

## 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 12<sup>th</sup> April 2023** in the Council Chamber, Dooradoyle and via MS Teams.

**In Attendance:** An Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Stephen Keary

SPC Members Present: Cllr. Michael Murphy, Cllr. Tom Ruddle, Cllr. Tom Collopy, Cllr. Sarah Kiely, Cllr. Fergus Kilcoyne, Cllr. Mike Donegan, Cllr. Sharon Benson, Cllr. Conor Sheehan, Cllr. Brigid Teefy, Cllr. Eddie Ryan, Cllr. Sean Hartigan, Ms Anne Cronin.

**In Attendance:**

Ms. Caroline Curley, Director of Service  
Ms. Helen Creed, Administrative Officer, Housing  
Ms. Martina Frawley, Administrative Officer, Housing  
Ms. Patricia Philips, A/ Head of Unit for Housing Welfare & Traveller Accommodation  
Ms. Jurate Andrijauskiene, Staff Officer, Housing  
Mr. Rory Culhane, Staff Officer, Housing  
Mr. Shane Feane, Assistant Staff Officer, Housing  
Ms. Jeannine Butler, Clerical Officer, Housing  
Ms. Amanda Ghasper, Clerical Officer, Housing  
Ms. Eileen Liston, Clerical Officer, Housing  
Ms. Triona O'Connor, Homeless Operations Programme Manager, Housing  
Mr. Liam Dooley, Clerical Officer, Housing  
Mr. Kevin Ryan, Collaboration Manager, Irish Council for Social Housing

**Apologies:** Cllr. Catherine Slattery, Cllr. Joe Leddin, Cllr. Adam Teskey, Cllr. James Collins, Ms. Tracy McElligott, Mr. P.J O'Grady, Mr. Patrick English, Ms. Una Burns, Ms. Dee Ryan. Ms Siobhan Heaney, Mr. Mike McNamara, Ms. Jennifer Brett, Ms. Mary Hayes, Senior Executive Officer, Ms., Ms. Sarah Newell, Senior Executive Officer, Mr. Brendan Kidney, Senior Engineer, Housing, Mr. Brian Bourke, Executive Engineer, Housing, Mr. Joe Delaney, Director of Service, Regeneration, Ms. Jennifer Ahern, A/ Senior Staff Officer, Housing, Ms Noelle Deedigan, Clerical Officer, LA Housing Construction & Maintenance Mr. Brendan Troy, Senior Executive Officer, Regeneration, Ms. Elaine O'Connor, Administrative Officer Regeneration.

### **Welcome by Councillor Sarah Kiely**

Cllr. Sarah Kiely opened the meeting and welcomed all members to the April SPC meeting. Cllr. Kiely initially chaired the meeting until the Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Stephen Keary arrived.

Ms. Caroline Curley, Director of Service communicated the protocol for the SPC meeting.

### **Item 1: Confirm minutes from meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2023.**

**Proposed:** Cllr. Michael Murphy

**Seconded:** Cllr. Bridget Teefy

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

No matters arising from previous minutes.

**Item 3: Programme of Work 2023**

Ms. Caroline Curley, Director of Services discussed the SPC Programme of Work 2023 below:

1. Sales Schemes as recommended by the Working Group on Vacancy and agreed by Council:

(a) Consideration be given to the introduction of pilot scheme for the sale of Council houses in need of refurbishment at low cost to people on housing list

(b) Consideration to be given to examination of dwellings compulsorily acquired under the Derelict Sites Act with a view to offering a portion to first time buyers on the housing list

Ms. Curley invited the committee to bring forward any additional items they wished to have included in the SPC Programme of Work for 2023.

A discussion took place and Cllr. Sharon Benson asked under Housing for All, if any more consideration had been given to the choice based letting scheme. Ms. Curley advised that the Council previously introduced a Choice Based Letting Scheme on a pilot basis, which was not successful. Ms. Curley advised that the Council can revisit the scheme in 2023.

**Item 4 Presentation by Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH) (Kevin Ryan)**

Mr. Kevin Ryan, Irish Council for Social Housing gave a presentation entitled “Current Landscape for AHBs.” Mr. Ryan discussed the policy landscape, regulatory context, current issues facing AHB’s, development options for AHB’s and highlighted some AHB schemes in Limerick.

A discussion took place and the presentation was well received by the committee.

Mr. Ryan in response to Cllr. Tom Collopy informed the committee that the ICSH represent 270 member organisations across Ireland.

Cllr. Tom Ruddle enquired about the tiers and Mr. Ryan explained that Tier 1 is small AHBs less than 50 units, Tier 2 between 50 and 300 units and Tier 3 all AHB’s with more than 300 units. Mr. Ryan informed the group that the majority of their members are volunteer led and projects are typically delivered and funded through the Capital Assistance Scheme. Ms. Anne Cronin enquired about the CAS scheme and Mr. Ryan explained the CAS model of funding available to AHB’s. Mr. Ryan also advised the committee that the CALF funding model to support delivery by the AHB sector was being reviewed and informed the committee that the DHLGH in conjunction with the ICSH would be holding a workshop in Limerick for AHB’s on the 10th May, 2023.

Cllr Ruddle asked if the voluntary sector are subject to the same regulatory framework. Mr. Ryan explained that the Approved Housing Bodies Regulatory Authority (AHBRA) established in February 2021 is the new regulator for the AHB sector and there is a regulatory framework for approved housing bodies available from AHBRA.

## **Item 5: Questions from PPN Linkage Group**

### Question 1

An update on social and affordable housing delivery in 2022 and if targets were met and budgets spent, with particular reference to the Traveller housing budget.

### Response

Ms. Helen Creed, Administrative Officer, Housing provided an update to the members as follows:

Our build target was 565 builds in 2022 so therefore we met 71% of our target (399/565). The target is 2693 homes by 2026 (5-Year Target). This target is a build target only.

In 2022, a total of 472 homes were delivered through new build (399 homes), acquisitions (39 homes) and leasing (34 homes). The 2022 out turn is undergoing final review with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage has mandated a target blend whereby LCCC to deliver 60% direct and 40% delivery by AHB sector.

Delivery Challenges which affected the 2022 out turn were beyond the control of Limerick City and County Council and include:

- Covid lockdown and site closures
- Impact of Brexit
- Ukrainian Crisis
- Material delivery delays to site which affected our completion dates
- Material and labour cost inflation issues – required resubmission of funding applications to DHLGH to approve and this delayed process

### Affordable

Limerick City and County Council undertook 3 affordable campaigns in 2022 seeking residential developments with planning permissions for affordable purchase. A fourth Affordable Campaign will be advertised by the end of April 2023.

The Council progressed 5 Council owned sites under the serviced sites fund and the affordable housing fund. In addition, we advanced a joint venture with Cluid/Whitebox on 3 City centre sites.

**Affordable Pipeline (Cost Rental and Purchase v Target)**

	COST RENTAL	AFFORDABLE PURCHASE	DHLGH TARGET
2022		0	25
2023		10	49
2024		78	68
2025	166	236	61
2026	522	260	61
Approved Pipeline as at March 2023	688	584	264

Table 1: Affordable Pipeline as at 2023

5-year target overall: 264 issued on 30th March 2022. This is the Housing for All Target for Affordable Housing Delivery for Limerick 2022-2026  
1272 units (688+584) in pipeline as at March 2023. Table 1 above shows expected handover dates by year of units.  
54% of pipeline = Cost Rental. Typically apartment typologies in Metro District  
46% of pipeline = Affordable Purchase. Typically 3 or 4 bed homes.

Ms. Patricia Phillips, A/Head of Unit for Housing Welfare & Traveller Accommodation provided an update on the Traveller Housing Budget. A discussion took place and An Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Stephen Keary asked Ms. Phillips what the capital works entailed and if there is any housing for travellers under construction at present.

Ms. Patricia Phillips advised that capital funding can be used for new Traveller accommodation, refurbishment of existing accommodation, caravan loans, site improvement and so on. Ms. Phillips informed Cllr. Keary that LCCC are currently looking at 2 houses in the Askeaton area and 2 houses in the City.

Cllr. Ruddle enquired how the allocation process worked and Ms. Phillips explained same.

Ms. Anne Cronin queried the target number of 105 for the traveller accommodation programme and enquired if it was reflective of the number of the travelling community on the waiting list. Ms. Phillips advised that the numbers can fluctuate with numbers travelling between Counties at any one time. Ms. Phillips advised that the targets are reviewed in line with the traveller accommodation programme.

## **Question 2**

*Status of LDA developments in Limerick and impact of timelines being pushed out on housing delivery targets in Limerick*

Ms. Helen Creed, Administrative Officer, Housing provided the following update to the members.

LCCC in partnership with LDA continue state-led master-planning, infrastructure planning and land acquisitions which 'de-risks' complex sites such as Carey's Road District as part of the Colbert Quarter Masterplan.

Following the adoption of Colbert Quarter Spatial Framework, the Council signed an MOU in September 2022 with the LDA to advance the delivery of mixed-tenure on Council owned and other State-owned lands at Colbert Quarter which will deliver approximately 2,500 new homes overall. This is a complex process with numerous stakeholders (HSE, CIE, LCCC) and constraints such as reviewing existing operations on site that may need relocation. This is particularly relevant for the CIE and HSE lands and hence why this process will take longer as indicated in the Minister's Report on Relevant Public Lands.

The LDA and LCCC have a working group and steering group structure where we are currently focusing on advancing a key work package for a phase 1 residential-led scheme on land south of Carey's Road for approximately 270 units. We are programming an expected delivery date of 2026 and this is indicated in the Housing Delivery Action Plan for Limerick.

Cllr. Keary asked how far was Carey's Road District proposal away from a planning application. Ms. Curley advised that it's a complex process with numerous stakeholders and we are programming an expected delivery date of the Colbert Quarter in 2026. Ms. Curley informed the committee that following the Land Development Agency's report on Relevant Public Land and further consideration by the Minister that LCCC hopes to see opportunities in the coming months for future development to deliver affordable and social housing.

Cllr. Kiely enquired about lands on the Dock Road and if there is any update on the CIE site where the boundary is being breached. Cllr. Kiely stated the Guinness site on Upper Carey's Road needs to be cleaned up. Ms. Curley informed Cllr. Kiely that CIE site is still in the ownership of the CIE and that LCCC will look into the Guinness site.

### **Item 6: Tenant in Situ Scheme**

Ms. Caroline Curley, Director of Service, Housing provided an introduction to the Tenant in Situ Scheme.

Ms. Helen Creed, Administrative Officer, Housing provided additional information to the Committee on LCCC's response for persons/households who have received a Notice to Quit (NTQ) and have no alternative accommodation.

A discussion took place and members had a number of questions:

Cllr. Kiely enquired about the number of households with an NTQ that LCCC are dealing with and if more resources are required. Cllr. Kiely enquired about acquiring tenant-in-situ properties in poor condition and is there an increase in the maintenance budget?

Cllr. Benson highlighted that we need more staff resources to process the queries and asked if housing delivery targets would be impacted by the surge in households receiving NTQ's. Cllr. Benson enquired about funding for repairs and the potential impact on the maintenance budget. Cllr. Benson asked about unit cost ceilings for acquisitions and the income threshold for the cost rental scheme.

Cllr. Conor Sheehan asked when LCCC received the revised tenant in situ circular, what discussions took place in respect of additional staff and what is the criteria for households above the social housing income threshold. Cllr. Sheehan asked if we could proceed to acquire apartments to prevent homelessness where the household is approved for a larger bed-type. Cllr. Sheehan enquired about all supports available to households.

Cllr. Keary asked if rent credits are available and for clarity on the income threshold for the Cost Rental Tenant in Situ Scheme. Cllr. Keary asked if there are many applications for the Tenant in situ scheme and the acquisition target of 75 and highlighted that the Government need to increase the numbers. Cllr. Keary stated that LCCC should not be covering refurbishment costs and enquired about HAP tenants not approved on the social housing waiting list. Cllr Keary asked how long a tenant has to vacate a property when issued an NTQ.

In response to the members queries Ms. Curley confirmed that LCCC are managing the volume of work at present. Ms. Curley informed the members that where a landlord wants to sell to LCCC with a tenant in situ the Council will progress same promptly to put the household who has received the notice to quit at ease. Ms Curley advised that the properties should be in a good condition and LCCC will seek additional funding for refurbishment from the DHLGH where required. Mr. Curley advised

that the number of bedrooms would not prevent LCCC from acquiring a house to support households to prevent homelessness. Ms. Curley advised that the net annual income must be below €53,000 to be considered for the Cost Rental Tenant in Situ Scheme (CRTIS) and the scheme is managed by the housing agency.

Mr. Curley confirmed that the initial allocation for the number of acquisitions that can be funded is 75 and advised that it's not a target but to allow local authorities to prioritise the acquisitions to be targeted.

Ms. Creed provided additional information on the Cost Rental Tenant in Situ Scheme (CRTIS) and advised that the Government plans to enact legislation providing a "Purchase under First Right of Refusal" and it is planned that the "First Homes (Shared Equity) Scheme" will be amended to extend eligibility for the scheme to those with notices to quit. Ms. Creed also informed the members that some tenants who have received a NTQ may be eligible to apply for a Local Authority Home Loan once they meet the criteria.

Ms. Phillips added that a HAP place finder service is available within LCCC to assist households at immediate risk of homelessness. Ms. Phillips also advised that the Homeless Action Team works very closely with Housing Allocations to support households. Ms. Curley advised that in order to qualify for social housing supports you must be eligible and in need of social housing.

Ms. Anne Cronin enquired about the numbers communicated in terms of trajectory of NTQ's ahead. Ms. Creed advised that the number of households contacting the Council has risen significantly since the announcement of the ending of the winter eviction ban. Ms. Creed advised that in October 2022 the Housing Directorate were dealing with 22 Notices to Quit and at 12<sup>th</sup> April we had 257. Ms. Creed confirmed that the figure is inclusive of proposals received before 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2023.

Cllr. Collopy queried whether rent paid over a period of time is considered in a situation where a long term tenant approaches the Council to purchase the property. Ms. Curley replied that rent paid is not taken into account and that the level of discount available is related to income and subject to meeting other criteria for the tenant purchase scheme.

#### **Item 7: AOB**

Housing Commission Public Consultation.

Ms. Helen Creed, Administrative Officer, Housing informed the group that the Housing Commission recently launched a public consultation running from Tuesday 21st March 2023 until Tuesday 18th April 2023 seeking views on the housing system in Ireland.

For further information on the Housing Commission public consultation and to access the questionnaire, please click on the following link <https://www.gov.ie/en/consultation/7d325-the-housing-commission-public-consultation/>

**June SPC meeting date Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2023.**

An Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Stephen Keary thanked everyone who attended the SPC.

**END OF MEETING**