**MINUTES OF STRATEGIC POLI CY COMMITTEE MEETING ON HOUSING, SOCIAL INCLUSION & CORPORATE SERVICES**

**Microsoft Teams 11 September 2020**

**In attendance:** Cllr Val Smith, Chairperson

Mr Eoin Doyle, Director of Service

Ms Lynda McGavigan, Cavan County Council

Mr John Donohoe, Cavan County Council

Mr John Wilson, Cavan County Council

Ms Bridie McBrearty, Cavan County Council

Cllr Paddy McDonald

Cllr Clifford Kelly

Cllr Patricia Walsh

Cllr Trevor Smith

Cllr Madeleine Argue

Mr Paul Elliott, Development & Construction

Ms Theresa Thompson, Trade Unions

**Apologies:** Ms Leanne Coyle, Community/Voluntary

Cllr Val Smith, Chairperson welcomed everybody to the meeting on Microsoft teams and acknowledge the challenging time it had been for everybody since the previous meeting.

1. **MINUTES**

On the proposal of Cllr McDonald, seconded by Cllr Walsh, the minutes of the meeting held on 4th February were confirmed.

1. **TRANSPARENCY CODE**

E Doyle brought to the attention of the meeting the regulation of the Lobbying Act 2015 and outlined the obligations of the Transparency Code as they relate to the Strategic Policy Committee.

It was noted and agreed that the committee will comply with the Transparency code of the Public Lobbying Act 2015. This will be done by regular circulation of minutes and the agenda of committee working groups / task force meetings on the Council website. The website will also detail membership and terms of reference of the committee.

1. **HOUSING PROGRESS REPORT**

B McBrearty presented a report on progress in the housing office since previous meeting. Members noted the following:

* Approved applicants for social housing support - 623 nett together with 518 on the transfer list making the total number approved 1141.
* A total of 597 have availed of the Housing Assistance Payment Scheme and there are currently 412 total active tenancies.
* There are 413 household in accommodation provided under the Rental Accommodation Scheme and 116 through the Approved Housing Bodies.
* Of a total of 70 offers of accommodation in the County in 2019 23% refused the offer, with the highest refusal rate in Cavan Town
* 61 new tenancies were set up and 52 tenancies were terminated.
* 25 households were provided with homeless accommodation to date in 2020
* 18 households were provided with tenancy sustainment
* The Housing First model commenced in the County January 2020 with a target of 3 tenancies per year. Work currently underway with 2 households and a further 5 identified.
* 1 loan has been approved in principle with 6 being processed currently
* 7 Letters of offer have issued under the Incremental Tenant Purchase Scheme
* €1,508,230 is the total allocation for grants in 2020 which is a small increase on 2019 allocation. Total committed expenditure for 2020 is €1,239,661 to date.

J Wilson presented the progress report on housing construction. Members noted:

* There are 264 units at various stages of planning, design, and construction.
* An additional 92 units are being provided by Approved Housing Bodies.
* 2 units being built in Butlersbridge would be completed by end September and the 4 units in Ballyjamesduff were nearing completion.
* 11 units had been acquired to date further purchases will be considered by Department for emergencies only. However, the Council is expecting further information on this matter next week as the position has now changed in relation to acquisitions.

**4. HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT 2020**

Members noted that the annual Summary of social housing assessments is to be carried out on 2 November 2020 with the final date for return of data on 30 November.

**5. LETTER TO TENANTS**

Members noted the draft letter circulated which it was proposed to send to all tenants outlining the repairs for which they are responsible. Following discussion, Members agreed that the letter as drafted should be sent out as the way in which some tenants maintain their houses is an issue. Cllr. McDonald proposed that the Council should carry out random inspections of council properties. There was agreement to this proposal however the resources issue and the implications for funding were accepted. P. Elliot enquired if there was an option for some of the repair duties to be taken over by the Council and if tenants could be charged additional rent for this purpose. It was noted that if this were to happen resources would be an issue and that the introduction of a ‘service charge’ to tenants is a matter that would need to be agreed at a policy level nationally.

**6.** **VOIDS SCHEME: VACANT HOUSES**

J. Wilson presented a report on the status of the 92 houses which are vacant in the county at present. Members noted:

* DHPLG ‘Voids’ Funding: 27 no. completed to date with a contractor appointed for a further 4 no.
* CCC budget funding: 6 no. completed and 8 no. with works ongoing
* Fire damaged properties: 1 no. complete and a contractor appointed to progress 2 no. additional
* On the 4th September, the council received a further funding allocation of €969,000 for the refurbishment of 71 no. vacant houses under the Voids Stimulus Programme with work to be completed and houses offered by 31st December.

E. Doyle advised members that the funding would not complete all the works required to the vacant houses. Additional funding would be required, and this has to come from the Council’s resources and therefore had implications for the budgetary process.

Members welcomed the allocation acknowledging the short timeframe for having works completed. Cllr Walsh asked if a portion of rental income could be set aside for the purposes of bring houses back into stock, however it was noted that this is a matter to be considered by the Members of the Council at Budget time.

**6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place on the **13th November 2020 at 10.00 a.m.** (venue to be confirmed) and that correspondence and all communications with the Members of the SPC would issue by email.

**Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Chairperson**