

Minutes

Housing SPC- 10th December 2020

Present: Cllr Brendan Weld, Cllr. Noel Connolly, Cllr. Tim Durkan, Cllr. Chris Pender, Cllr. Mark Leigh, Cllr Daragh Fitzpatrick, Cllr. Vera Louise Behan, Mr. Tom O'Malley, Mr. Pat Doyle.

In attendance: Annette Aspell, Director of Services, Evelyn Wright, Snr. Exec. Officer, David Creighton, Snr Architect, Ollie Brady, Administrative Officer, Siobhán Scully, Administrative Officer

1. The minutes of the meeting of 8th October were proposed and seconded by Cllr. Pender and Cllr. Connolly.
2. The Chair invited members to declare any conflict of interest, none were declared.
3. Discussion of Referred Motions:

(a)Cllr Weld: *That the council return to the policy of providing "temporary demountable dwellings" for people who have a site. This would help to alleviate the ongoing shortage of suitable accommodation for rent.*

Cllr Weld outlined the difficulty of sourcing suitable accommodation for older single people who have a site in their ownership.

E Wright provided the committee with a report on the issues related to the use of demountable dwellings. There is no Departmental policy for the use of such structures and no funding mechanism. In the past they were provided on humanitarian grounds. The installation of a demountable dwelling is subject to the planning acts. The approximate cost of installation is €25, 000-€30, 000.

D Creighton addressed issues of durability and cost. He advised that the installation of a demountable dwelling is subject to the rural housing guidelines, appropriate assessment screening and possibly strategic environmental assessment.

Cllr Weld requested that a detailed report be provided at the next meeting of the SPC.

(b)Councillor Moore: *That the council take a leadership role and designate a wraparound programme with other agencies for one social housing development per year in each of the five major towns in Kildare, to prevent a rise in poverty related social problems as have arisen in other areas.*

It was agreed that this motion would be referred to the newly formed Anti-Social Behaviour Forum.

4. Correspondence/Circulars, S Scully requested that members contact her if they required a copy of any circular.
5. Rebuilding Ireland Update. A Aspell provided the committee with the following update:
 - The council met with the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage. It is anticipated that there will be an increase in Rebuilding Ireland targets in Quarter 1, 2021
 - Affordable Housing Guidelines will be published in Quarter 1, 2021.
 - The council held a meeting with the newly created Housing Delivery Coordination Office (HDCO). The main concerns arising from the meeting were the lack of affordable land and infrastructural deficits such as wastewater.
 - The Summary of Social Housing Assessments 2020 will be published in Quarter 1, 2021.
 - Additional staff resources will be appointed to the Homeless Team in January 2021.
 - Covid19 restrictions are having the largest impact on housing adaptation works and private rented inspections.
 - The “Spending Review 2020- Analysis of the Social Housing Build Programme”, a study of six local authorities found that Kildare County Council achieved value for money in its acquisition programme.
6. Midlands Energy Efficiency Retrofitting Programme- David Creighton provided the members with an update on programme. There is a budget of €3.3 million. Houses selected for upgrade must be located in a peat burning area and capable of achieving a substantial up-lift in the energy rating. Works will commence in Beechgrove, Rathangan in April 2021. No decanting costs have been provided for.
7. Work Programme
 - (a) Homelessness:

O Brady provided with the members with the following update.

 - The additional resources being allocated to the homeless team will allow for an increased focus on tenancy sustainment, prevention and outreach work.
 - There is an increasing number of single person presentations. The number of rough sleepers in the county is between 15-20. 24 cold weather beds are being provided in partnership with the Peter McVerry Trust.
 - To date five Housing First tenancies have commenced. E Wright advised the members that the Review of the Mid East Region Homeless Action Plan is being finalised and will be presented to the committee in 2021.

P Doyle advised the members that the Peter McVerry Trust has 11 family units with another two being delivered in Athy.

T Durkan recommended that the council consider the CPO process for derelict properties for adaptation to one-bed units. A Aspell advised that the CPO process is ongoing for a number of units, however there was a reduction in acquisition funding in 2020.

(b) Review of the Strategic Plan for Persons with a Disability: A Aspell advised that the steering group met in November and that further guidance is awaited from The Housing Agency.

(c) Affordable Housing Scheme: A Aspell advised that the scheme is due for review in 2021.

(d) Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy: A Aspell advised that the first meeting of the forum will take place on 17th December.

(e) Choice Based Letting: The scheme has been reviewed and the council is seeking to extend the properties being advertised.

A Aspell advised the committee that a number of staff changes are taking in place in Housing, she noted that Sinead Fitzpatrick and Mary McCarthy were moving to other sections of the council and wished them well in their new roles.

The meeting concluded.