

**Minutes of County Kildare Housing SPC
December 15th 2016
Kildare County Council.**

Present:

Cllr Paddy Kennedy, Chairperson
Cllr Joanne Pender
Cllr. Aoife Breslin
Cllr Thomas Redmond
Cllr. Brendan Weld
Cllr. Deborah Callaghan
Cllr. Tim Durkan
Pat Doyle
Raymon O' Reilly

In attendance:

Tadhg Mc Donnell, Director of Services
Annette Aspell, SEO, Housing
Avril Cummins, SO, Housing
Mary Mc Carthy, AO, Housing
Mark Mc Loughlin, AO, Housing
David Creighton, A/Senior Architect
Karen McHugh, CEO Safe Home Ireland

Apologies:

Cllr Robert Power
Sinead Fitzpatrick

1. Minutes of SPC May 19th 2016

The minutes of the SPC meeting of September 15th 2016 were approved. Proposed by Cllr. Tim Durkan, seconded by Cllr. Thomas Redmond.

2. Matters Arising

None

3. Correspondence

A list of circulars received by the Housing Department to date in 2016 was circulated to all members for consideration.

4. Presentation from Safe Home Ireland

Karen McHugh, CEO from Safe Home Ireland gave a presentation to the committee on the services provided by Safe Home Ireland who are an Emigrant Support Service. Those services include advice and information, outreach visits, housing assistance and a link with home for Irish emigrants. Ms. Mc Hugh informed the group since its initiation in 2000 it has dealt with almost 2,000 cases. Some of the difficulties encountered include shortage of housing, access to social welfare payments and driving licences.

To apply for housing via Safe Home, applicants must meet certain criteria which include aged 57+ years, living in rented accommodation abroad and unable to provide accommodation for themselves on return to Ireland.

Ms McHugh then answered several questions from the group. She thanked the committee for the invitation to the meeting.

5. Motion referred

- **Councillor Fitzpatrick:** That council as a matter of urgency decides a policy around modular housing to help alleviate the housing crisis in the county and have an almost instant impact.

6. Rapid Build Housing

David Creighton presented a film to the group on Rapid Build Housing in Dublin City Council. David informed the group that the Rapid Build Housing was aimed at targeting homelessness and to provide temporary accommodation until more suitable accommodation became available then the houses revert to traditional social housing. The reported cost of each unit is €180,000. Schemes must go through the same approval process as traditional housing and have a sixty year life span to be funded by the Department. The benefit is that the building can be sealed quickly; it is ideal for larger developments and can provide savings through economy of scale.

Councillor Weld noted that due to the housing crisis alternatives have to be looked at however he recommended that the committee do not make any decision with regard to Cllr. Fitzpatrick's motion until technical expertise in this area is sought.

Pat Doyle added that he was a member of the working group for Rapid Build in Dublin. He said there had been huge learning on the pilots and the second phase was built in about twelve weeks after all the ground works had been done. The downside to this approach was works were on a mass scale and don't provide mixed communities. He supported the motion not to make any decision that day.

Councillor Durkan added that there is no sewerage capacity for development in some parts of Kildare and that infrastructure must be provided first.

David Creighton noted that currently the approach is to respond to the housing need and the needs of that community

Tadhg informed the committee that the Office of Government Procurement is currently working on a Framework for rapid build housing which Kildare an avail of when ready.

While supporting the principle of rapid build Councillor Pender noted that costs had not yet been confirmed. She supported Councillor Weld's proposal not to deal with Cllr. Fitzpatrick's motion until further information is available.

The Chair agreed to leave this item on the agenda for the next meeting.

ARAS

The Chair welcomed Niamh a Team Leader with ARAS to the meeting to give a brief background to the committee on the services provided by them.

Niamh informed the group that ARAS was funded by the HSE to provide treatment and rehabilitation for substance abuse. They provide one to one and group programmes ranging from recovery supports, family supports and a drop in service twice a week. The main challenge is the waiting list to access the service which can be up to 6 months. The service user achievement awards will take place next week and a children's party and Christmas dinner are planned before Christmas.

7. Anti Social Behaviour Policy

Mary Mc Carthy provided an update to the committee on the policy document. The committee noted the policy and agreed that it be referred to the next CPG meeting, and subject to approval, to full council for consideration.

8. Housing Update

Mr. McDonnell briefed the group on the number of houses purchased this year; to date 100 houses have been bought in comparison to 57 last year. Two Part 8s are imminent. Councillor Redmond raised a query regarding funding for the Dominican site and Mr. McDonnell confirmed there was no funding issue.

Councillor Weld said he was critical of the amount of time for turnover of vacant houses. Mr. McDonnell noted that not every boarded up property was a KCC house. He suggested perhaps it would be more useful to present the vacant house report in a different manner to the members to reflect long and short term works.

Clouncillor Durkan suggested that when a house is being purchased by KCC the owner could be approached to bring the property up to standard in advance of the purchase and this would avoid the delay in the procurement process.

Councillor Redmond queried how many inspections of HAP properties had taken place, he was aware that some were in poor condition. Mark McLoughlin outlined that the EHOs carried out inspections for KCC. Houses are self selected by the tenant. KCC can issue a prohibition notice, when it is established that works are needed to bring a property to the required standard.

Councillor Callaghan asked if all the sales had gone through for the 100 houses purchased and if people are living in those houses. Mr. McDonnell replied that some sales were being finalised and it depended on the extent of the works involved as to how long it would take to make a property available for allocation.

9. Date of next meeting : February 9th 2017

The Chair thanked everybody for today's meeting and wished a Happy Christmas to all.

This concluded the business of the meeting.