

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 **the 22nd June 2020** by Cisco WebEx.

In Attendance: An Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Michael Murphy

Councillors Present: Cllr. Sharon Benson, Cllr. James Collins, Cllr. John Costelloe
Cllr. Sean Hartigan, Cllr. Stephen Keary, Cllr. Sarah Kiely, Cllr. Fergus Kilcoyne
Cllr. Joe Leddin, Cllr. Tom Ruddle, Cllr. Eddie Ryan, Cllr. Conor Sheehan
Cllr. Brigid Teefy, Cllr. Mike Donegan, Cllr. Catherine Slattery

Sectoral Interests: Mr. P.J O’Grady, Ms. Dee Ryan, Mr, Michael McNamara

In Attendance: Ms. Aoife Duke, Director of Service, Housing Development
Ms. Sarah Newell, Executive Planner, Housing Development
Ms. Siobhan O’Dwyer, Assistant Planner, Housing Development
Mr. Cathal Quaid, Administrative Officer, Operations & Maintenance
Mr. Rory Culhane, A/Assistant Staff Officer, Housing Development
Ms. Jeannine Butler, Clerical Officer, Housing Development
Mr. Eoin Lehane, Clerical Officer, Housing Development
Ms. Jurate Andrijauskiene, A/Assistant Staff Officer, Housing Development – SPOC
Mr. Sean McGlynn, A/Senior Executive Officer, Design & Delivery
Ms. Jennifer Ahern, A/Staff Officer, Housing Development
Mr. David E Leahy, Executive Engineer, Service Operations

Apologies: Ms. Pauline Keane

Item 1: Welcome by Chairperson – Cllr. Michael Murphy

The Chair welcomed everyone to the SPC, the first one since the COVID-19 restrictions were put in place.

Item 2: Confirm minutes from meeting held on February 24th 2020

Proposed: Cllr. Brigid Teefy

Seconded: Cllr. Eddie Ryan

Item 3: Matters arising from the Minutes

- Cllr. Keary wished to seek progress on the matter from Cathal Quaid regarding a reduction or subsidy that could be granted to tenants who wish to upgrade their

properties by installing new windows and doors - from the previous minutes. Cathal Quaid responded that a formal pilot has not been put in place at present due to COVID-19. A formal process will be put in place.

- The chairperson thanked all of the staff who are involved with the housing newsletter for their hard work.

Item 4: Affordable Housing and Incremental Purchase – Policy Proposal

Sarah Newell, Executive Planner, Housing Development gave a presentation on Affordable Housing (in the context of LC&CC New Build Programme) and the Incremental Purchase Scheme. This is a strategy proposal and looks at how we can get more of a mixed tenure in to schemes.

We have three legal mechanisms at our disposal to allow us to deliver mixed tenure – 1. New Build Incremental Tenant Purchase Scheme (50% of units) 2. Service Sites Fund (Part V Affordable Dwellings) (30% of units) 3. Private Elderly Downsizing Scheme (20% of units)

A discussion took place around this and the main points were:

- Cllr. Leddin thanked Ms. Newell for the presentation and asked have we considered the Cost Rental Model that was referenced in the Programme for Government. Ms. Newell responded that we are awaiting the Circular from the Government to advise us on how to proceed with the Cost Rental Model. Ms. Newell assured Cllr. Leddin that as soon as we have the Circular, we would be looking to implement the Cost Rental Model as part of our Service Sites Fund.
- Ms. Newell stated it would involve a Chief Executive's Order to designate an estate under incremental purchase.
- Cllr. Keary also went on to raise a concern about the scheme in Pallaskenry of 16 units and the mix of social and private housing. Cllr. Keary also stated that he received a letter from Housing Development to say that at least 50% of the scheme would be available for affordable housing. Ms. Newell said that yes, if it is over 20 units then this applies. Cllr. Keary said that the letter did not state that fact and he would hope that we could consider a 50/50 split of tenure going forward. This was agreed going forward.
- Ms. Newell also mentioned that she will send out a separate document with background information on the Incremental Purchase Scheme and a guide for the Affordable Dwellings under the Service Sites Fund. Ms. Newell also advised that if anyone has any queries to feel free to contact her.
- At the end of the meeting, Aoife Duke mentioned that we are looking for support from the members of the SPC in relation to the percentage split as we review

Turnkeys. Private developers are coming to HD and looking for HD to take them on. She asked for permission from SPC to have discussions with private developers on Turnkeys, which would then ensure mixed tenure at the start of the design.

- Cllr. Benson voiced her concern regarding the split.
- The issue will be workshopped at a later date.

Item 5: Voids Programme and Single Point of Contact (SPOC) – Progress Report

Aoife Duke, Director of Service, Housing Development gave a presentation on the Voids and SPOC programme. Ms. Duke covered three areas to show where we are at with vacancy turnaround at the moment.

Progress is being made on turning around vacant houses, which the graph in the presentation shows however, the area requires constant focus. SPOC is working. Ms. Duke spoke about the programme of works for COVID voids during the health crisis and how vacant houses were turned around for families in homeless accommodation.

Ms. Duke referenced Cllr. Collin's point that he raised at the last SPC in relation to timelines around the inspection process, and that is something she is actively working on at present. Details will be in the housing newsletter and something that can be discussed at the next SPC.

Ms. Duke also noted at the end of her presentation that the SPOC process should guarantee a faster turnaround of houses and better value for money.

A discussion took place around this.

Ms. Duke also referenced back to Cllr. Costelloe's point on the €15 million maintenance budget, she stated that Conor Culloo (senior engineer) is putting together a project implementation plan for this will come back at the next SPC with an update on this.

Cllr. Benson also asked could Ms. Duke speak to her about the Thermal Upgrades in Moyross, as there is a similar issue to that of St. Mary's Park. Ms. Duke also confirmed that we will have an update also at the Moyross Regen Committee Meeting and is happy to discuss.

Cllr. Donegan thanked Ms. Duke on her presentation and wanted to give his thanks to the team on the Housing newsletter.

Cllr. Benson expressed how well the SPOC project is working; she is seeing great progress and complimented the team.

Item 6: Rebuilding Ireland – Quarterly Delivery Update

Sarah Newell, Executive Planner, Housing Development gave a presentation on Rebuilding Ireland delivery streams and is hoping to give updates to SPC for every quarter from now on.

Presentation went through updates on Build, Buy & Lease figures. Ms. Newell mentioned that we are now focusing on acquiring one-bedroom houses as per Government guidelines.

To summarise our Build scheme at Q2 of 2020 we have 171 under construction, 114 at tender stage, 295 at planning stage, 61 at initial stages of feasibility report. Ms. Newell mentioned Traveller Accommodation Programme, which is being led by Design & Delivery.

Our acquisitions at Q2 2020 stand at 5 and with our leasing programme we have completed 23.

Ms. Newell feels that we are in a healthy position to meet our target of 1,365.

A discussion took place around the presentation.

Cllr. Costelloe and Cllr. Keary voice their frustration with the amount of time it is taking for schemes to go to tender – it is an extremely slow process. Cllr. Costelloe also spoke about getting an update at the next meeting for the Orchard Site.

Item 7: Energy Efficiency Project – Current Programme Update

David E. Leahy, Executive Engineer, Service Operations gave presentation on the Energy Efficiency Project.

LC&CC were allocated €2.6 million for this project. Houses with poor BER ratings were identified for the scheme along with houses with elderly and vulnerable tenants. The allocations were as follows:

Metro East – 20
Metro West – 20
Metro North – 20
Cappamore/Killmallock – 20
Adare/Rathkeale – 17
Newcastlewest – 23

Totalling to 120 houses identified for the scheme. Through the tendering process SSE Airtricity main contractor for works and SSE Airtricity (through a competitive tendering process) appointed Icarus Properties as main contractor for construction.

Planned end of completed works – end of October.

A discussion opened up from Councillors around the presentation.

Responding to a question from Cllr. Donegan, Mr. Leahy will circulate planned works for each Municipal District after the meeting.

Mr. Leahy also stated that he hopes there will be a follow-on phase in 2021 with a number of additional approvals. This will be dependent on Government funding.

Item 8: Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor S. Hartigan

I will move at the next meeting of the Metropolitan District that the Council make evidence of a household waste collection service a condition of all tenancies and in cases of non-compliance the cost of waste collection is added to the customers rent bill

Aoife Duke, Director of Service, read out the reply from the Community Sustainment Unit – it states that the CSU of LC&CC is responsible for carrying out tenancy induction with all newly appointed council tenants and as part of that the terms and conditions of the tenancy agreement are clearly explained to the tenants prior to them signing the agreement.

Condition 6 of the letting agreement refers to tenants having an authorised waste collector as part of their tenancy and all tenants must provide proof of bin collection service before keys can be obtained.

The response states that in incidents where tenants fail to continue with their bin service collection the CSU in conjunction, as appropriate with the Environment section of the council will take action.

The response goes on to say that, there is an issue around the legal perspective of adding the cost of waste collection service to a person's rent account.

A discussion took place around this NoM and Councillors voiced their concern in relation to the motion given the concerns raised by members.

Aoife Duke agreed to obtain legal advice and will speak to Brian Kennedy (Physical Development) in advance of the next SPC regarding the environmental elements of the motion. Cllr. Hartigan agreed to this course of action.

Item 10: AOB

Cllr. Costelloe raised a concern to Aoife Duke regarding the slow progress of Thermal Upgrades and Refurbishments. He suggested it could be due to the slow payments to contractors. Aoife Duke noted the comment and committed to reviewing payments due.

END OF MEETING

The Chair thanked all presenters, host, staff and Councillors for their attendance. The meeting concluded.