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

**JURY ROOM 1, COURTHOUSE, CAVAN**

**20th September 2017.**

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

Mr Joe McLoughlin, Director of Services

Ms Orla Brady, Cavan County Council

Cllr Paddy O’Reilly

Cllr Noel Connell

Mr Larry McCluskey, CPPN

Ms Madelieine Ui Mhealoid, Society of SVP

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

Cllr Shane P. O’Reilly

Cllr Clifford Kelly

Cllr Madeline Argue

Mr John Donohoe, Cavan County Council

Mr Seamus McLoughlin, Senior Executive Engineer

Mr Thomas Maughan, Cavan Traveller Men’s Shed

Cllr Val Smith, Chairperson, welcomed all present to the meeting.

He informed the meeting that he has replaced Councillor Madeline Argue as Chairperson of the Housing, Social and Cultural SPC as resolved at the meeting of

Cavan County Council held on 12th June, 2017.

1. **MINUTES**

On the proposal of Mr Larry McCluskey, seconded by Ms Madelieine Ui Mhealoid, the minutes of the meeting held on 18th May, 2017 were confirmed and signed.

1. **HOUSING PROGRAMME:**

Ms Orla Brady updated the committee on the Housing Programme. The main points are as follows:-

* **Programme of Works to Void Units** – 2017 Allocation

€ 221,950 - 12 no units

Update: 9 units completed.

* **Energy Retrofit Works** – Phase I works completed, awaiting allocation and conditions associated with Phase II works. 2016 allocation for phase 1 works €732,700.
* **2016 Programme for DPGs and Extensions to Council Houses**  -Allocated interim budget of 65% of 2016 Budget which equate to €215,012
* **Construction Programme**
  + **4 Units in Butlersbridge**

Consultants (Michael Fitzpatrick Architects Ltd., Butlersbridge) appointed as Lead Architects for the Project. Tenders have been received for construction of 4 units.

Update : Crosserlough Construction appointed as Contractors and houses due for completion in early 2018. Construction works to start in May/June 2017. Cost €585,000.

* **8 Units in Woodlands, Ballyhaise**

Consultants (MH Associates, Letterkenny) appointed to prepare tender documents for construction of 8 No. units in Woodlands, Ballyhaise.

Update : Cannot name contractor as yet as no Contract signed yet. Proposed site start early Oct 2017. Cost €1.6 million.

* **8 units in Mullagh**

Consultants (DMC Architects Ltd., Cavan Town) appointed to prepare documents for construction of 8 no. units in Rosehill, Mullagh. Approval for Stage 2 and 3 has been received from the Department.

Update : Documentation will be going out in late September for procurement of Contractor

A discussion took place on the Housing Programme during which the following points were raised:

* Ms Madelieine Ui Mhealoid informed the meeting that a house was recently sold in Mullagh village for €165k and the average rent was now €850 per month. With no date for construction to start on the 8 units in Mullagh she queried were houses still being purchased.
* Mr Joe McLoughlin advised the meeting that broadly speaking the house purchase policy had been very successful for Cavan County Council in the last 3 years with 73 houses purchased compared with 10 houses built in the same period. He further stated that house purchase was a cheaper, faster way of increasing stock with more dispersal throughout the County.
* Ms Orla Brady informed the meeting that houses were actively being sought, , there was a shortage of bungalows throughout the county, care was taken not to get into a bidding war especially with first time buyers.
* Cllr Noel Connell advised of a shortage of houses to rent in Ballyjamesduff
* Mr Larry McCluskey advised that there is little availability for rent or purchase in Cootehill.
* Ms Madelieine Ui Mhealoid queried change in drawdown procedure for Voluntary Housing Associations and Ms Orla Brady agreed to check same.

**QUARTER 2 (APRIL TO JUNE) 2017 - ACTIVITY REPORT**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| WAITING LIST | 996 |  |  |  |
| TOTAL STOCK | 2038 |  |  |  |
| VACANT PROPERTY | 4% |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **STATISTICS** |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| OFFERED | 34 |  |  |  |
| APPOINTED | 32 |  |  |  |
| REFUSED | 14 |  |  |  |
| VACATED | 14 |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **REASONS VACATED** |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| ABANDONED | 0 |  |  |  |
| DEATHS | 4 |  |  |  |
| HOUSE SURRENDERED | 7 |  |  |  |
| OTHER | 0 |  |  |  |
| PURCHASED OUTRIGHT | 0 |  |  |  |
| TRANSFER | 3 |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **HOMELESSNESS PRESENTATIONS** | |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  | **TOTAL PERSONS** |  | **ADULTS** | **CHILD** |
| 2013 = 22 | 28 |  |  |  |
| 2014 = 60 | 115 |  |  |  |
| 2015 = 90 | 172 |  |  |  |
| 2016 = 105 | 240 |  | 131 | 109 |
| 2017 = 34 TO END JUNE | 75 |  | 44 | 31 |

A discussion took place on the Activity Report during which the following points were raised:

* Queries were raised on the number of houses vacated and reasons why were discussed. Cllr Val Smith advised that rising pre-let expenditure was discussed at the last council meeting and the need for urgent reduction in same. Cllr Paddy Smith suggested the appointment of a tenant caretaker on each estate who would oversee the estate and harness local knowledge.
* Cllr Paddy O’Reilly expressed concern that the new Tenant Purchase Scheme excludes some categories of tenants e.g. elderly non working in rurals and a discussion ensued on the scheme.
* Orla Brady advised the meeting that while homeless presentations were decreasing, those presenting were more challenging. There was more focus being placed on assistance being provided to source private rented accommodation rather than provision of emergency accommodation.
* Cavan County Council can avail of two homeless beds through Simon in Dundalk and anybody availing of these beds were further referred to the Tenancy Sustainment Programme.
* It was agreed that Eimear Coveney, Cavan County Council be requested to give presentation on depravation areas of County Cavan at next meeting.

1. **HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT (HNA)**

Ms. Orla Brady circulated the meeting the Summary of Social Housing Assessment 2017 i.e. the net need figure – the number of qualified households on the housing authority list whose housing need has not been met. This was completed between 28th June and 19th September and involved reviewing 247 applications who meet the criteria of eligibility and need set out in the Social Housing Assessment Regulations

She further advised that the result of these summaries are invaluable in terms of identifying the level of national need and the forming of housing policy.

1. **HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENT (HAP)**

Ms Angela Fitzpatrick, Cavan County Council outlined the procedures followed for processing HAP applications gave an update on the Housing Assistant Payment (HAP) as follows:-

HAP Scheme active in Cavan since 1st December 2016

* To date we have 96 active HAP Tenancies

**HAP tenancies per Municipal District:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *Name* | *Cavan County Council* |
| Ballyjamesduff | 20 |
| Cavan-Belturbet | 61 |
| Bailliborough-Cootehill | 14 |
| **Inter–Authority Movement:**  Kells, Co. Meath | 1 |
| ***Total*** | ***96*** |

**HAP Households by Family type:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Family Size/Type* | *Cavan County Council* | *Total* |
| SINGLE | 29 | 29 |
| SINGLE +1 | 20 | 20 |
| SINGLE +2 | 13 | 13 |
| SINGLE 3+ | 4 | 4 |
| SINGLE SHARING | 2 | 2 |
| COUPLE | 7 | 7 |
| COUPLE +1 | 7 | 7 |
| COUPLE +2 | 8 | 8 |
| COUPLE 3+ | 6 | 6 |
| ***Total*** | ***96*** | ***96*** |

* 66 households paying a top-up to their landlord
* 30 cases where full Landlord rent is covered in full by the Rent CAP

– 18 of these the CAP exceeds rent due to Landlord

**Transfer List:**

* 94 households have availed of the option to remain on the Social Housing Transfer List

**Inspections:**

* 49 Inspections completed to date

1. **LOCAL AUTHORITY DEPOSIT SCHEME**

Ms Orla Brady sought the opinion of the committee on a Local Authority Deposit Scheme and outlined how a scheme might work.

Following discussion it was agreed that the committee was in principal approving of the idea of a rent deposit scheme and Ms Orla Brady undertook to provide further information and scenarios at the next meeting.

1. **A.O.B**
2. Apologies were noted from Ms Catriona O’Reilly, Cavan County Council, Arts Officer. Mr Larry McCluskey stated that as the SPC’s remit also covers cultural development the opportunity to discuss same should be offered the committee. It was agreed that Ms Catriona O’Reilly be requested to update future meetings.
3. Cllr Noel Connell complimented Mr Marty Lynch on the success of the Annual Estate Awards.
4. **DATE AND VENUE FOR NEXT MEETING:**

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on 22nd November 2017 at 2.30pm.

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

**Chairperson**