

**20<sup>th</sup> October 2021**

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 20<sup>th</sup> October 2021.**

**A Chomhairleoir, a chara,**

### **Summary Report/Main Issues**

Cllr. Michael Murphy opened the meeting and welcomed all members to the October SPC meeting.

#### **Item 1: Confirm minutes from meeting held from 16<sup>th</sup> June 2021**

**Proposed:** Cllr. Stephen Keary

**Seconded:** Cllr. Sarah Kiely

#### **Item 2: Matters arising from the Minutes:**

Cllr. Sarah Kiely noted that as part of the discussion about HAP tenancies and allocations, Mr. Rob Lowth was to explore the possibility of looking for references for people who had been on the HWL for a long time and who had been allocated Local Authority housing. Cllr. Kiely also noted that Cllr. Catherine Slattery had raised an issue in the previous minutes. Mr. Lowth noted that they have amended their inspection process.

#### **Item 3: Introduction to new Housing Directorate**

Ms. Caroline Curley introduced the new Housing Directorate and her Senior Management Team.

#### **Item 4: Housing For All Presentation**

Ms. Sarah Newell gave a presentation on the recently published Housing For All document by the Department of Housing.

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

- Cllr. Kiely noted conflicting information on 'Project Tosaigh', at some meetings she was advised there was AHB intervention and Cllr. Kiely advised her preference would be the LDA as it would benefit the population of Limerick more. . Cllr. Kiely asked, do we have a replacement for the Long Term Lease scheme. Cllr. Kiely noted the staffing shortage in Allocations and Assessments. Cllr. Kiely raised queries on Planned Maintenance and noted she would welcome a workshop.
- Ms. Newell noted that under 'Project Tosaigh' it includes the Guinness Sites and this is currently in the Service Sites Fund and the DHLGH has asked whether Limerick City and County Council is going to stick with the SSF or go towards the Affordable Homes Fund. Ms. Newell noted the LDA is working to understand what type of partnership approach is available and we are working with them on this and will update Councillors and SPC members on this.
- Ms. Newell advised that Build is the only replacement to the Long Term Lease scheme.
- Mr. Lowth noted the staffing issue in assessments and flagged that it should be rectified by start of December.
- Mr. PJ O'Grady flagged that the Housing for All plan does not deal with rural Ireland and raised a concern about rising cost of supplies. Mr. O'Grady looked for details on the turnaround of vacant units.
- Ms. Newell advised timelines would be set out in action plan and itemised by settlement and this would be communicated to all SPC members.
- Cllr. Keary asked how many houses per annum is LCCC obliged to deliver over the period of the Housing for All programme. Cllr. Keary asked where the proposed development for 31 units in Adare.
- Ms. Newell outlined targets to SPC members for the next five years.
- Mr. Conor Culloo advised that he is looking through DHLGH correspondence in relation to the 31 units in Adare.
- Cllr. Sharon Benson asked are the build targets Local Authority build or AHB build. Cllr. Benson flagged a concern about the Tenant Purchase Scheme and an overall concern about the Housing for All plan. Cllr. Benson raised a concern around voids and the cost of materials associated with maintenance refurbishing units.
- Ms. Newell advised that the 90,000 build target is strictly social housing and the blend is AHB's 40% and Local Authority 60%.

- Mr. Culloo advised Cllr. Kiely that he would revert with more concise information regarding planned maintenance under Housing for All.
- An Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Murphy noted the emphasis on Turnkeys in the Housing for All documents and raised a concern regarding First Time Buyers losing out due to Turnkeys and AHBs. Cllr. Murphy also asked about extra pressure on plan due to phasing out of Direct Provision.
- Cllr. Keary raised a concern about asking questions and An Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Murphy advised the SPC is for formulation and development of policy.

#### **Item 5: Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor C. Sheehan**

- An Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Murphy noted that Cllr. Conor Sheehan sent his apologies and asked for his Notice of Motion to be deferred to our next Home and Social SPC.

#### **Item 6: AOB**

- Cllr Benson flagged a concern she had in relation to communication she had been receiving from Home Improvement applicants (Disabled Person Grants, Mobility Aid Grants, Housing Adaptation Grants) in relation to very high quotes. Cllr. Benson proposed that LCCC write to the Minister for Housing requesting a review of the maximum grant allocation for Housing Adaptation Grants for disabled people.
- Cllr. John Costelloe raised his concerns about the severe lack of tradesmen in Limerick and the over-reliance on AHBs.
- Ms. Curley noted Cllr. Costelloe's point about lack of tradesmen and advised that it is a concern.
- Cllr. Kiely supported Cllr. Costelloe's point on AHBs and flagged her frustration around trying to find which AHB is managing specific tenancies. Cllr. Kiely noted her concern over some AHB managed housing and the time period around responding to anti-social behaviour issues.
- Mr. Lowth advised that if there is a concern with an AHB, the Tenancy Sustainment Team are the first point of contact and it's important for Councillors to flag issues to them.
- Ms. Curley advised that if a protocol for AHBs is proposed by the SPC, that LCCC will research it and come back with recommendation.

- Ms. Una Burns noted that AHBs play a very important part in social housing delivery and they also provide skills and expertise to support households which need significant complex supports.

Recommendations (endorsed by SPC members):

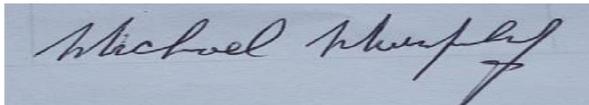
1. **That, this Council, write to the Minister for Housing requesting a review of the maximum grant allocation for Housing Adaptation Grants for Disabled People.**

**Proposed:** Cllr. Sharon Benson

**Seconded:** Cllr. Sarah Kiely

END OF MEETING

The Chair thanked everyone for joining the meeting and advised the next SPC is the 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021.



Is mise le meas,

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