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

**Microsoft Teams – 26 March 2021**

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

Mr Eoin Doyle, Director of Service

Mr John Wilson, Cavan County Council

Ms Lynda McGavigan, Cavan County Council

Ms Bridie McBrearty, Cavan County Council

Ms Sinead Smith, Cavan County Council

Mr Paul Elliott, Development and Construction

Ms Theresa Thompson, Trade Unions

Cllr Paddy McDonald

Cllr Clifford Kelly

Cllr Patricia Walsh

Cllr Trevor Smith

Cllr Madeleine Argue

**Apologies:** Mr John Donohoe, Cavan County Council

Mr Thomas Maughan, Social Inclusion

Cllr Val Smith, Chairperson welcomed everybody to another meeting on Microsoft teams.

1. **MINUTES**

On the proposal of Cllr McDonald, seconded by Cllr T Smith, the minutes of the meeting held on 04 December 2020 were confirmed.

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 - 534 nett together with 572 on the transfer list making the total number approved 1104.
* A total of 675 have availed of the Housing Assistance Payment Scheme and there are currently 449 total active tenancies.
* There are 410 household in accommodation provided under the Rental Accommodation Scheme and 117 through the Approved Housing Bodies.
* 27% of offers of accommodation have been refused since beginning of year – 47 offers in total
* 31 new tenancies were set up and 21 tenancies were terminated.
* 5 households were provided with homeless accommodation to date in 2021
* 21 active cases with tenancy sustainment
* The Housing First model commenced in the County in January 2020 with a target of 3 tenancies per year. 4 households currently in the Scheme and working towards providing an accommodation solution for 3 further identified.
* 8 loan applications since start of year, 3 ineligible, 1 approved and 1 paid out. 4 are currently being processed
* 1 Letter of offer has issued under the Incremental Tenant Purchase Scheme this year
* €1,519,168 is the total allocation for grants in 2021 which is a small increase on 2020 allocation. Total committed expenditure for 2021is €959,508 to date.
* The annual count of accommodation needs for travellers in 2020 was 145.
* The Local Strategic Plan for Housing People with a Disability for Cavan is currently being prepared and drafted by the Housing and Disability Steering Group

Members noted the progress report presented by J Wilson on the build programme

* 269 units are at various stages of planning, design and construction
* An additional 92 units are being provided by Approved Housing Bodies
* 4 units will be ready at end April in Ballyjamesduff
* 4 units will be ready in Ballinagh

Members expressed their concern at the continued large number of refusals of accommodation. However, noted that an approved applicant may not be suspended from the list for a one-year period unless they refused to valid offers of accommodation within a 12-month period

Cllrs Kelly, Argue, Walsh and McDonald asked for a hard copy of the Summary of the Housing Needs Assessment for 2020 be sent to them.

Members thanked the housing staff for their work throughout the year.

**3. VACANT HOMES**

S Smith outlined the role of the Vacant Homes Officer and provided an update of the work carried out to date – see copy of presentation attached.

**4.** **VOIDS SCHEME: VACANT HOUSES**

J Wilson advised Members that the council received a further funding allocation of €969,000 for the refurbishment of 71 no. vacant houses under the Voids Stimulus Programme. Work was completed on 53 no. of the units and the remaining balance will be completed by end March. He advised that preparatory work is underway on the 2021 Voids Funding Programme and that priority will also be given to completing works on houses purchased in the latter part of 2021.

Members welcomed the works and the fact that vacant houses were coming back into stock. In response to a query from Cllr Walsh, S Mc Laughlin confirmed that an Architect would be appointed by end January to commence the plans.

**5. 2021 ENERGY RETROFIT PROGRAMME**

J Wilson advised that the energy retrofitting programme had been revised and it now provides for a significant upscaling in the level of funding available and focuses on ensuring that the fabric of the home is upgraded, and an energy efficient heating system is provided. It is the first year of a ten-year programme which is expected to grow to meet the programme for Government commitments which targets 2,400 social homes for upgrade works in 2021.

The Council has applied for 27 properties at an estimated cost of €769,800. He advised that as Laragh Crescent is the only council estate with single glazed windows this is the area which has been chosen for retrofitting works in 2021.

Members expressed their appreciation of the good news that houses were being upgraded and Cllr Argue asked when such work would be carried out at O’Raghallaigh Park, J Wilson advised that houses for next programme would be chosen on the basis of the worst BER ratings.

Members asked that a copy of the report be provided.

**6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Cllr McDonald expressed disappointment that the Part VIII for 28 no. houses at Maghanure, Cootehill had not been approved.

Members raised concerns at recent anti-social behaviour of some tenants at the new houses in The Gallops owned by Cluid. B McBrearty advised that the Gallops is a significant development in Cavan Town and that Cluid maintain a good working relationship with the Council. They wanted to ensure that this isolated incident would not be detrimental to the provision of other units in the County. They had been in contact with the Gardai and were awaiting information on the formal evidence so that notices can be served.

E Doyle thanked councillors for the additional funding which was provided at Budget time which enables additional works to be carried out on getting vacant property back into stock. He assured Members that the Council had been in contact with Cluid and were satisfied that the matter is being dealt with. In relation to ASB generally he informed the committee that this is an increasing problem in the Council’s own stock and that just one officer currently deals with this matter. He advised that the ASB Strategy is being revised which will bring forward policies which need to be costed and funded - he would be looking to the Councillors for support for such measures.

Date of next meeting to be confirmed at later date.

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

**Chairperson**