

Minutes Housing SPC-8th October 2020

Present: Cllr Brendan Weld, Cllr. Noel Connolly, Cllr. Tim Durkan, Cllr. Chris Pender, Cllr. Mark Leigh, Mr. Tom O'Malley, Mr. Pat Doyle, Cllr. Vanessa Liston (invited).

Apologies: Cllr Daragh Fitzpatrick

In attendance: Annette Aspell, Director of Services, Evelyn Wright, Snr. Exec. Officer, David Creighton, Snr Architect, Tom Kelleher, Senior Executive Quantity Surveyor, Ollie Brady, Administrative Officer, Patrick Harrington, Senior Executive Architect, Siobhán Scully, Administrative Officer

1. The minute of the meeting of 2nd July were proposed and seconded by Cllr. Connolly and Cllr. Pender
2. The Chair invited members to declare any conflict of interest, none were declared.
3. Correspondence/Circulars, S Scully requested that members contact her if they required a copy of any circular.
4. A Aspell provided the members with an update on Rebuilding, advising the committee that no target was received in 2020, however the council continues work to achieve the over-all target for the period 2018-2020. Limited funding has been made available to purchase units in 2020. She advised that the Housing Agency recently issued a Call for Housing (Acquisitions and Leasing) and that work is progressing on approximately 15 units.
5. Cllr Liston was in attendance to discuss a referred council motion relating to the financial contribution for the provision of homeless services. She thanked staff for the detailed report and outlined her concerns as follows:
 - Rationale for the amount charged
 - What analysis is carried out to determine the burden of the cost on families
 - Additional costs experienced by families residing in hotel style accommodation

She proposed that there should be a justified and scaled cost which takes account of difficult circumstances being experienced by families.

A number of committee members spoke on the matter.

- P Doyle advised that a financial contribution is in place across all Peter McVery Family Hubs. The financial charge was reflective of a contract between accommodation providers and users. It assists families in preparing for a reduction in their income when they move into a home.
- Cllr. Chris Pender stated that he was in favour of a financial contribution as it assisted families in household budgeting and preparing for a move-on.
- Cllr. Connolly stated that he agreed with the charge, however discretion should be allowed in the case of financial hardship.
- Cllr. Weld stated that he agreed with the charge as it assists families in getting ready to manage a household budget.

E Wright, O Brady and A Aspell made the following points:

The charge is clearly explained to prospective users of emergency accommodation and it is not intended as a barrier to people availing of homeless accommodation.

The collection rate is 80%

It assists families in preparing for move-ons and the creation of future sustainable tenancies. Each family or individual in homeless accommodation has a dedicated case worker and any issue with payment of the contribution will be dealt with by this worker.

Cllr. Liston made follow up comments in relation of the ability to pay, the lack of cooking facilities in some types of accommodation and accepted that discretion is applied where the contribution causes financial hardship.

Work Programme

Homeless Action Plan, E Wright provided the following update: The review of the plan has commenced. A draft plan will be presented to the SPC in December 2020, and if approved will be presented to the full council in January 2021.

Cllr. Connolly raised the issue of dry hostel accommodation and the availability of homeless accommodation for single childless females.

Persons with a Disability

The review of the strategy has been deferred. The council is awaiting guidance from the Housing Agency.

Cllr Weld stated that adaptable units should be incorporated into new housing schemes.

Cllr. Durkan stated that bungalow type accommodation should be dealt with at the planning proposal stage.

A Aspell advised that the council exceeded the annual target for the allocation of properties to persons with a disability (10% Acquired, 12% Built). She stated that the amount of funding available for adaptation works on council owned properties is inadequate.

D Creighton stated that disability cover a broad spectrum. There has been success in the delivery of one-bed maisonette Part V units, however density requirements are problematic for the delivery of bungalow style accommodation.

Affordable Purchase Scheme

A Aspell advised members that is anticipated that the council will be requested to review it's scheme. Guidelines are awaited.

Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy. A Aspell advised that members that work has commenced on the establishment of a cross sectoral forum and it is anticipated the first meeting of the forum will take place in December 2020.

The Members were provided with an update on the Rebuilding Ireland Delivery.

The meeting concluded.