**MINUTES OF STRATEGIC POLI CY COMMITTEE MEETING ON HOUSING COMMUNITY, SOCIAL & CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, COURTHOUSE, CAVAN**

**18th January 2019**

**Present:-** Cllr Val Smith, Chairperson

Mr Eoin Doyle, Director of Service

Ms Bridie McBrearty, Cavan County Council

Mr John Wilson, Cavan County Council

Cllr Noel Connell

Cllr Paddy O’Reilly

Cllr Shane P O’Reilly

Cllr Madeline Argue

Mr Thomas Maughan, Cavan Traveller Men’s Shed

Mr Larry McCluskey, CPPN

Ms Madelieine Ui Mhealoid, Society of SVP

**Apologies:** Apologies for inability to attend were received from:

Mr John Donohoe, Cavan County Council

Ms Catriona O’Reilly, Cavan County Council

Cllr Clifford Kelly

The meeting was opened by Cllr Val Smith, Chairperson.

1. **MINUTES**

On the proposal of Cllr Madeline Argue, seconded by Cllr Noel Connell, the minutes of the meeting held on 9th November 2018 were confirmed and signed.

**MATTERS ARISING**

The committee welcomed the feasibility study for the provision of a regional sports facility for County Cavan carried out by S3 Solutions which Mr Brendan Jennings, Director of Service, presented at last SPC meeting.

It was agreed that the location of this facility needs to be carefully selected to enable maximum accessibility and growth.

Mr Eoin Doyle advised the committee that while various sites have been identified, no decision has been made and no funding has been secured to date. He committed to update Mr John Donohoe, Community & Enterprise on the SPC concerns regarding location.

1. **SAFE HOME IRELAND**

The Chairman welcomed Ms Karen McHugh, Chief Executive Officer, Safe Home Ireland to the meeting.

Ms McHugh thanked the SPC for inviting her to address them on Safe Home Ireland a small charity based in Co Mayo and made the following presentation:

**SAFE HOME IRELAND**

Founded in 2000 as Pilot Project, Safe Home Ireland now provides key services to anyone considering moving or returning to Ireland.

Our head office is in Mulranny, Co. Mayo, with outreach offices in Galway and Kerry.

Our **vision -** to ensure that anyone considering of returning or moving to Ireland is given every opportunity to make an informed decision

Our **mission -** to act as the *link* for Irish emigrants both at home and abroad by providing advice, information, guidance and supports for those seeking permanent repatriation as well as those who chose to stay in their adopted country.

**FOUR PILLARS**

Advice & Information

* We provide an *information and advice service* to anyone (regardless of age or circumstances) who may be contemplating returning or moving to Ireland.

Housing Assistance

* *We assist* *qualifying* *older Irish born emigrants* to return to *secure* accommodation in Ireland and *liaise* with Housing providers in Ireland to explore appropriate and secure housing options for qualifying applicants seeking to return to social housing

Advocacy & Outreach

* We carry out *Home Visits* to Safe Home housing applicants throughout the *UK* (funding related) and we *offer Outreach and advocacy service to people who have returned home* both through and independent of Safe Home in all 26 counties

Connect

* We act as a *link* for emigrants both at home and abroad, from those seeking permanent return to those who choose to stay in their adopted country.
* We also work in partnership with agencies at home and abroad to offer a professional, holistic and person centered service to our client group.

**SAFE HOME QUALIFYING CRITERIA (FOR HOUSING)**

* Irish born emigrants living abroad
* Aged 57 years and over
* Capable of Independent living
* Living in rented accommodation abroad and unable to provide accommodation for themselves (from their own income/savings) on return to Ireland

**NOTE** – WE PROVIDE ADVICE, INFORMATION AND REFERRAL FOR ALL OTHERS WHO CONTACT OUR SERVICE

**OUTPUTS, OUTCOMES & IMPACT – JAN-DEC 201**

* We dealt with **683 new Information requests**
* We processed **84 new Housing Applications** bringing the total number of active applications registered on our list to **326 applications**
* We facilitated **65 new referrals to Local Authority** housing waiting lists nationwide
* In total, we carried out **172 outreach visits**; these include home visits to Safe Home applicants in UK, as well as those who returned (112 in Ireland and 60 in UK).
* There were a total of **4,065 interventions** carried out on behalf of Safe Home clients
* We held **5 information** days/clinics in collaboration with Irish welfare & advice agencies in the UK; Coventry, Luton (X 2), Edinburgh, and Birmingham
* We directly supported **2029** older Irish born people return home to live - come from all corners of the globe and to all 26 counties.
* **‘Staying connected to home’** is important for most Irish abroad – our curren**t Newsletter** circulation is **537 via post** and in excess of **528/month via e-bulletin**
* **Accommodation** was **secured by 51 people**

**CONCLUSION**

We are the only service that can offer ***outreach* and home-visits** for returning and returned Irish emigrants throughout the 26 counties to help with the transition back home which improves the likelihood of resettlement/reintegration in their communities.

We are based in **rural locations** outside of Dublin (outreach offices in Galway and Kerry) and **ready to travel** at short notice to returnees in any part of the 26 counties.

We **visit** all our housing applicants in the UK and carry out **Information Clinics in the UK**. Restricted funding does not permit us to travel further afield

Our service represents **value for money** as we operate all of the above on a very modest but appreciated grant of €260k/annum from The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Defense (under the Emigrant Support Programme).

We can offer a real **housing option** for *qualifying older Irish emigrants* throughout the 26 counties .

**CONTACT DETAILS**

**ADDRESS** Safe Home Ireland, St. Brendan’s Village,

Mulranny, Co. Mayo

**TEL**: + 353 98 36036

**EMAIL**:- [info@safehomeireland.com](mailto:info@safehomeireland.com);

**WEBSITE**: [www.safehomeireland.com](http://www.safehomeireland.com/)

**TWITTER**: <https://twitter.com/Safehomeireland>

**FACEBOOL:-** <https://www.facebook.com/safehomeprogramme>

The Chairman thanked Ms McHugh for her presentation.

Following discussion it was agreed that Ms McHugh had a great knowledge and grasp of problems facing returning emigrants such as securing accommodation, driving licences, insurance, nursing home placements.

It was acknowledged that Cavan County Council and many voluntary housing bodies throughout the county have a very successful working relationship with Safe Home Ireland.

Ms McHugh left the meeting.

1. **HOUSING REPORT**

Ms Bridie McBrearty, Senior Executive Officer, circulated an up-to-date housing report.

**Summary of Housing Needs Assessment 2018 :** 737 nett

**Approved applicants for Social Housing Support at 16th January**

Nett 638

Transfer 371

Total approved 1009

**HAP**

Total 325

Total Active Tenancies 277

**RAS Recipients** 475

**Loans**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Rebuilding Ireland Home Loans** | |  | **Incremental Purchase Scheme** | |
| Applications to date | 34 |  | Applications to date | 16 |
| Ineligible | 6 |  | Ineligible | 5 |
| Incomplete Applications | 9 |  | Incomplete Applications | 1 |
| Declined | 7 |  | Further Information Requested | 4 |
| On Hand (with Underwriters) | 0 |  | Letter of Offer Issued | 6 |
| Loan Approvals | 9 |  |  |  |
| Under consideration | 3 |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Mortgage to Rent** | |  |  |  |
| Applications to date | 19 |  |  |  |
| Ineligible | 2 |  |  |  |
| Incomplete Applications | 2 |  |  |  |
| Further Information Requested | 7 |  |  |  |
| Approved for SHS | 8 |  |  |  |

**Grants - Review of processing of Grant Applications**

A review of the Grant Application Process has been undertaken. The purpose of the review was to determine what if any changes could be made to the process so that it could be streamlined. The review shows that delays in processing can be attributed to:

* applications being submitted without all required documentation
* lack of clarity in forms and Guidance Notes
* need to resubmit new quotations due to changes in the proposed works to the recommended works which are necessary to meet the needs of disabled person – HGD
* leave periods
* inefficient use of resources in that current system is manual
* funding

The following changes are now being made:

* Forms and Guidance Notes have been revised to include checklists and clarity in information.
* A validation of applications has been introduced – this means that applications which are submitted without the required documentation will be returned as invalid. This is similar to the approach introduced some months ago for SHS.
* Applications will now only be referred to the SAMO in cases where further clarifications/information is required in relation medical issues.
* HDG – all applicants will not be required to submit Contractor’s estimates with the initial application, the Council will first of all determine the works necessary to meet the needs of the disabled person which will be communicated by issuing a letter of ‘approval in principle’. The applicant will then be required to submit two written itemised Contractors estimates in respect of the cost of the approved works together with the Income Tax details and detailed plans/planning permission where required. Following a report from the Council’s Engineer a final decision will be made and a notification of Final Approval issued.

Together with the above the review also highlighted the need to update and make changes so as to ensure the Council comply with all current regulations and particularly changes made by Department of Finance / Revenue Office.

* Proof of Ownership of Property i.e. a copy of Title Deeds or a letter from a Solicitor must be submitted with the application.
* If the person for whom the grant aid is sought is not a Registered Owner of the property, a Legal Right of Residency must be established in his/her favour and submitted at the outset.
* Proof of compliance with the LPT at both the date of receipt of application and on date grant is paid (if different year).
* Payment of a grant can only be issued to the applicant.

**Amount of monies spent 2018**



**No. of Grants Paid 2018**



**No.’s on Hand**



**Differential Rents Scheme 2019**

The Differential Rent Scheme is being reviewed for 2019. Changes being considered are

* To bring income disregards into line with the Household Means Policy used for determining eligibility for social housing support.

* To update scheme as types of social housing support have changed over the past number of years to include RAS, AHB units, HAP and standard social housing. This is to ensure that all clients are treated fairly and equally, this will involve removing the clause which aligns maximum rent to value of the house which is not applicable to all types of social housing support.

The Chairman thanked Ms Bridie McBrearty on her report and the committee were unanimous in their support of any review aimed to streamline processes.

It was noted that Councillors pay a very important role in providing local information and advocating on behalf of applicants.

With regard to the three grants currently available Ms McBrearty highlighted amounts of monies spent in 2018, commitments for 2019 and changes being introduced.  There followed discussion and it was felt that the introduction of requirement to submit proof of ownership of property and payments only being issued to applicants could cause processing difficulties.

The committee was advised that the Differential Rent Scheme was currently being reviewed and a Rent Review would shortly be undertaken for all tenants.

Ms MsBrearty advised the committee that all proposed changes are being introduced to bring the schemes in line with guidelines and stated that every effort will be made to work with all applicants to try to eliminate delays and difficulties.

Ms McBrearty informed the committee that Home for Life, a private company, and new provider of Mortgage To Rent (MTR) services in County Cavan where available to attend next SPC meeting.

It was agreed that they be invited to give an overview of the Mortgage to Rent Scheme.

1. **HOUSING CONSTRUCTION**

Mr John Wilson, Senior Engineer, updated the committee as follows:

**A1. LA New Builds completed 2018 – 12 No. Units.**

**SECTION A: SHCIP LOCAL AUTHORITY NEW BUILD**

**4 Units in Butlersbridge:**

Construction and allocation of dwellings completed in Q2 2018.

**8 Units at Woodlands Ballyhaise:**

Construction of 8 No units (4 No. 2 bed and 4 No. 3 bed) was completed in early November and they are in the process of being allocated to tenants.

**A2. LA New Builds expected to be completed in 2019 – 13 No. Units.**

**8 Units in Mullagh:**

Construction works commenced on the 12th March and is due for completion in Q1 of 2019. Completion date is on target.

**2 Units at Clones Road, Butlersbridge:**

Stage 3 approval has been received from the Dept of Housing, Planning and Local Government. The tender process for the construction of these units is currently underway.

**3 of 14 Units at “Ashgrove”, Derrylurgan, Ballyjamesduff – Turnkey Development:**

Approval received from the Dept of Housing, Planning and Local Government on the 19th November to progress this scheme. It is anticipated that construction will commence in 2019, subject to the successful completion of legal and contractual matters.

**A3. LA New Builds expected to be completed in 2020 – 15 No. Units.**

**11 of 14 Units at “Ashgrove”, Derrylurgan, Ballyjamesduff – Turnkey Development:**

Approval received from the Dept of Housing, Planning and Local Government on the 19th November to progress this scheme. It is anticipated that construction will commence in 2019, subject to the successful completion of legal and contractual matters.

**4 Units at Corstruce, Ballinagh:**

Part 8 Planning was approved on the 16th October and Stage 2 approval was received from the Dept of Housing, Planning and Local Government on the

23rd November.

**A4. LA New Builds expected to be completed in 2021 – 25 No. Units.**

**19 Units at Main Street, Mullagh:**

Stage 1 approval has been received and a design team led by Sweeney Architects was appointed this month.

**6 Units at Holborn Hill (The Palais):**

Stage 1 approval has been received from the Dept of Housing, Planning and Local Government.

**SECTION B: SHCIP LOCAL AUTHORITY ACQUISITIONS**

**B1. LA Acquisitions in 2018**

The acquisition of 31 units was completed in 2018.

**B2. LA Acquisitions in 2019**

It is estimated that 20 units will be acquired in 2019.

**SECTION C: SHCIP LOCAL AUTHORITY VOIDS**

**C1. LA Voids in 2018**

14 void units were refurbished in 2018.

9 of these vacant units will be counted in the Rebuilding Ireland targets

**SECTION D: SCHIP APPROVED HOUSING BODIES NEW BUILD**

**D1. AHB New Builds completed 2018 – 21 No. Units.**

**11 Units at Drumalee Manor, Cavan.**

The Approved Housing Body is Túath Housing.

**10 Units at Diamond Court, Belturbet.**

The Approved Housing Body is Túath Housing.

**SECTION E: SCHIP APPROVED HOUSING BODIES ACQUISITIONS**

**E1. AHB Acquisitions in 2018**

The acquisition of 4 units was completed to the end of Q3 2018.

**REBUILDING IRELAND 2016-2021**

**SUMMARY OF PROGRESS TO DATE**

**BUILD & ACQUISITION**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2016/2017** | **2018** | **TOTAL** |  |
| **LA BUILD** | 2 | 12 | 14 | **REBUILDING** |
| **LA VOIDS** | 63 | 9 | 72 | **IRELAND** |
| **LA Part V** | 1 | 0 | 1 | **2016-2021** |
| **AHB BUILD** | 16 | 21 | 37 | **TARGETS** |
|  |  | **TOTAL**  **BUILD** | **124**  **(41%)** | **300** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **LA ACQUISITION** | 40 | 31 | 71 |  |
| **AHB ACQUISITION** | 32 | 4 | 36 |  |
|  |  | **TOTAL ACQUISITION** | **107**  **(88%)** | **121** |

1. **A.O.B**
2. Cllr Patrick O’Reilly outlined his concerns regarding anti social behaviour on the Rathdrum Estate, Virginia. There was consensus that a concentrated interagency approach is required. Ms Bridie McBrearty advised the committee that a review of Tenancy Agreements to bring same in line with 2014 Act and include reference to anti social behaviour was currently being undertaken.
3. Mr Larry McCluskey stated that an update from the Ms Catriona O’Reilly, Arts Officer, would be most welcome at each SPC meeting.
4. Ms Bridie McBrearty advised the committee that invitations for the Estate Awards to be held Wednesday 6th February had been sent to all members.
5. **DATE AND VENUE FOR NEXT MEETING**

Ms Bridie McBrearty advised that four SPC meetings would be held in 2019 as detailed in the Service Delivery Plan for Housing Department 2019 and It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday, 16th April 2019 at 11.am.

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

**Chairperson**