

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 12th February 2026 in the Council Chamber, Dooradoyle and via MS Teams.

In Attendance: An Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Stephen Keary

SPC Members Present: Cllr. Sharon Benson, Cllr. Sarah Beasley, Cllr. Sarah Kiely, Cllr. Catherine Slattery, Cllr. Tom Ruddle, Cllr. Azad Talukder, Cllr. Francis Foley, Cllr. Noreen Stokes, Cllr. Elisa O'Donovan, Ms. Una Byrnes, Mr. Michael Joyce, Ms. Eileen Erwin

In Attendance:

Mr. John Moran, Mayor

Ms. Sarah Newell, Senior Executive Officer, Housing Strategy and Mixed-Tenure Partnership Unit

Mr. Brendan Kidney, Senior Engineer, LA Housing Construction and Maintenance

Ms. Patricia Phillips, A/Senior Executive Officer, Housing Welfare & Traveller Accommodation

Ms. Elizabeth Rea, Administrative Officer, Housing Support Services

Ms. Miriam Donnelly, Administrative Officer, LA Housing Construction & Maintenance

Mr. James Hayes, Administrative Officer, Housing Strategy and Mixed-Tenure Partnership Unit

Mr. Conor Cooney, Senior Executive Quantity Surveyor, LA Housing Construction & Maintenance

Ms. Jennifer Browne, Senior Staff Officer, Housing Strategy and Mixed-Tenure Partnership Unit

Mr. Rory Culhane, Staff Officer, Housing Strategy and Mixed-Tenure Partnership Unit

Ms. Niamh O'Brien, Staff Officer, Housing Strategy and Mixed-Tenure Partnership Unit

Ms. Jayne Power, Senior Staff Officer, Housing Strategy and Mixed-Tenure Partnership Unit

Ms. Amanda Glasper, Assistant Staff officer, Housing Strategy and Mixed-Tenure Partnership Unit

Mr. Oliver O'Brien, Assistant Staff Officer, Housing Strategy and Mixed-Tenure Partnership Unit

Ms. Melissa Lynch, Clerical Officer, Housing Strategy and Mixed-Tenure Partnership Unit

Ms. Zara Daly, Clerical Officer, Housing Strategy and Mixed-Tenure Partnership Unit

Mr. Paul Bourke, Co-Op Student, Housing Strategy and Mixed-Tenure Partnership Unit

Cllr. Joe Pond

Cllr. Dan McSweeney

Apologies: Mr. Vincent Murray, Ms. Mary Hayes, Ms. Kathy O'Grady

Welcome by Chairperson – Cllr. Stephen Keary

An Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Stephen Keary opened the meeting and welcomed the members to the February SPC meeting.

Item 1: Confirm minutes from meeting held on 4th December 2025

Proposed: Cllr. Noreen Stokes

Seconded: Cllr. Elisa O'Donovan

Item 2: Matters arising from the Minutes

No issues arising from the previous minutes.

Item 3: Housing Infrastructure Investment Fund Presentation

Ms. Sarah Newell, Senior Executive Officer, gave an update on the Housing Investment Fund stating the Housing Team is working towards the 28th of February deadline. Ms. Newell stated that the allocation was not open to private developers as of yet.

Item 4: Short Update on the Programme of Work Workshop

Mr. James Hayes, Administrative Officer provided a short verbal update on the Programme of Work Workshop, noting that it will take place on Friday 27th February and will be facilitated by the Institute of Public Administration. Mr. Hayes stated that an invite had been circulated and if any member would like to see any policies or strategies on the SPC to please contact Kathy O'Grady in advance of the workshop and that invitees would be encouraged to attend in person.

Item 5: Short Update on Expert Group on Homelessness and Drug Addiction

This item was deferred to the April SPC, due to Ms. Mary Hayes' absence.

Item 6: Short Update of Rightsizing Voids

Mr. James Hayes, Administrative Officer, stated there has been no current rightsizing voids to date.

Item 7: Presentation on Single Stage Circular

Mr Conor Cooney, Senior Executive Quantity Surveyor delivered a presentation on the new Single Stage Circular application process and informed the members how the process has been streamlined to remove unnecessary roadblocks and prevent delays.

Cllr. Benson questioned if Single Stage is available for derelict and vacant properties. Mr. Cooney replied that this process is available for derelict and vacant properties and that final documents and circulars have not been issued yet.

This presentation was well received by the committee.

Item 8: Presentation on Capital Funding Programme

Mr. Brendan Kidney, Senior Engineer, delivered a presentation on the Capital Funding programme which was well received by those in attendance. In reference to the partially spent budget for 2025, Mr Kidney clarified that any unused funding from the previous year is not lost and will roll over to the following year.

Mr. James Hayes, Administrative Officer, delivered an update on Affordable Housing Delivery. Cllr. Stephen Keary queried how many Local Authority Home Loans were approved in 2025. Mr. Hayes stated he did not have the figures at present but will ask the Home Loans team to provide same to Cllr Keary.

Cllr. Sarah Kiely queried what were the Affordable Housing Delivery figures from 2024 and 2025. Mr. Hayes stated that the figures for 2025 have not been signed off yet and that the figure for 2024 was 7. Cllr Kiely questioned what the targets for this scheme are for 2026 and 2027. Ms Newell stated that 264 units were approved for delivery between 2022 to 2026 (5 years).

Cllr. Tom Ruddle asked how many vacant properties are on our list currently. Mr. Brendan Kidney stated that there are 180 properties on the list at present, 80 of which are voids. Some of which will receive full funding under the SHIP Renew scheme, but the derelict properties tend to require a large amount of work. Cllr. Ruddle asked how fast the turnaround is regarding bringing these units back into habitable state. Mr. Kidney noted that this can vary on a case-by-case basis as some units may require a lot more work than others. Mr. Kidney added that there are contractors and crew working on approximately 50 of 80 of these properties at present.

Item 9: Presentation on Proposed Competitive Dialogue Process to activate development sites currently in private ownership

Mr. Conor Cooney, Senior Executive Quantity Surveyor, delivered a presentation on the proposed competitive dialogue process and explained that competitive dialogue is a procurement procedure that allows the contracting authority to engage in discussions with selected bidders to develop one or more suitable solutions to meet their requirements.

The benefit is Limerick City and County Council can forward fund developments, and this reduces finance cost. In addition, the Part 8 Planning process can be used in partnership with an operator selected. Aim is to fast-track housing and reduce finance cost.

Cllr. Ruddle queried what financial protections are in place in the event the developer comes into financial difficulty. Mr. Cooney stated that throughout the process, stages are non-committal until the final stage and there is a bond security in place to provide fiscal safeguards. Cllr. Ruddle asked if it

was possible that the developer takes out a loan on during the process or in the final stage. Ms. Newell replied that in this case Limerick City and County Council would be the provider of funds via milestone payments and we would determine the schedule as we work through the process.

Cllr. Elisa O'Donovan asked if there were any examples of the Competitive Dialogue Process yet? Ms. Newell responded that Cork County Council have provided great assistance in the consultation process, sharing how this is practically applied new build and derelict properties.

Item 10: Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor J. Pond (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 would change their policy of not allowing tenants in local authority houses to engage contractors to install solar panels on their houses.

Cllr. Joe Pond provided an overview on this motion. The members discussed.

Proposed: Cllr. Joe Pond

Seconded: Cllr. Sharon Benson

Mr. Brendan Kidney, Senior Engineer, gave a response on the motion and outlined that any Limerick City and County Council tenant is required to obtain Council's approval in writing before starting any improvements, alterations or additions to their home. The request will then be assessed by Limerick City and County Council's Housing Maintenance section and a timely response on the matter issued to the tenant thereafter.

Mr. Brendan Kidney agreed with supporting the installation of solar panels as long as sufficient checks are completed to ensure that health and safety regulations are adhered to. Mr. Kidney noted the importance of ensuring the providers and installation service is approved by Limerick City and County Council to maintain compliance with healthy and safety regulations.

Update on below Notice of Motions

Mr. James Hayes, Administrative Officer, stated that documentation was circulated on the Affordable Scheme of Priority and Mixed Tenure to all SPC members. A workshop will be taking place, on the 19th February, for Full Council to discuss and any updates would be brought back to the Home and Social Development SPC at a later date.

Item 11: Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor D. McSweeney (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 this Council commence an immediate review of the Scheme of Priority for Affordable Dwelling Purchase Arrangements.

Item 12: Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor D. McSweeney (to be referred to the Home and Social Development Strategic Policy Committee)

I will move at the next Meeting of Limerick City and County Council that this Council commence an immediate review of the Housing Mixed Tenure Policy to feed into an updated Housing Strategy and Housing Need and Demand Assessment.

Item 13: Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor M. Donoghue (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 a special committee is setup for the purposes of reviewing and recommending a new approach to the Housing Strategy and Housing Needs Demand Assessment that is people-centred and focused on developing and supporting sustainable communities in the context of the impending review of the current Limerick Development Plan.

AOB

Cllr Noreen Stokes requested the provision of an update on the Housing Adaptation Grants be added to the April meeting of the SPC.

Next SPC meeting date Thursday, 30th April 2026

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

END OF MEETING