



**Date: 9<sup>th</sup> October 2025**

**To: The Mayor, Príomh Chomhairleoir and Each Member of Limerick City and County Council**

**Chairperson's Report for the Home and Social Development Strategic Policy Committee  
Meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> October 2025**

**A Chomhairleoir, a chara,**

**Summary Report/Main Issues**

Cllr. Stephen Keary opened the meeting and welcomed all members to the October SPC meeting.

**Item 1: Confirm minutes from meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2025**

Proposed: Cllr. Adam Teskey      Seconded: Cllr. Elisa O'Donovan

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

Cllr. Sarah Kiely and Cllr Keary asked for clarification regarding SMART Housing in relation to the last Meeting.

Ms. Sarah Newell, A/Director of Service gave an update on SMART Housing to members.

**Item 3: Safe Home Ireland**

Ms. Karen McHugh, CEO, Safe Home Ireland, gave a presentation on Safe Home Ireland.

Ms McHugh gave a brief overview on the charity and explained that Safe Home Ireland supports older Irish born people to return home to live in Ireland. Ms McHugh outlined that they are asking all local authorities including Limerick City and County Council to consider the allocation of one housing unit per year to a Safe Home Ireland Housing Applicant approved on the Local Authority housing waiting list.

The Presentation was well received by members.

Ms Mary Hayes outlined that she would arrange a meeting with Housing Allocations and Assessments teams with Safe Home Ireland with a view to review to amend the allocations scheme so that this group could be identified as a priority group. Ms. Sarah Newell A/Director of Service added that Safe Home Ireland can be added to the work programme in the new year to bring back to a future SPC and refer on to Full Council.

**Proposal:** Cllr. Stephen Keary

**Seconded:** Cllr. Elisa O'Donovan

**Item 4: Update on Second Hand Acquisition funding**

Ms. Kathy O'Grady, Administrative Officer, gave an update on Second Hand Acquisition funding.

Ms. Sarah Newell clarified that Limerick City & County Council (LCCC) had a meeting with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) this week and stressed the need of refurbishments as part of the programme

Cllr. Benson proposed to write to the Department to ask if funding for refurbishments can be included for Tenant in Situ acquisitions.

**Proposed:** Cllr. Sharon Benson

**Seconded:** Cllr. Elisa O'Donovan

**Item 5: Notice of Motion submitted by Councillors S. Kiely and D. McSweeney (to be referred to the Home and Social Development Strategic Policy Committee)**

"We will move at the next meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick that we examine the rollout of a Home Improvement Grant Scheme for Social Housing Tenants of Limerick City and County Council in advance of Budget 2026"

Response to this motion was given in the presentation on the Proposed Home Improvement Scheme.

**Item 6: Presentation on Proposed Home Improvement Scheme**

Mr. Neal Boyle gave a presentation on the Proposed Home Improvement Scheme. He outlined that the grant scheme will be available to Limerick City and County Council tenants towards the cost of maintenance and upgrades of their rented properties.

Mr. Brendan Kidney updated members that they are preparing the proposed home improvement scheme budget for inclusion in the 2026 budget and will revert to the members with more details after Budget 2026 has been approved.

**Item 7: Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor S. Beasley (to be referred to the Home and Social Development Strategic Policy Committee)**

“I will move at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick that Limerick City and County Council remove the 2-year waiting time for getting on the housing transfer list for those in exceptional circumstances or where the circumstances of the family have taken a drastic change”

Ms. Mary Hayes, Senior Executive Officer gave the response to members. The response outlined In order to qualify for a transfer a tenant will need to ensure compliance with the following requirements:-

- Lived in property for at least 2 years
- A history of no rent arrears
- No history of anti-social behaviour
- Home has been kept in good condition

As outlined above tenants are not ordinarily eligible to make a transfer application where they have been a tenant for less than 2 years, however in exceptional circumstances Limerick City and County Council may consider a transfer application for tenancies under 2 years. In these exceptional cases the tenant will need to provide documentary evidence/supporting information detailing the reason they cannot live in the property and wish to apply for a transfer.

**Proposed:** Cllr. Sarah Beasley

**Seconded:** Cllr Elisa O'Donovan

**Item 8: Notice of Motion submitted by Councillors J. Pond and C. Slattery**

“We will move at the next meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick that should a downsizing property becomes available that the property is used for downsizing again and not put back into the social housing stock.”

Ms. Kathy O’Grady, Administrative Officer gave a response to members to the above. It was agreed in the immediate term to deliver rightsizing in perpetuity on Local Authority owned stock. Ms. Sarah Newell outlined that the team will provide updates going forward of rightsizing lettings made when voids relating to older persons accommodation appear. It was also agreed that the team will reengage with the SPC members when National Rightsizing scheme comes into being to check for any issues arising with this national policy direction.

**Proposed** Cllr. Tom Ruddle

**Seconded** Cllr. Noreen Stokes

**Item 9: Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor S. Hickey-O'Mara (to be referred to Home and Social Development Strategic Policy Committee)**

“I will move at the next Meeting of Limerick City and County Council that this Council formally declares a Student Housing Emergency in Limerick and commits to convening a Student Housing Taskforce in partnership with local Students’ Unions, local third-level institutions, approved housing bodies, and relevant Council departments, with the aim of: (i) Acknowledging the acute shortage of affordable and suitable accommodation for students attending third-level institutions in Limerick; (ii) Identifying Council-owned or privately owned land suitable for student housing; (iii) Exploring opportunities for cost-rental, or cooperative models of development; (iv) Removing planning or zoning barriers where appropriate for the construction of student housing”.

Mr. James Hayes, Administrative Officer gave a response to members. Limerick City and County Council’s Housing Directorate will seek to progress work on development of student housing initiatives to address the student housing shortage in conjunction with other partners such as 3<sup>rd</sup> level institutions. The first step will be to establish an Expression of Interest process to seek operators to consider developing student and other housing tenures on Council owned land. We will aim to publish this before the end of 2025 and advise the SPC members of that outcome.

**Item 10: Introduction of Charges for Homeless Private Emergency Accommodation Services**

Ms. Mary Hayes gave an overview and Mr. Joe McDonald gave a presentation on the changes for Homeless Private Emergency Accommodation Services. Mr McDonald outlined that Limerick City and County Council intends to commence charging clients who are placed in homeless private emergency accommodation. He outlined the rationale for introducing these charges and highlighted the benefits to clients in introducing these charges.

Next SPC meeting date **Thursday, 4<sup>th</sup> December 2025**

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

END OF MEETING

**Recommendation 1:**

On the proposal of Cllr. Sharon Benson seconded by Cllr. Elisa O' Donovan it was agreed that the Council write to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to regarding Second Hand Acquisitions and ask that a refurbishment budget be allowed for tenant in situ acquisitions.

**Recommendation 2:**

On the proposal of Cllr. Tom Ruddle seconded by Cllr. Noreen Stokes it was agreed to bring the recommendation for a policy change to enable an in perpetuity rightsizing model on Council build stock.

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**Cllr. Stephen Keary, Chairperson  
Home and Social Development Strategic Policy Committee**