

22nd October 2020

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 on the 22nd October 2020.**

A Chomhairleoir, a chara,

Summary Report/Main Issues

Chair opens up meeting and welcomes the new members – Tracey McElligott, Anne Cronin and Una Byrnes.

Item 2: Matters arising from the Minutes

No matters arising from previous meeting.

Item 3: Policy Documents Following Update

- A. Adare Pilot for Affordable Sites
- B. Private Downsizing Scheme

Ms. Newell outlined the progression on the policies since the last SPC and they will be going to Management Team on the 9th November.

Ms. Newell noted that if there are changes to the schemes of allocations in terms of financial contribution relating to the Private Downsizing scheme they will be brought to the Council meeting.

Item 4: Expressions of Interest for AHBs

Ms. Newell outlined that we are looking at AHB's to be involved in delivering mixed tenure on LCCC land.

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

- Cllr. Keary had questions regarding value for money through competitive tendering and overrun costs. Ms. Newell noted that the AHB's are fully conscious of funding models that they have already undertaken with new build and also the Department's caps on new build for Limerick. Ms. Newell also mentioned the DHLGH do rigorous checks before approving funding. Ms. Newell was conscious of overrun costs and noted that the DHLGH have a separate cap for abnormal costings.
- Cllr. Ryan asked could a non-AHB sign up to the scheme. Ms. Newell said that they would have to sign up the AHB code of regulation with the Housing Agency but an individual could build a property and sell to an AHB (Turnkey).
- Ms. McElligott voiced her concern regarding potential delays relating to the tendering process. Ms. Newell noted that one of the securities we have is that no disposal will take place until planning permission is granted – the onus is on the AHB to move quickly.
- Cllr. Ruddle also asked when and how AHB's are paid. Ms. Newell said that LCCC would not be involved with any contract or payment. The AHB has to go to the HFA to get their funding to ensure that they are borrowing enough money so that they are happy that they can deliver.

Item 5: Regeneration Update

Ms. Duke gave an update on Regeneration in regards to the below:

- a) Social Intervention Fund
- b) Update on Physical Projects in Regeneration

Item 6: Energy Efficiency Update – David Leahy

Mr. Leahy gave an update to the members on the Energy Efficiency project.

At present, the project is approximately 80% complete with over 90 homes now substantially complete.

Mr. Leahy gave four examples of energy efficiency upgrades:

1. External Wall Insulation
2. Home Heating Systems
3. Positive Input Ventilation
4. Photovoltaic Roof Panels

Completed works in areas include – Abbeyfeale, Newcastle West, Askeaton and Patrickswell.

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

- Cllr. Keary asked has the project come across a privately owned house in a series of LCCC owned terraced houses and if a problem like this was found, how was it solved. He also asked about the spend around the project. Mr. Leahy noted that the houses were chosen based on LCCC ownership so he did not come across a private house within a group of terraced house. 120 houses with a total grant draw down so far of €2.69million and that given that it will eliminate response maintenance issues which may happen in the future. Cllr. Keary also raised a concern about the potential of vandalism on the external upgrade fixtures. Mr. Leahy said it the external insulation is robust and durable and the test will be time.
- Ms. McElligott asked is there a liaison person for the families due to the technological aspect of the upgrades. Mr. Leahy noted Ms. McElligott’s concern, he said that before the house is handed over to each contractor, they have an induction with each tenant and gives him or her a simple guide to how the system works.
- Mr. O’Grady asked, that in places where an individual has refused to accept upgrades can they join the scheme the following year. Mr. Leahy said that he has tried to engage the people who did not want to be involved but if a similar scheme happens in the future that those tenants will want to sign up.
- Cllr. Teefy asked how 120 houses were selected and asked will the project be going on over a number of years. Mr. Leahy said that the selection of houses was based on a number of factors including age of property, BER and previous maintenance issues.

Item 7: AOB

a. 2021 Work Programme

Ms. Duke appealed to members on direction we need to take in 2021 and is keen to ensure we keep the momentum going as a lot of policies have been endorsed by members. Ms. Duke went on to say that housing delivery agenda items can be e-mailed to the team at any time and noted that we are more than happy to be guided by members about what we need to focus on.

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

- Mr. O Grady asked have we been able to reduce the number of voids in the county. Ms. Duke noted that in 2020 we have introduced the Single Point of Contact system were any voids properties that came back into the system were recorded, inspected and categorized based on level of works required.

- Ms. McElligott asked the question, are there enough sustainment officers to ensure the upkeep and maintenance of houses. Ms. Duke noted the increased resources regarding this area in 2020 with ongoing review as necessary.
- Cllr. Hartigan asked for cost per house for the energy upgrades/thermal upgrades. Mr. Quaid said it does depend on quality of house and gave breakdown of associated costs per unit.

END OF MEETING

The Chair thanked everyone for logging in and for their valuable contributions. He also thanked the members of the executive present.

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Cllr. Michael Murphy
Chairperson
Home and Social Development Strategic Policy Committee