

MINUTES OF MEETING OF LIMERICK CITY AND COUNTY COUNCIL HOME AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT SPC

A meeting of Limerick City and County Council, Home and Social Development Strategic Policy Committee was held on **Tuesday, 29th October 2019** in the Council Chamber, Dooradoyle Limerick.

In Attendance: An Cathaoirleach Cllr. Michael Murphy

Present: Cllr. Sarah Kiely
Cllr. Joe Leddin
Cllr. Sean Hartigan
Cllr. John Costelloe
Cllr. Stephen Keary
Cllr. Fergus Kilcoyne
Cllr. Adam Teskey
Cllr. Conor Sheehan
Cllr. Sharon Benson

Sectoral Interests: Mr. Mike McNamara, Ms Dee Ryan

In Attendance: Ms. Aoife Duke, Director of Service, Housing Development
Mr. Seamus Hanrahan, Senior Architect, Housing Development
Mr. Sean McGlynn, A/Senior Executive Officer, Regeneration
Ms. Sarah Newell, Executive Planner, Housing Development
Ms. Siobhan O'Dwyer, Assistant Planner, Housing Development
Mr. Cathal Quaid, Administrative Officer, Operations & Maintenance
Ms. Maria Croke, Clerical Officer, Housing Development
Mr. Rory Culhane, A/Assistant Staff Officer, Housing Development
Mr. Eóin Lehane, Clerical Officer, Housing Development
Ms. Nicole McGuigan, Co-Op Student, Housing Development

Apologies: Cllr Michael Donegan

On opening the meeting the Chair welcomed everyone to the first meeting as the new committee and expressed that he is delighted to be chair. He also commended the last committee on their Strategic Focus and delivery of work. He also welcomed Mike McNamara to today's meeting.

Other Sectoral Reps and PPN nominations will be in place for our first meeting of 2020.

Cllr. John Costelloe wished the Chair all the best going forward but was very disappointed with the turn out considering the Housing Crisis.

Cllr. Sarah Kiely also wished the chair the best.

Aoife Duke spoke about Strategic goals and priorities and explained that private downsizing, land availability and any other priorities would be discussed at the meeting.

Item 1: (a) Private Downsizing Scheme

Ms. Sarah Newell gave an in-depth presentation where the members were provided with information in relation to the downsizing proposal to include both public and private. Examples of how the scheme works in Dublin and Cork were provided.

The issue was discussed by the members and it was agreed that a further workshop would take place to review options in more detail. It was also proposed that a member of the team from Cork County Council could attend also as a lessons learned exercise to assist in moving the issue forward in Limerick. The key objective to this scheme would be to maximize potential of existing stock.

The main issues raised were:

- If an applicant sells their house to LCCC and then becomes tenants, what rent applies?
- If a person sells their house, can they stay in their current area?
- Why would someone sell their house and pay rent when they could sell their house privately and buy smaller somewhere else?
- Why should someone who has paid a mortgage their whole life, end up having to pay rent under this scheme?
- If an 'applicant' needed a family member to live with them, and the 'applicant' passes away, can the family member remain in the property as a tenant?
- Is there any incentive in place for current council tenants to downsize?
- What is the differential rent based on?

Ms. Sarah Newell explained to the committee about the benefits of this scheme. These are as follows:

- 24/7 Call Care Service
- Security and Safety
- Communal facilities which encourages Social Interaction.
- 3 and 4 bedroom houses are being freed up

Sarah Newell also made reference to similar projects which encouraged the same (Vizes Court, Colviet Court and Lord Edward Street)

Item 1: (b) Land Availability

Mr. Seamus Hanrahan gave a presentation on Land Availability where the members were provided with details of site availability, challenges in particular locations and the various options open to the Local Authority in terms of ensuring adequate supply of housing over the long-term. After much discussion it was agreed to revert with an update on sites in progress. The issue of land purchase and zoning was also discussed. Seamus Hanrahan to send LCCC owned sites to all newly elected councillors in the coming weeks.

Item 1: (c) Strategic Goals/Priorities for 2020

Ms. Aoife Duke spoke about the Strategic Goals and Priorities for 2020. The following broad headings were listed by the Director;

1. Build Programme
2. Affordable Housing
3. Planned Maintenance
4. Removal of Voids/Vacant houses
5. Single Differential Rent Scheme
6. Choice-Based letting
7. Downsizing
8. Land Availability review

We note the ongoing workshops and SPC meetings all of which offer an opportunity to review the priorities. Members are also invited to put forward Agenda items for discussion.

Item 2: Regeneration Training

Mr. Sean McGlynn gave a very positive presentation on Regeneration Training and was congratulated by Mike McNamara. A number of members welcomed this project and agreed that Regeneration Training is important and that there is continuous input. Galvone Industrial Estate was referred to and Aoife Duke to provide a comprehensive update at the next meeting.

Item 3: Update on Workshop

Following the recent workshop it has been agreed to complete sample surveys of properties in each of the Municipal Districts regarding Planned Maintenance. When the information on the condition of the houses is gathered, the details will be brought to the members for review and a discussion around various options on the level of works to be completed can take place. The formal paperwork for the €15m loan for the Planned Maintenance Programme will go to the November Council meeting.

Members were also advised that The Single Differential Scheme will commence on 1st February 2020. A significant communication campaign will take place with tenants in advance of the deadline. Members will be updated on an on-going basis also.

Item 4: Affordable Housing Scheme of Priorities

Ms Sarah Newell provided a presentation on the Affordable Housing Scheme of Priorities. Going forward there will be a dedicated workshop so that the scheme can be discussed more in depth. This scheme has to be adopted before it is implemented.

The following issues arose during discussion:

- Why discuss scheme further when members don't have any input to scheme? It was questioned did any Local Authority have any input into this scheme?
- Everyone should be given the opportunity to apply for this scheme.
- Can council tenants apply (RAS tenants)?
- Can the distance be kept as low as possible?

The Chair advised that there will be workshops carried out in the future to discuss in detail.

A special meeting on Affordable Housing Scheme of Priorities was requested to be carried out in Adare/Rathkeale Municipal District, proposed by Cllr. Stephen Keary and seconded by Cllr. Adam Teskey.

Item 7 Any Other Business

- Compliments given for the works that were carried out in Nicholas Street by Cllr. John Costello.
- Aoife Duke to speak with Corporate Services to see can the SPC dates be changed. It was noted that the next SPC meeting isn't being held until February 2020
- All presentations be emailed to members before SPC

The meeting concluded.