

**Minutes of Meeting of Housing, Community and Culture Strategic Policy Committee held in
via MS Teams on Tuesday, 23 May 2023.**

Members Present:

Councillor Thomas Mulligan (Cathaoirleach)
Aodh Flynn
Councillor Frank Dolan
Councillor Paddy O'Rourke
Councillor Padraig Fallon
Councillor Enda Stenson

Officials Present:

Mary Quinn, Director of Services, Housing, Corporate Services, Community and Cultural Services
Justin Fannon, Senior Executive Officer Housing Capital
Kieran Brett, Meetings Administrator
Ann Warnock, Administrative Officer, Housing Department

Apologies:

Councillor Mary Bohan

10 Adoption of Minutes

As Councillor Thomas Mulligan had indicated he would be late joining the meeting,
On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Paddy O'Rourke
SECONDED by Cllr Frank Dolan
It was agreed that Cllr Enda Stenson would stand in as Chairperson for this meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Paddy O'Rourke
SECONDED by Cllr Frank Dolan

It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of 15th February 2023.

11 Correspondence

1. Letter from Department of Community & Rural Development concerning the launch of "*A Guide for Inclusive Community Engagement in Local Planning and Decision Making*"
2. Copy of "*A Guide for Inclusive Community Engagement in Local Planning and Decision Making*"

12 Presentation on preparation of new 5 year Library Development Plan

Pauline Brennan invited Mark Tully and Maeve McCormack of Tully Meehan and Associates Ltd to update the members on the preparation of a new 5 year strategic Library Plan.

Mark Tully informed the members of the requirement to prepare a 5 Year Strategic Library

Plan, He advised the plan will outline how the library service currently meets the needs of the community, what the mission statement of the Library service is and how its current work programme meets its goals and objectives. The plan will outline how the Library service will meet the needs of the community over the next five years both in terms of the provision of local services and also how Leitrim Library service will meet the vision of the National Library Plan. In the preparation of the draft plan, Tully Meehan & Associates Ltd will engage and consult with elected members, stakeholders and library users as part of the process.

Cllr Pdraig Fallon queried the provision of a new Library in Kinlough.

Ms Mary Quinn advised that this will be addressed through the consultative process with the elected members and stakeholders. Once the draft plan has been prepared and considered by the SPC it will be brought before the plenary council for approval.

13 Housing Update

Mr Justin Fannon provided the members with an update on the delivery of Housing Services:

- There are currently 230 households on the housing waiting list.
- Including those in receipt of HAP or on the housing transfer list this figure increases to 526.
- These figures represent an approximate increase of 10 households year on year.
- The Housing delivery target for 2023 is 26 housing units. 24 units will be delivered in the next 6 weeks through developments in Ballinamore, Drumshanbo and Manorhamilton. A further 4 housing units will be delivered in Dromahair by year end and thereby achieving the delivery target.
- Through acquisitions, 13 units have been purchased or are at sale agreed stage in 2023.
- 3 homes have been purchased through the Tenant in Situ scheme and discussion are ongoing in relation to other properties under this scheme.
- Interest in the Repair & Lease scheme has increased across the county. Currently there are 3 units in train under this scheme.
- Approximately 100 application forms have been issued for the Croí Cónaithe refurbishment scheme.
- A further 71 expressions of interest have been received in relation to the expanded Croí Cónaithe - refurbishment of properties for the rental market.
- To date, under the Croí Cónaithe scheme, 36 applications have been received, 17 have been fully approved, 3 have been approved in principle and 16 are being processed. The applications are primarily in rural locations.
- Housing grants to the value of €716K have been approved by the Department; €573K funded by the Department and €143K funded from Leitrim County Council own resources.
- Under the Disabled Persons Grant, funding of €308,593 has been allocated with €34K being allocated from Leitrim County Council own resources.
- Leitrim has limited housing stock available on the private market, with approximately 6 houses available to rent and 181 available to buy in the entire county.
- Vacant Homes: Across 14 towns and villages, 756 properties have been identified for

further investigation. The Vacant Homes Officer has inspected 168 of these properties to date and 25 have been identified as derelict. Through active engagement with the property owners, efforts will be made to bring these vacant properties back into productive use.

Ms Mary Quinn advised the members that the key priority is the delivery of Housing units. Further analysis is required around the rental market and the affordability of housing.

In response to the housing update the members raised the following queries:

- Councillor Frank Dolan queried when the new housing development in The Commons, Manorhamilton will be available for allocation to tenants,
- Councillor Pdraig Fallon queried if there are any supports available for tenants currently renting from private landlords,
- Councillor Fallon complimented the staff of the Housing Department for their efforts in dealing with housing queries and helping people with their housing needs.
- Councillor Paddy O'Rourke queried if there will be an improvement in the provision of OT services by the HSE to assess applicants' suitability for DPG funding. Councillor O'Rourke queried if the provision of OT services is being out sourced by the HSE.
- Councillor Paddy O'Rourke queried how often reviews of costs associated DPG grants are carried out, as the cost of construction materials is continuing to increase, and this is impacting quotes that building contractors provide.
- Councillor Thomas Mulligan asked if anything can be done to circumvent the need for a letter from an applicants' insurance company stating that works/repairs are not eligible under the applicants' home insurance policy. Councillor Paddy O'Rourke supported Cllr Mulligan's query and suggested that the applicant make a self-declaration in support of their funding application for works/repairs.
- Councillor Thomas Mulligan queried if anything can be done to assist persons seeking housing supports to repair or carry out work on their home but have not paid their LPT. The understanding has been that the LPT due would be taken eventually on the sale of the persons estate. Housing supports or funding is dependant on having LPT payments made.
- Councillor Pdraig Fallon queried if one and two bedroom properties, known as OPD homes, could be included for disposal under the Tenant Purchase scheme.

Mr Justin Fannon informed the members that the homes in The Commons, Manorhamilton are now complete, and tenants will be allocated in the coming weeks.

Ms Mary Quinn said the issue with housing is lack of supply. There has been a recent increase in HAP threshold to benefit tenants. Leitrim County Council will continue to identify supply options and will act on situations that present and will continue to assist people with their housing issues.

Ms Ann Warnock advised that the HSE OTs are giving priority to assessing urgent cases.

Ms Mary Quinn advise that the terms and conditions of the DPG scheme are set nationally and apply equally to all Local Authorities. The Department of Housing are very specific about

the requirement for applicants to be LPT compliant. An enquiry will be made with the Department about provision of housing supports and the deferral of LPT charges to a later date and on the sale of the persons estate.

Mr Justin Fanon advised that an updated increase in DPG limits has not yet been received but an increase in limits is expected.

Ms Mary Quinn said it is difficult to justify the disposal of properties under the Tenant Purchase Scheme in areas where there is key demand and constraints of supply.

14 Summary of issues for the Corporate Policy Group

Ms Mary Quinn, Director of Services, summarised the items from this meeting for presentation to the Corporate Policy Group and plenary Council meeting.

15 Date and Time of the Next Meeting

It was agreed the next meeting of the Housing, Cultural, & Community SPC take place on Wednesday 27th September 2023 at 10am.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

SIGNED: _____
Councillor Thomas Mulligan
Chairperson

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

DATE: Wednesday, 27 September
2023