

MINUTES OF STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING ON HOUSING, SOCIAL INCLUSION & CORPORATE SERVICES on 10 March 2023 at 11.30 a.m. in the Council Chamber, The Courthouse, Cavan

In attendance:

- Cllr Val Smith, Chairperson
- Mr Eoin Doyle, Director of Service
- Mr Seamus McLoughlin, Cavan County Council
- Ms Bridie McBrearty, Cavan County Council
- Ms Ramona McAvenue, Cavan County Council
- Cllr Patricia Walsh
- Cllr Trevor Smith
- Cllr Madeleine Argue

Apologies:

- Mr John Wilson, Cavan County Council
- Ms Lynda McGavigan, Cavan County Council
- Mr John Donohoe, Community & Enterprise
- Cllr Paddy McDonald
- Cllr Clifford Kelly
- Mr T Maughan, Social Inclusion,
- Mr P Elliott, Development and Construction
- Ms Theresa Thompson, Trade Unions
- Ms Leanne Coyle, Community/Voluntary

Cllr Val Smith, Chairperson welcomed everybody to meeting.

Before the meeting commenced Cllr V Smith offered his condolences on the passing of Bridie McBrearty's father Willie Doherty, may he rest in peace. Cllr P Walsh, Cllr M Argue and Cllr T Smith also offered their sympathies.

30 MINUTES

On the proposal of Cllr P Walsh, seconded by Cllr M Argue, the minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2022 were confirmed.

40HR/CORPORATE UPDATE

E Doyle gave an update on matters relating to HR and Corporate which included items of recruitment, 2022 Annual Report, PMDS, Gender Pay Gap Report, Wellness programme and Data Protection. It was noted FOI requests have increased and the Council received 65 requests in 2022. E Doyle advised the Blended Working Scheme commenced in 2023 with 72 employees availing of the scheme, however, it was noted most staff wish to be in the office.

A discussion took place around new Council offices. Cllr P Walsh queried could the 'Old Library' building be refurbished. E Doyle advised the preferred option was to have one fully functioning building located in Cavan town.

E Doyle advised a national campaign will be rolled out for the Register of Electors in September 2023 that will include those eligible to register to provide Eircode and PPSNs. Cllr T Smith noted people are reluctant to give PPSNs.

50SOCIAL INCLUSION UPDATE

No social inclusion update.

60HOUSING PROGRESS REPORT

S McLoughlin presented the report on the capital and void programme of work as follows:

- The current Local Authority New Build programme consists of 16 no. housing schemes for 271 units at various stages of planning, design, and construction. There are 90 units under construction and 77 units are expected to go to site this year.
- Approved Housing Bodies – 1 no. housing scheme for 8 units at Drumalee Manor, Cavan will be provided by Tuath this year.
- The overall 'Housing for All' new build programme (LA & AHB) for 2022-2026 is 490 units. 98 units were delivered in 2022 and expected delivery for 2023 is 92 units.
- There are 9 acquisitions currently in process of being acquired. Improvement works have been completed to 1 no. house purchases in 2022. In addition, works are ongoing to another 5 no. houses.
- Cavan County Council has returned 283 vacant houses back to use over the past 5 years.
- The Energy Retrofit Programme was launched in 2021. In 2022, the Council completed retrofit work on 20 properties to a 'B1' BER standard. The Council are waiting for a funding allocation for 2023, however contracts have been recently awarded for the first tranche of 2023 retrofit work on 12 no. vacant houses in Cavan, Shercock, Kingscourt, Bailieborough and Cootehill.
- Croi Conaithe (Towns) Fund
Stream 1 Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant - 46 applications received to date, 20 of which require further information and 23 applications are approved in principle.
Stream 2 Ready to Build Scheme, serviced sites for new homes. S McLoughlin advised this scheme provides for local authorities to make service sites available in towns and villages at a discount on the market value, to individual purchasers for the building of their home.

B McBrearty presented a report on progress in the housing office since previous meeting.

- Approved applicants for social housing support - 468 nett together with 542 on the transfer list making the total number approved 1010

- A total of 865 have availed of the Housing Assistance Payment Scheme and there are currently 396 total active tenancies. Reduction in number currently on HAP represents the current market conditions.
- There are 353 household in accommodation provided under the Rental Accommodation Scheme and 122 through the Approved Housing Bodies. Reduction in numbers relates to the number of landlords getting out of scheme and selling their properties.
- NTQs – a total of 66 RAS tenancies to date, 46 became Council or AHB tenants. 33 HAP tenancy NTQs to date, 11 became Council or AHB tenants, 8 others who made alternative arrangements.

Allocations -

2022 offers: 229 (149 Council, 80 AHB); 66 refusals 28% refusal.

2023 offers: 51 (41 Council, 10 AHB); 5 refusals 10%

2022 tenancies: 209 (141 Council, 68 AHB)

2023 tenancies: 47 (36 Council, 11 AHB)

- The Council have had 23 presentations to date and are currently providing TEA for 6 household (14 Adults and 4 Children). There are 13 active cases assigned to tenancy sustainment provided by Dublin Simon.
No Housing First allocations so far in 2023 and there are currently 7 active cases. The Council are required to allocate 3 HF tenancies per year, however, there is a difficulty in securing one bed accommodation.
- 35 loan applications received in 2022, 2 approvals in principle issued, 5 finally approved and 1 paid out. Local Authority Home Loan Scheme (LAHL): There have been changes to the Local Authority Home Loan Scheme from 1 March as follows:
The income limit for an individual applicant has been increased to €70,000 and for joint applicants to €85,000 and the maximum market house price limit has been increased in Cavan to €275,000 which means that the maximum loan which may be borrowed is now €247,500.
- 8 Letters of offer have issued under the Incremental Tenant Purchase Scheme this year. 7 sales completed in 2022 totalling €412,400.
- 15 applications are approved for Mortgage to Rent and another 33 have been completed to date.
- €1,541,043 is the total allocation for grants in 2022. The total value of payments amounted to €1,778,227 in respect of 198 grants.
- Rent App – it is envisaged that this option to tenants to pay online will commence in Q3 2023.
- ASB – 145 complaints received since beginning of year, 108 cases closed. Regained possess of 8 unlawfully occupied properties without having to take legal action and 1 other following legal action. 8 cases have been referred to the law agent for advice/legal action.

Cllr Walsh acknowledged the work done to date and asked that more is done to highlight the housing work completed.

Cllr T Smith asked for a breakdown of house type for the development of 11 units at Ashgrove Court, Ballyjamesduff. S McLoughlin advised the scheme at Ashgrove Ballyjamesduff is currently in the design and planning process, but it is proposed to construct 5 x 2 bed two storey units and 4 x 1 bed duplex style units.

Cllr Argue asked for a breakdown of house types for the development of 9 units at Widows Row, Belturbet. S McLoughlin stated the development will consist of 3 x 1 bed, 5 x 2 bed, 1 x 3 bed units.

A discussion took place around the Minister's direction to purchase houses for those with termination notices. E Doyle confirmed that several had been purchased in previous years. That Council only bid on houses where there is no other bidder, in particular, first time buyers. Cllr V Smith queried were refurbishments necessary when buying a property. E Doyle advised that most acquisitions require remedial works and these works, if not scheduled into the housing maintenance programme, will impact on the Council's vacant property programme as works must be completed following the purchase in order to obtain funding from the Department.

70 HOUSING & DISABILITY STEERING GROUP MEETING REPORT

B McBrearty presented a report on progress in the housing office since previous meeting. The National Implementation Plan is due to be published shortly and a meeting of the Housing & Disability Steering Group is to take place in April.

28 of the total allocations in 2022 have been made to disabled people: 14 physical, 5 sensory, 4 mental health and 5 intellectual. This represents 10% of the overall allocations for 2022. 16 of those were accommodated in housing which had been adapted specially to meet their needs and 12 to standard housing.

80 UKRAINIAN ACCOMMODATION

E Doyle gave an update on the State's obligation following an EU Directive to provide protection, emergency accommodation and support to those displaced by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Cavan town was one of seven sites identified countrywide to provide modular homes for Ukrainian refugees. A public consultation was held in the Scouts Den, Farnham Road, Cavan to discuss with local residents the proposed development of 30 modular home units to be placed on a site at Drumnahanagh, Cavan.

Cllr M Argue queried when will the development be ready and who will qualify. E Doyle advised it will be ready at the end of Q2 this year and it will be the Department that will determine who will be offered a home. He advised that Hotel and Guesthouse accommodation were dealt with by IPAS and the Department was managing the vacant homes with the Council's assistance.

90 AOB

Cllr P Walsh asked that her thanks are passed onto the Housing staff for their hard work and service in dealing with the public, housing work and all the associated challenges currently in the housing sector. Cllr M Argue, Cllr T Smith and Cllr V Smith echoed Cllr Walsh's sentiments to also pass on their thanks to all Housing staff.

: 0 2023 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

Next Meeting: 9 June 2023 at 11.30 in the Council Chamber.

Scheduled Meetings: 8 September, and 8 December at 11.30 in the Council Chamber, Courthouse.

Signed: _____
 Chairperson

Date: _____