

Housing SPC Meeting Minutes – 1st June 2023 – 2.30 p.m.

Present: Cllr. Brendan Weld, Cllr. Noel Connolly, Cllr. Mark Leigh, Cllr. Tim Durkan, Tom O'Malley.

In attendance: Annette Aspell, Shirley Farrar, Siobhan Scully, Ollie Brady, Fiona Byrne, Brian O'Gorman, Margaret O'Dwyer, Aidan McCane, Siobhan Barry, Elaine Price, Tom Kelleher, David Creighton, Emma Mulroy.

Apologies: Cllr Chris Pender

Resignation: John McLoughlin, PPN Social Inclusion Representative and Pat Doyle, Peter McVerry Trust.

No conflict of interests declared.

Minutes of previous meetings

- Adoption of the minutes of the 9th February 2023 meeting proposed by Cllr. Connolly, seconded by Cllr. Leigh.
- Cllr. Weld advised the meeting that Alan Dunney has been appointed Director of Service for Planning Department, he thanked him and wished him well in his new role. Ollie Brady has been appointed as Acting Senior Executive Officer.
- Cllr. Weld thanked Shirley for her assistance with the presentation to the full Council meeting on Monday last.
- Cllr. Weld also advised the meeting that Veronica Cooke had recently retired and requested a letter issue on behalf of the SPC to Veronica thanking her work the Housing Department and wishing her well for the future.
- Cllr. Weld also thanked Pat Doyle, PMVT, who has recently resigned and requested a letter issue to him acknowledging his helpfulness and good advice to the Housing Department and the SPC.
- Members noted that Mr Francis Doherty, CEO PMVT would replace Mr Doyle and be invited to attend the Housing SPC meetings.

Previous motions – update of Defibrillators and Radon Monitoring

- S. Barry advised that 50 radon testing units have been installed in properties in Leixlip, Maynooth and Celbridge. The initial plan was to install the units in vacant

units but under advice from the test supplier they were installed in tenanted units with agreement from the tenants. These will remain in place for 3 months after which they will be returned to the supplier for testing and the results are expected to be available in August. S. Barry stated that this is a pilot programmed and we expect to further explore our option for radon testing of properties on a larger scale. A. Aspell advised that when the results are received, they will be brought to the SPC.

- E. Price advised the meeting that a defibrillator is being installed this week in the Celbridge Library and Celbridge First Responders will be responsible for same.

Director of Service update

- A Aspell updated the members on the following areas Affordable Housing, Local Authority Home Loan, Homelessness, SSHA and Vacant Properties.
- Cllr. Leigh asked if the Home Loan is available for the houses in Grey Abbey and this was confirmed.

Vacant Homes Update

- F Byrne gave a comprehensive report in respect of Town Regeneration and Vacant Homes, Buy and Renew, Repair and Leasing Scheme, Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant, Compulsory Purchase, Town Centre First and URDF.
- Cllr. Connolly referred to the Compulsory Purchase and was advised this course of action had not taken place for many years and had the same source of funding as DPG's.
- Aspell referring to the report outlined the numerous changes happening and that a Section 183 would be required.
- Aspell stated that vacant properties requiring minor works are put back on the market but they cannot be used for social housing. A Section 183 will then be required.

Update on Work Programme 2023

Housing for All

S Scully advised the meeting that this information was provided in the Chief Executive's Report for May 2023

Homelessness

- M O'Dwyer provided an update and confirmed the Homeless SMG and Forum quarterly meeting took place on 25th May '23 and was well represented by the various agencies. Meath LA and Wicklow LA also attended.
- A summary of recent work under Homeless Outreach was provided.
- During the month of April, presentations were slightly up from March, this is including repeat presentations.
- At present we have 83 active tenancy sustainment families.
- HHAP received 5 applications in April; with 21 applications in total for 2023 to the end of April. In comparison, to the end of April 2022 there were 16 applications in total.

Affordable Housing

- M O'Dwyer confirmed applications opened on the 24th May and will remain open until the 24th June, Applications can only be made via an online portal only which is available on our website.
- The affordable housing scheme comprises 21 units in Grey Abbey, Kildare Town.
- In line with the Affordable Housing Act 2021, income limits apply and applications will be assessed in line with Kildare County Councils Scheme of Priority for Affordable Dwelling Purchase Arrangements. Full details and FAQ's available on the website.

Anti-Social Behaviour Policy

- S Scully provided an overview of the proposed revised Anti-social Behaviour Strategy, along with the Estate Management Strategy, she advised the committee that the format of the strategy is in accordance with that proscribed in legislation and that the definition of anti-social behaviour was defined in the Housing Acts.
- There was a general discussion regarding the policy and issues related to estate management which were addressed by A McCane and A Aspell. A Aspell advised the committee that it was the council's intention to increase resources in this area.
- The members agreed that the policy should now proceed to the Joint Policing Committee.
- S. Scully stated that if Members wish to visit Loughnamona or Anne St Community Centre this could be arranged. The Members present stated they would be interested and a visit is to be arranged.
- Regarding encampments A. Aspell advised this would be outside the Anti-Social Policy remit but dealt with by Travellers Section.

Strategic Plan for Housing Persons with a Disability

M O'Dwyer stated that the Housing & Disability Steering Group met on 2nd February 2023, it was very positive with good engagement. The council is awaiting the implementation plan in order to progress work on the strategy.

Climate Action Initiatives

- Tom Kelleher updated the meeting on the Energy Efficiency retrofitting Programme and performance analysis of Air to Water Systems which have been installed.
- Kildare County Council have engaged Energy Consultants to conduct air tightness test and that we expect to provide a report at the Q3 SPC meeting.
- He also advised that NUI Galway are progressing HAVEN Study.

Traveller Accommodation Programme

Brian O'Gorman updated the meeting stating:

- Revised target of 89 housing units (Standard and Traveller specific) under TAP (September 2022). To date, 69 housing units have been delivered (seven of these in current year). A full review of the plan is expected to commence in Q4 2023.
- The Ardrew Halting Site redevelopment project (Athy) is being progressed and planning scheme (Section 179(a) P&D Act) is expected to be published later this year, with construction to commence in 2024.
- An allocation of €20,000 has been made under the national Dormant Accounts Scheme and will be used for enhancements to site entrance at Ardrew and other minor enhancement works at sites.
- An announcement under the National Caravan/ Mobile Loan Scheme is awaited (c. 5 local applications expected).
- Fire safety awareness sessions are being scheduled for residents on sites over the coming weeks. These are being facilitated by the Fire Service and supported by the Civil Defence.
- The next quarterly meeting of the LTACC will take place on 22nd June. A presentation from the CENA (Traveller) Approved Housing Body will be made.
- The LTACC Chairperson (Cllr P. O'Dwyer) will make a presentation to the SPC at the September meeting.

Tenant Support Scheme

- S. Barry advised the meeting that applications for this scheme closed on 12th May and currently reviewing the applications received. She advised that 71 applications received, mostly for windows, doors and heating systems. The scheme covers up to

90% of the works, to a maximum grant of €5,000 and the letters are expected to issue to tenants by mid June.

- Funding for this grant scheme is limited so it may not be possible to offer grants to all applicants. It is intended to close out the programme by the end of the year. Priority will be given to climate action improvement works.

Ukraine

E Price updated the meeting on the current position.

- Cllr. Durkan asked whether discussions with the owners of the dis-used Red House Hotel and the Department have been checked recently and E. Price advised that talks are ongoing.

Correspondence / List of Circulars

S. Farrar advised there was no correspondence. Circulars are available on request.

A. O. B.

Cllr. Weld wished Aidan McCane, TLO well and thanked him for his help and co-operation. He also thanked all the Tenant Liaison Officers stating it is not an easy job.

Date of next Meeting

The date for the next meeting of 14th September 2023 was agreed by members. Cllr. Weld thanked staff and Members and the meeting ended.