

To the Mayor and Each Member of Limerick City and County Council

Chairperson's Report for the Home and Social Development Strategic Policy Committee Meeting of the 30th April 2018.

A Chomhairleoir, a chara,

Summary Report/Main Issues:

A minute's silence was held as a mark of respect, acknowledging the bereavement of our colleague Denis Tierney, Communications Officer on the death of his mother

A query was raised by elected members over the rescheduling of the meeting to a morning slot and it was agreed that going forward meetings would be held in the afternoon.

Item 2: Matters arising from the Minutes

Concerns were raised by Cllr Leddin regarding the undertaking of site investigations at Upper Careys Road with no prior notification to the elected representatives. Residents contacted their local Councillors having received letters from the Council notifying them of proposed investigative works. Cllr. Leddin proposed adjourning the meeting in the absence of an official from the Design and Delivery Section. Mr. S. Hanrahan, A/Director of Services, outlined the housing delivery process which consists of 4 stages; the first stage being to investigate the viability of the site, after which the decision is made to proceed with the project or not.

On the recommendation of the Chairperson, Cllr. W. O'Donnell, Cllr. Leddin agreed to change his proposal as follows: 'Where site assessments are to be carried out for potential housing capital projects, the elected representatives are to be notified in advance.'. This was agreed.

Discussion took place in relation to the Council acquiring and disposing of sites and houses. Mr. S. Hanrahan stated that the Council have made a significant purchase of land on the Southside of the City and that disposal should be considered where there is over-concentration of social housing in an area or an excessive amount of land for LCCC use.

Item 3: Housing Targets 2018-2021

Mr. Seamus Hanrahan, A/Director of Service gave a presentation on the Housing Targets including DHPLG targets for delivery for 2018 of 251 units and for the period 2018 to 2021 of 1365 units. Mr. Hanrahan stated that it is projected that LCCC will exceed the minimum target of 1365 from 2018 to 2021. He stated there were 3119 applicants on the Housing Waiting List representing a 39% reduction from figures recorded in September 2015 and advised the demand is primarily for 1 and 2 bed units.

Mr. S. Hanrahan also outlined the Delivery figures for 2018 with a projected unit delivery of 312 units through the following delivery streams:

Acquisition	-	143
Build	-	100
Leasing	-	69

A discussion took place with issues raised by members as follows:

Buy and Renew: Concern was expressed with the length of time it takes to render these properties ready for occupation. Mr. S. Hanrahan advised that there is more work involved with the properties bought under this scheme as they are long term vacant properties in poor condition and therefore will take longer to refurbish, now that the scheme is place the process is being refined to ensure reduced delivery timelines.

Approved Housing Bodies: Mr. S. Hanrahan advised a list of the AHBs was issued in response to a question for the next meeting of the Newcastle West Municipal District. He stated that Limerick was second to Dublin City for the number of AHBs involved in the provision of housing.

Construction v Acquisition: Concern was expressed in relation to the balance of housing delivery mechanisms and a perceived lack of construction in relation purchasing and its effect on local employment. Mr. S. Hanrahan advised that properties purchased under the Buy and Renew Scheme, given their poor condition, generate considerable work for the smaller and medium sized builders.

Compliance on sites: Mr. M. McNamara advised that there is an issue with contractors and possible non-compliance with regard to employment regulations. Mr. S. Hanrahan advised that the Council would facilitate any examination of this issue with regard to Council managed projects

Item 4: Presentation by the Urban and Village Renewal team

Ms. Rosie Webb gave a presentation on the Urban and Village Department outlining the structure and work of the Unit and progress to date. She advised that there are three main functions as follows:

- Dereliction, Vacancy & Reuse – Addressing dereliction, vacancy and under-utilisation and engaging with property owners to enable re-use, refurbishment and redevelopment in Limerick.
- Community Property Development Support – Identifying opportunities for optimising the usage of community properties assets;
- Place-Making – Putting communities at the heart of public space design through public realm improvements that position citizens to improve liveability in their local areas.

Town and Village Renewal Schemes: Ms. Webb advised that 8 towns benefitted in 2016 and 13 in 2017 with approximately €1.1m allocated by the Department of Rural and Community Development. She advised that confirmation from the Department is awaited in relation to the final details for the 2018/2019 applications following which community groups will be asked to submit Expressions of Interest for projects in their areas.

A discussion took place on when groups would be identified and the importance of being ready to start work on confirmation of the allocation. It was also stated that there was good feedback from community groups, and the elected members acknowledged the work being done. Ms. Webb confirmed they were looking at reviving a 'Love you Streets' painting Scheme.

Audit of Vacant houses: Ms. Webb confirmed there are 5 staff on the ground inspecting properties with 266 having been inspected from January to March 2018 and these properties are being mapped.

Item 5: Update on the Buy & Renew and the Repair & Lease Schemes

Ms. Sinead Hourigan, Staff Officer gave a presentation on the output from the two schemes and progress to date as follows:

Buy & Renew scheme - Launched in July 2017 under which 18 units have been purchased, sale agreed on 23 units and refurbishment completed on 6 units.

Repair & Lease scheme - Launched in March 2016 with 66 properties assessed, 43 deemed suitable, 11 Agreements signed and 6 in progress with the first lease being signed on 30th April 2018.

Ms. Hourigan stated that as well as providing social housing, the scheme helps to improve streetscapes and eliminate dereliction.

Item 6: Public Land Activation - Adare

Ms. Sarah Newell gave a presentation outlining the process as follows:

- July 2017 – LCCC was requested by the DHPLG to prepare a Strategic Development and Management Plan (SDMP) by September 30th 2017 for all LCCC owned lands for mixed-tenure.
- It is a key objective under Rebuilding Ireland.
- Objective to pilot a number of viable and developable sites for mixed-tenure in Limerick City and County.
- The Council has much of this work underway with the Public Land Activation Programme established in LCCC in February 2017.
- The SDMP presented and issued to SPC at October meeting.

In relation to the Adare site, Ms. Newell advised that Best and Final Bids were to be submitted by May 2018 and there were strict timeframes for delivery including a buy back clause in the event of the purchaser failing to comply with the time period specified.

A discussion took place on affordable housing and affordable. Mr. S. Hanrahan advised that the developer will be required to comply with Part V obligations and there may be affordable housing option in addition to social housing option as part of the new Affordable Housing Scheme to be launched shortly.

Item 7: Notices of Motion referred to the Home and Social Development SPC

(1) Notices of Motion submitted by Cllr. Prendiville were deferred to the next meeting of the SPC.

Item 8: Any other business

Issues raised by members included the following:

Visit by Minister Damien English – Mr. J. Prior relayed the thanks of the Southill Community in relation to the Churchfield development while also expressing his disappointment that he, as a community

representative was not advised of the Minister's visit. The Mayor, Cllr. S. Keary also expressed his disappointment of the late notice he received in relation to the Minister's visit.

Joint Housing and Planning Meeting – A meeting was requested to be held prior to the end of June.

Houses in Ballyhahill – A discussion took place in relation to houses that became vacant and boarded up during the tenure of the Gortadroma landfill site. Mr. S. Hanrahan, stated that the Operations and Maintenance section are assessing these houses to ascertain if they are suitable for letting.

Recommendations

Where site assessments are to be carried out for potential housing capital projects, the elected representatives are to be notified in advance.

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Cllr. William O'Donnell.

Chairperson

Home and Social Development Strategic Policy Committee