



Minutes
Housing SPC Meeting - 23rd September 2021

Present: Cllr. Brendn Weld, Cllr. Noel Connolly, Cllr. Vera Louise Behan, Cllr. Chris Pender, Cllr. Mark Leigh, Tom O'Malley

In attendance: Annette Aspell, Siobhan Scully, Ollie Brady, Brian O'Gorman, Veronica Cooke, Fiona Byrne, David Creighton, Thomas Kelleher, Shirley Farrar, Ciara Sherry

Apologies: Cllr Daragh Fitzpatrick, Cllr Tim Durkan, John McLoughlin, Pat Doyle

1. Minutes proposed by Cllr. Leigh, seconded by Cllr. Connolly

2. No conflict of interests declared

3. Correspondence/List of Circulars: S Farrar advised that no correspondence was received and that copies of circulars available on request

4. Demountable Dwellings: D Creighton presented report on Demountable Dwellings. Key areas/issues highlighted linked to the Planning Regulations, requirement to obtain Part 8 and funding of such dwellings were discussed by the Committee. Chair, Cllr. Weld, proposed a meeting be arranged between representation of Housing SPC members and Planning Department to discuss, Cllr. Connolly, Cllr. Leigh, Cllr. Behan & Cllr. Pender agreed availability to meet with Director of Services for Housing and Planning. Chair, Cllr. Weld also proposed a submission be considered for the Department in relation to funding. Cllr. Connolly & Cllr. Behan queried figures outlined in report and D Creighton advised figures are from the last 3-4 years. Topic to be deferred to later meeting.

5. Vacant Homes List: S Scully advised the meeting that report was issued to the members. She highlighted the reasons for some properties remaining vacant for period of 12 months or more. S Scully also brought to the attention of the members the numbers of refusals, the current refusal rate is 27%, and reasons include but are not limited to "property too small, want more than one bathroom, area not desirable". S Scully explained the limited



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consequences of refusals for Social Housing Applicants and advised a number of properties will be advertised on the Choice Based Letting System.

Cllr. Behan queried how cumbersome the process was if a Social Housing Applicant refuses a property and S Scully explained the process begins again in finding another suitable applicant.

Issues in obtaining contractors to carry out works to properties were raised. D Creighton explained that there are two Framework Agreements in place, one for quick turnaround works, and one for more extensive works which requires a tender, issues with the availability of contractors was highlighted.

A Aspell requested agreement from the SPC members that the format of the Vacant Housing Report was acceptable. All members in agreement.

6. Housing for All: A Aspell outlined the targets as set out in the Housing for All scheme, and advised it is very much focused on new build, which poses a challenge to KCC, as the land bank is very limited and most already in use. KCC are endeavouring to acquire more land, however the purchasing of land is difficult in a competitive market. Any sites that are possibilities are problematic and Council are now having to consider Brownfield Sites rather than Greenfield.

A Aspell also outlined the difficulties faced by acquisitions to acquire properties in current market. Affordable Housing targets not yet identified, however more resources will be required to provide this scheme, request for staff has been submitted to the Department and response is awaited.

7. Update Work Programme 2021

Homelessness: O Brady provides update on Homeless Services. The numbers over the last few months have reduced, due to allocations, HAP and Homeless HAP Placefinder.

Presentation numbers are still high and are mainly single people which is consistent with the national picture.

O Brady outlined how the Homeless Team resources have been strengthened with additional staff including a Tenancy Sustainment Officer currently working with 50 tenants to support their tenancies. Also engaging with HALE who provide specialised Tenancy Support to those who require it (e.g addiction issues, mental health).

Outreach staff are visiting the entire County to try and identify and address rough sleepers, it is noted there has been an overall reduction in the number of rough of sleepers in the County.



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There are 25 beds at the Kerdiffstown Facility and an agreement has been made to increase this to 40 beds.

Jigginstown facility is mainly aimed at younger people, there are 12 individual units in total, at the moment 6 are occupied and it is expected that 10 units may be occupied by the end of the year. This facility is operated by Tiglin.

An expression of interest was put out about Shared Housing, and a need has been identified. Currently a trial of 3 Shared Housing Units in the County in underway with two operated by Teach Los in Athy and one operated by Peter McVerry Trust in Naas.

Cold Weather Beds: 25 supplied last year through Peter McVerry Trust, it is anticipated this will be the same for current year.

Homeless HAP Place finder facing difficulties getting properties and engaging with estate agents as much as possible.

Housing First-currently 9 tenancies, currently a waiting period for keys with a target of 20 by year end.

Cllr. Leigh queried if Teach Los in Athy was a male only facility and O Brady confirmed that it was and that the need was identified for male only in the area.

Cllr. Behan queried what role, if any, KCC played in the Housing of young adults leaving the foster care system. O Brady advised that Tusla are responsible for the provision of after care services. A Aspell informed that KCC sits on the Tusla Aftercare Steering Group Committee, and the advice is to ensure the young person is on the Social Housing List.

A Aspell acknowledged the work of the Homeless team.

Affordable Housing: Awaiting targets and guidance from the Department and as mentioned above, allocations of staff/resources to be considered.

Anti-Social Behaviour: V Cooke provided an update outlining policies are currently under review. Five Community Liaison Officers have been paired with Tenant Liaison Officers and assigned to MD's to address anti-social behaviour issues.

Current project ongoing in an estate within the Clane-Maynooth MD, to establish a community within the estate and set up a Residents Association. This project will allow for learning and progression of other similar projects in other estates.

V Cooke advised that overall, the number of complaints received were not too high and generally could be resolved by the Tenant Liaison Officers.

Cllr. Weld suggested getting the Ani-Social Committee back up and running.



Strategic Plan for Housing Persons with a Disability: F Byrne advised the plan has been submitted to the Housing Agency for review.

Traveller Accommodation Programme: B O’Gorman advised that the team are progressing work on the plan. The target for the year is 73 allocations, to date 44 have been made. Currently waiting guidance on mid-term review. Stage One application for Adrew Halting Site has been submitted to the Department and clarification is awaited. Equality review was carried out by HREC, 6 recommendations were made and reply will issue to the HREC on these recommendations. The Council is engaging with CENA, a new AHB providing culturally appropriate homes for traveller community. LTAC meeting has been rescheduled.

Energy Efficient Programme/Midlands Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programme: T Kelleher advised that 7 projects have gone to tender. KCC is experiencing difficulty with the tendering process. GPOC framework awarded 3 contracts one on site. Beechgrove, Ashpark & Loughnamona projects hope to commence on site next week.

Cllr. Weld expressed concerns along with Cllr. Behan in relation to the financial impact on tenants in relation to electricity bills. T Kelleher advised electricity bills of tenants will likely increase, however overall there will be savings in comparison to current heating methods e.g. oil/gas.

A Aspell outlined that this project forms part of national government policy. Representations may need to be made to the Department regarding costs, as the impact is significant for the Housing Maintenance Revenue Budget.

AOB: A Aspell advised of temporary staff changes, Evelyn Wright former Senior Executive Officer has moved to Transportation Department as Director of Services, Siobhan Scully is Acting Senior Executive Officer and Shirley Farrar is Acting Administrative Officer on a temporary basis.

Covid Return to Work: A Aspell referred to the updated guidelines in relation to return to offices and informed that as staff had continued to work throughout the pandemic that no immediate changes would be made to current working patterns, at present some staff are in the office, some working remotely and other blended working (between office and remote).

Next meeting 9th December 2021



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