

Minutes of Meeting of Housing, Community and Culture Strategic Policy Committee held via MS Team on Wednesday, 2 December 2020.

Members Present:

Councillor Caillian Ellis (Cathaoirleach)
Councillor Padraig Fallon
Councillor Sean McDermott
Councillor Paddy O'Rourke
Councillor Enda Stenson

Officials Present:

Mary Quinn, Director of Services, Housing, Corporate Services, Community and Cultural Services
Samantha Healy, Senior Executive Officer Corporate Services and Housing
Ramona McAvenue, Administrative Officer Housing
Justin Fannon, Senior Executive Officer Housing Capital
Kieran Brett, Meetings Administrator
Ornaith O'Shannon, Assistant Staff Officer

Apologies:

Councillor Mary Bohan
Aodh Flynn
Maura Gallagher
Sean O'Reilly

1 Adoption of Minutes

Minutes of meeting held on 30th September 2020

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Padraig Fallon
SECONDED by Cllr Sean McDermott

It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of meeting of 30th September 2020.

2 Housing Update

Ms Mary Quinn, Director of Services, advised the housing needs assessment had been completed. The current housing need is 190, there are 308 on the transfer list, 281 of these are HAP transfers, 27 are local authority transfers. There are 80 private RAS tenancies and 13 short term leases.

Ms Quinn advised despite the challenges of 2020 there have been 49 tenancies created in 2020 to date and currently there are 25 vacant properties.

The Choice Based Letting Scheme will be reviewed next year once there is a sufficient operating period to review. The acceptance rate under the Choice Based Letting Scheme significantly higher than that under the previous allocation method - in November 13 properties were advertised with 100% acceptance rate and 8 properties are currently advertised for December.

There have been 43 presentations from households who are at risk of homelessness, this number of presentations represents 50 people.

To date, 53 Private Housing Grants, have been paid, totalling €254,124. There are approved applications to the value of €436,331 and applications on hand to the value of €215,000 approx.

Under the Traveller Accommodations Program 5 units of accommodation have been delivered.

Covid-19 has had an impact on delivering the target 156 units in 2018-2021 - to date 122 units have been delivered. The Department has given approval for an augmented acquisitions programme to be undertaken. At this point in time, 13 acquisitions are in progress.

A detailed analysis of the housing waiting list will be undertaken to establish the profile in terms of age, demand, disability profile, household composition profile. A report will be provided to the SPC on the current waiting list and what the key policy issues are emerging from the need. An analysis will also be carried out on issues affecting our capacity to deliver over the next three years for discussion at the next meeting.

Cllr Caillian Ellis enquired about the sale of rural houses. He advised there is demand from young people to purchase houses in rural areas.

Ms Mary Quinn advised in some instances it is difficult to resolve issues where a property is surrounded by family farm or where right of way issues exist. A review will be undertaken of rural properties to identify potential issues.

Cllr Pdraig Fallon enquired if it is standard practise that the purchaser is liable to cover the cost of the legal fees of the Local Authority when buying a property under the Tenant Purchase Scheme. He acknowledged and thanked the Housing Department for the work they are doing in relation to homelessness in Co. Leitrim. He considers the provision of emergency accommodation will be something that will need to be addressed in the near future.

Cllr Sean McDermott congratulated the Housing Department on the success to date of the Choice Based Letting Scheme.

Cllr Paddy O'Rourke advised he is aware of rural properties that have been vandalised when they were vacated. He suggested a register of properties that may become vacant is compiled so they can be re-let in a timely manner to avoid incidents of vandalism.

Cllr Enda Stenson enquired if there has been any progress on the Tenant Purchase Scheme.

Ms Mary Quinn responded as follows:

- There is no further update on the Tenant Purchase Scheme.

- An inventory of the rural houses will be compiled.
- It is a requirement the purchasers cover the legal costs and purchasers are advised of this at the outset of the process.

Ms Samantha Healy, Senior Executive Officer, advised there are an increased number of presentations of homelessness. She advised that the Housing Action Team (HAT) will be operational by the end of the year. She added the provision of temporary emergency facilities requires professional expertise and would require detailed consideration.

3 Library Service Update

Ms Pauline Brennan, County Librarian, provided the meeting with an update on the library services in the County. She advised that 2020 saw significant challenges for the Library Service and staff had to adapt quickly. Access to books online increased 3-fold and the number of people accessing the eBook system has doubled.

She informed the meeting that the Part 8 Planning for the Open Library in Dromahair was approved and the application to the Rural Regeneration funding has been submitted.

Work is being completed in Mohill Library and it will open in 2021. There will be a sensory room for people with learning difficulties and Autism to avail of. She advised the Library Service have received Dormant Account funding and they will be working in collaboration with Sligo and Roscommon Library Services in bringing an Occupational Therapist on-board to advise how to make the best use of the new equipment in Mohill. Work is also underway on the refurbishment of Manorhamilton Library.

In 2021 the new 5-year library development plan will commence. This will tie into the national Library Strategy and is timely in light of the Covid Pandemic.

A library digitisation programme will be undertaken to digitise rare and unique parts of local studies. Presently a lot of this material is only available in the Library and it would be very beneficial to have this material accessible online.

Cllr Sean McDermott welcomed the proposed new library for Dromahair and advised it is a welcome addition for North Leitrim.

Cllr Enda Stenson commended the Library Service for the services they provide.

Cllr Pdraig Fallon commended the library service and welcomed the refurbishment of the library in Manorhamilton.

Cllr Caillian Ellis supported all comments and thanked Ms Brennan for her presentation.

4 Community Update - Keeping Well Campaign

Ms Suzanne Duffy, Administrative Officer, provided an update on the Keeping Well Campaign. She advised Leitrim County Council has received funding of €67,225 to support a number of initiatives.

There are 5 themes in the Keeping Well Campaign - Keeping Active, Staying Connected, Switching off and Being Creative, Eating Well and Minding Your Mood.

Three working groups have been established in partnership with the relevant stakeholders such as the Local Authority, HSE, CYSPC, Resource Centres, Leitrim GAA, etc. The working groups are as follows:

1. Keeping Active/Eating Well
2. Staying Connected/Managing your mood
3. Switching off/Being creative

Ms Duffy outlined the Action Plan and funding allocation to each theme as follows:

- Your County - €20,168.00
- Switching off & Being Creative - €30,251.00
- Staying Connecting (Community Call) - €16,806.00

The report as circulated to members appears as Minute Item 4 in the minute book.

5 Summary of issues for the Corporate Policy Group

Ms Mary Quinn summarised the items for presentation to the Corporate Policy Group and Council.

6 Date and Time of the Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting of the SPC will be held at 10.00am on Wednesday, 10th February 2020.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

SIGNED: _____
Councillor Caillian Ellis
Chairperson

SIGNED: _____
Kieran Brett
Meetings Administrator
Housing, Community and
Culture Strategic Policy
Committee

DATE: Wednesday, 24 February 2021