

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 30th of April 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. Joe Leddin, Cllr. Tom Ruddle, Cllr. Adam Teskey, Cllr. Azad Talukder, Cllr. Francis Foley, Cllr. Noreen Stokes, Cllr. Maria Donoghue, Cllr. Frankie Daly, Cllr. Elisa O'Donovan, Ms. Una Byrnes, Mr. Michael Joyce, Ms. Eileen Irwin

In Attendance:

Mr. Vincent Murray, Director of Service, Housing
Mr. Brendan Kidney, Senior Engineer, LA Housing Construction and Maintenance
Ms. Mary Hayes, Senior Executive Officer, Housing Support Services
Ms. Kathy O'Grady, Administrative Officer, Housing Strategy and Mixed-Tenure Partnership Unit
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. Darragh Quinn, Executive Architect, Housing Strategy and Mixed-Tenure Partnership Unit
Ms. Mairead Sayers, A/Project Manager, Housing Strategy and Mixed-Tenure Partnership Unit
Ms. Clare O'Callaghan, A/Project Manager, Housing Strategy and Mixed-Tenure Partnership Unit
Ms. Jennifer Browne, Senior Staff Officer, Housing Strategy and Mixed-Tenure Partnership Unit
Mr. Gerard McNamara, Senior Staff Officer, Housing Support Services
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. Amanda Glasper, 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
Mr. Liam Mannix, Director of Research and Dig

Apologies: Ms. Patricia Phillips, Ms. Sarah Newell

Welcome by Chairperson – Cllr. Stephen Keary

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

Item 1: Confirm minutes from meeting held on 12th February 2026

Proposed: Cllr. Sarah Kiely

Seconded: Cllr. Noreen Stokes

Item 2: Matters arising from the Minutes

No issues arising from the previous minutes.

Item 3: SPC Work Programme

Ms. Kathy O’Grady, Administrative Officer, gave a short presentation on the Home and Social Development Strategic Policy Committee Work Programme for 2026-2029. A discussion took place on the policy items. Ms. O’Grady outlined that if any members wanted to add any further policy items to contact her in advance of the June SPC as the work programme would be finalised then.

Cllr. Elisa O’Donovan was in favour of a review of the current Homeless Action Plan and would be interested in view an analysis of research and evidence gathered on the operation of the current policy. Cllr. Sarah Kiely and Cllr. O’Donovan requested the circulation of this presentation and that items added to future agendas be of a policy nature. In addition, Cllr. Kiely and Cllr. O’Donovan requested an update on Choice Based Letting (CBL). Ms. Mary Hayes noted that CBL is currently under development in conjunction with Business Improvement and an online system will be piloted in the coming months. Ms. Hayes welcomed any input from elected members on this matter and recognised the issue of housing offer refusals. Ms. Hayes added that if accommodation offered reasonably meets the housing needs of the applicant and they have refused two offers they will not be considered for social housing for one year.

Ms. Una Burns questioned if the transfer list is evaluated according to varying needs or if there is a priority for medical cases. Additionally, Ms. Burns asked if the biggest issue for allocations is locating larger housing stock for larger families. Ms. Hayes replied that Housing Support Services works alongside the Construction, Maintenance and Strategy departments to provide housing solutions for those with the highest need and prioritise exit from homelessness.

Cllr. Tom Ruddle queried if there are any units for people facing homelessness in the county. Ms. Hayes expressed that she would be happy to work with any members of the SPC who wish to provide input on a proposal for homelessness units in the county, reflecting these units are mainly located in the city to allow ease of access to health and addiction services.

Cllr. Stephen Keary responded to Cllr. Ruddle that it would be prudent to provide council owned homeless accommodation per municipal district as opposed to the county in general as the cost of housing homeless individuals in privately owned hostels is considerable. Ms. Hayes requested that any elected members who know of buildings in the County areas, please approach HSS to allow these to be considered for acquisition under homeless accommodation.

The update was well received by the Committee.

Item 4: Expert Group on Homelessness and Drug Addiction

Ms. Mary Hayes, Senior Executive Officer, delivered a presentation on the aims and objectives of the expert working group co-chaired by Cllr. Sarah Beasley. An Expert Group was established as part of the Mayoral Programme to address homelessness and drug addiction in Limerick. Ms. Hayes noted that the group is working in collaboration with consultant Liam Mannix, Director of Research and Dig and Dr. Laura Keyes of CircUL.

A series of workshops were held with stakeholders in order to generate innovative solutions that could inform future strategies, policies and interventions. The working group intend to distribute 40 questionnaires to people with lived experiences with street homelessness to form more effective, person-centred policies. Ms. Hayes mentioned a number of key actions currently being proposed by the group including tailored accommodation solutions to cater for diverse needs of those experiencing homelessness.

Mr. Mannix expressed his gratitude to work on such a beneficial project and encouraged attendees to provide any input they may have on actions of the working group.

A number of Councillors requested a review of the current Allocation Scheme, the transfer list policy and the Homeless Action Plan. Ms. Hayes noted they would be happy to hold a briefing with elected members from the SPC to discuss these policies.

Ms. Hayes informed the SPC members that the Mid West Homeless Action Plan is up for review shortly by the joint steering committee, which includes the HSE, TUSLA, Clare County Council and stakeholders from the AHB sector.

This presentation was well received by the committee.

Item 5: Case Study- Turnkey Acquisitions

Ms. Kathy O'Grady, Administrative Officer, gave a presentation to seek SPC policy guidance on whether Limerick City and County Council should continue to acquire completed or near-complete residential units in private developments where a portion of units have already been sold on the open market and the developer is unable to sell the remaining units due to no bids. This applies to housing schemes outside of the Limerick City Metropolitan District in small towns and villages where finding purchasers for completed units may be more difficult due to demand and location. Key

considerations were discussed including housing need and delivery, vacancy and dereliction risk and market impact and perception.

That Limerick City and County Council Housing Department continues to acquire residual units in partially sold developments in settlements outside of the Limerick City Metropolitan District subject to:

- **Value for money (i.e., independent market valuation)**
- **Ensuring last units purchased of a scheme are for either Incremental Sale or Affordable Sale subject to funding approval and AHF eligibility to ensure an ownership model overall within the small scheme**

The members agreed that the recommendation should proceed to the next Full Council meeting for approval.

Cllr. Stephen Keary queried the difference between Incremental Sale and Affordable Sale and whether there are income limits for either. Ms. O'Grady added that eligibility criteria for the Incremental Purchase, required the applicant be in receipt of HAP/RAS or on the social housing list whereas for Affordable, these properties can be purchased by private citizens. Mr. Vincent Murray informed attendees that the income limits vary depending on the scheme in question and that both offer a reduction in price to allow people on a variety of income levels to access home ownership.

This presentation was well received by the committee.

Item 6: Review of Tenant Handbook

Mr. Brendan Kidney, Senior Engineer, stated that the current Tenant Handbook was created back in 2019 and Limerick City and County Council are now looking to put a working group together to review and update the handbook. The working group would be made up of 2 or 3 Councillors from the SPC, the maintenance team and community sustainment staff.

Cllr. Sarah Kiely, Cllr. Sarah Beasley and Cllr. Tom Ruddle expressed an interest in putting their names forward for the working group.

Item 7: Advocating for new housing policy - Cost Rental Repair and Lease

This item was deferred to the June SPC.

Item 8: Short Update of Rightsizing Voids

Ms. Kathy O'Grady, Administrative Officer, stated there has been no current rightsizing voids to date.

Item 9: A Review of Future Modular Housing Development

Mr. Darragh Quinn, Executive Architect gave a presentation on the Future of Modular Housing and Modern Methods of Construction (MMC). The members had a lot of questions in relation to the

Mayoral Programme on SMART Housing and requested that a Special SPC be held in advance of the next Home and Social Development SPC on SMART Housing. Cllr. Sarah Kiely and Cllr. Stephen Keary acknowledged the substantial work undertaken by Mr Quinn and the wider SMART Housing team.

Cllr. Maria Donoghue and Mr. Michael Joyce, expressed their concerns at constructing homes in haste, questioning if this leads to a shorter life expectancy for the units themselves. Mr Quinn responded that timeline delivery is a crucial part of the construction process and that the materials selected must meet the rigorous standards for Local Authority housing set out by the National Standards Authority of Ireland. Mr. Joyce asked whether the HSE or private companies may consider building housing units for their staff to contribution to housing activation.

Cllr. Azad Talukdar questioned if planning permission will then be required for modular units in homeowner's garden in future. Mr Quinn responded that the government are currently working on exemption criteria to remove barriers for those interested in erecting modular homes to meet housing needs, however, fire safety and water connections must be considered.

Members agreed to hold a Special SPC on SMART Housing in advance of the June SPC.

Next SPC meeting date Thursday, 25th June 2026

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

END OF MEETING