

## 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> October 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. Fergus Kilcoyne, Cllr. Catherine Slattery, Cllr. Sharon Benson, Cllr. Joe Leddin, Cllr. Conor Sheehan, Cllr. Brigid Teefy, Cllr. James Collins, Cllr. Eddie Ryan, Cllr. Sean Hartigan, Cllr. Adam Teskey, Cllr. Mike Donegan, Cllr. Sarah Kiely, Ms. Una Burns, Ms Siobhan Reidy, Mr. P.J O’Grady, Ms. Dee Ryan.

**In Attendance:**

Ms. Mary Hayes, Senior Executive Officer  
Mr. Brendan Kidney, Senior Engineer, Housing  
Ms. Helen Creed, Administrative Officer, Housing  
Ms. Martina Frawley, Administrative Officer  
Ms. Patricia Philips, A/ Head of Unit for Housing Welfare & Traveller Accommodation,  
Ms. Triona O’Connor, Homeless Operations Programme Manager, Housing  
Mr. Joe Delaney, Director of Service, Regeneration  
Mr. James Hayes, Administrative Officer, Housing  
Ms. Fiona O’Keeffe, Senior Staff Officer, Housing  
Ms. Jennifer Browne, A/ Senior Staff Officer, Housing,  
Mr. Rory Culhane, Staff Officer, Housing  
Ms Aisling Meaney, Assistant Staff Officer, Housing  
Ms. Jeannine Butler, A/ Assistant Staff Officer, Housing  
Ms. Amanda Glasper, Clerical Officer, Housing  
Mr. Liam Dooley, Clerical Officer, Housing  
Ms. Lauren Allen, Co-Op Student, Housing  
Ms. Christine Skehan, Assistant Staff Officer, Housing  
Mr. Joe McDonald, Senior Staff officer, Housing  
Mr. Peter McNamara, Clerical Officer, Housing  
Ms. Karen Fennessy, Regional Programme Manager Mid-West

**Apologies:** Cllr. Tom Collopy ,Mr. Mike McNamara, Mr. Patrick English, Ms. Tracy McElligott, Ms Anne Cronin, Ms. Caroline Curley, Director of Service, Ms. Sarah Newell, Senior Executive Officer , Ms Niamh O’Brien, Staff officer, Housing, Mr. Brian Bourke, Executive Engineer, Ms. Noelle Deedigan, Clerical Officer, Housing, Ms. Eileen Liston, Clerical Officer Housing, Ms. Elaine O’Connor, Administrative Officer, Regeneration Mr. Brendan Troy, Senior Executive Officer, Regeneration, Mr. Seamus Hayes, Administrative Officer, Housing, Ms. Aoife O’Brien Slater, Administrative Officer, Housing, Ms. Miriam Donnelly, Administrative Officer, Housing, Ms. Jurate Andrijauskiene, Staff Officer, Housing

## **Welcome by Chairperson – Cllr. Stephen Keary**

An Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Stephen Keary opened the meeting and welcomed all members to the October SPC meeting and stated the protocol for the SPC.

## **Item 1: Confirm minutes from meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2023.**

**Proposed:** Cllr. Joe Leddin      **Seconded:** Cllr. Adam Teskey

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

No matters arising from previous minutes.

## **Item 3: Healthy Age Friendly Homes Programme**

Ms. Karen Fennessy, Regional Programme Manager Mid-West Region gave a presentation on the “Healthy Age Friendly Homes” Programme. The presentation was well received by the committee.

A discussion took place. Ms. Dee Ryan, CEO, Limerick Chamber enquired (a) how many participated in the Healthy Age Friendly Homes Programme during the pilot phase in Limerick and (b) how participants were identified? Ms. Ryan also asked about the number of rightsizing households supported.

In response Ms. Fennessy advised that she would provide the number of Limerick participants during the pilot phase and the number of households who participated in the rightsizing scheme after the SPC.

Ms. Fennessy explained that there are a number of referral pathways such as self-referral and external referrals such as family/friends, health services, elected representative, community groups etc.

Cllr. Sharon Benson enquired (a) how many disabled persons grant applications did the Healthy Age Friendly Homes team assist with in Limerick (b) if there is something the Council can do to make older local Authority tenants aware of this programme.

Ms. Fennessy advised that she would revert to the committee on the number of participants they assisted with for Disabled Persons Grants. Ms. Fennessy confirmed that the Healthy Age Friendly Homes team can liaise with Housing Support Services in contacting the relevant local authority tenants to make them aware of the supports available.

Cllr. Tom Ruddle enquired how participants are prioritised considering there are only two co-ordinators allocated to Limerick City and County Council Health Age Friendly Homes Programme. Ms. Fennessy informed the committee that referrals are dealt with in date order unless there is additional information on the referral form for example in relation to a health priority. Ms. Fennessy advised that priority participants are included in weekly visits.

An Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Stephen Keary asked (a) who funds the programme, (b) what background is required for a coordinator post, (c) what salary they are on (d) if the coordinator gets mileage allowance and (e) whether there a duplication of services for example with public health nurses.

Ms. Fennessy responded that the programme is a collaboration between the Department of Health and Department of Housing and Local Government. She informed the committee that the

programme is funded by the Department of Health and operated by Age Friendly Ireland hosted in Meath County Council on behalf of Local Government.

Ms. Fennessy advised that a coordinators background is generally in Health or Housing, that the post is analogous to an administrative officer's post, that mileage is allowed for from their local authority base. Ms. Fennessy advised that the programme was examined by the Department of Health and Department of Housing and Local Government and while certain services were already being provided by organisations there was a need for an innovative supported coordination of services.

#### **Item 4: Rent Pressure Zone**

Ms Mary Hayes, Senior Executive Officer gave a presentation on "Rent Pressure Zones". The presentation was well received by the committee.

A discussion took place. Ms. Dee Ryan, CEO, Limerick Chamber of Commerce asked (a) what is the role of the Local Authority in the administration of this. Ms Ryan added that Limerick Chamber are monitoring rents and residential availability very closely in Limerick. Ms. Ryan advised that the September report highlights that the average rent in September was €1,600.00 and only 49 homes were advertised as available to rent during this period. Ms. Ryan advised that Limerick Chamber can circulate the report and would welcome the opportunity for Limerick Chamber to present their findings at the next SPC.

Cllr. Stephen Keary stated that this presentation would be welcomed.

Ms. Mary Hayes advised that there is legislation on how a RPZ's are designated and Limerick City and County Council has a role in the implementation as part of the administration of the HAP and RAS schemes.

#### **Item 5: Updates**

For noting report to SPC from Housing Disability Strategic Group.

Cllr. Benson queried the disabled persons grant figures, the amount of funding allocated and the expenditure to date. Cllr. Benson highlighted that the number of successful grant applicants seems very low compared to the level of queries and applications. Cllr. Benson requested a workshop regarding same.

Ms. Hayes clarified that not all grant monies have been drawn down to date. Ms. Hayes explained how the DPG funding works and informed the committee that a funding application was made to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage at the beginning of the year based on a planned programme of work. Ms. Hayes confirmed that there was a further funding submission made to the Department in June based on the number of applications to hand.

Ms. Hayes stated that Limerick City and County Council can apply for additional funding throughout the course of the year as well as emergency funding where the need arises. Ms. Hayes advised that applications not funded in 2023 will go into a planned programme of work for 2024. Ms. Hayes informed the committee that a workshop can be organised for the Councillors.

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

Ms. Dee Ryan, CEO, Limerick Chamber informed the committee that Limerick Chamber submitted a letter on the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023 regarding the Council's Tenure Mix Policy to Councillors and the Executive. Ms. Ryan advised that the Chamber awaits a response. Ms. Ryan highlighted that the Chamber has requested that Councillors examine the tenure mix policy set out in the current Development Plan.

Ms. Ryan highlighted a specific development in Castletroy and Limerick Chambers concerns on the lack of availability of housing for purchase or rent to the private market given its' proximity to the technological park and the University.

Cllr. Sharon Benson advised that we shouldn't focus on one particular site in isolation and stated that there was significant demand for cost rental in the Castletroy area.

Cllr. James Collins stated that the Affordable Purchase Scheme needs to be more effective. Cllr. Collins highlighted that developers can't make it work under the current Affordable scheme and that's why the uptake hasn't been great. Cllr. Collins suggested that Affordable Housing and the issues around it should be an agenda item for the next SPC.

Cllr. Leddin informed the committee that the elected members were having a Tenure Mix Policy workshop on the 20th October, 2023. Cllr. Leddin stated that any revisions to the Tenure Mix Policy could impact approved planning applications.

Cllr. Keary added that an update can be provided after the Tenure Mix Policy workshop for Councillors.

**December SPC meeting date Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023.**

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

**END OF MEETING**