

**Minutes of Meeting of Housing, Community and Culture Strategic Policy Committee held in
via MS Teams on Wednesday, 29 November 2023.**

Members Present:

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

Officials Present:

Mary Quinn, Director of Services, Housing, Corporate Services, Community and Cultural Services
Suzanne Duffy, SEO Corporate Services
Kieran Brett, Meetings Administrator
Philip Delamere, Arts Officer
Sinead Flynn, Administrative Officer, Community Development
Aideen Kelly, Assistant Staff Officer

22 Adoption of Minutes

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Mary Bohan
SECONDED by Cllr Padraig Fallon

It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of 27th September 2023.

As Cathaoirleach Councillor Thomas Mulligan was delayed joining the meeting, it was proposed that Councillor Enda Stenson would be appointed as stand in chair in Councillor Thomas Mulligan's absence.

All elected members agreed.

23 Housing Update

Ms Mary Quinn provided the members with an overview of the outputs achieved to date in 2023 under the Housing Programme.

- The delivery of 26 social houses in 2023 at the following locations Pairceanna na Bhaile, Carrick-on-Shannon (7), Lahard, Ballinamore (10), Taobh Tire, Manorhamilton (5), and in Dromahair (4) as part of the Dromahair Regeneration Project.
- Under the Housing Acquisition programme, 13 houses were acquired. Of these, 4 of were purchased under the Tenant in Situ scheme, thereby preventing the risk of

homelessness for four families.

- Housing delivery over the next few years will be achieved through schemes such as Direct Build, Turnkey and Part V. Housing delivery targets will be determined through the Housing for All programme.
- Through DHLGH funding of €165,000, 15 void properties were refurbished. A further €396,000 was secured for energy efficiency works resulting in an additional 12 properties being upgraded.
- Leitrim County Council completed 4 extensions and 11 minor work upgrades under the Disabled Person Grants.
- Leitrim County Council has exceeded the target set out by the DHLGH of 327 private rented dwelling inspections during 2023.
- Leitrim County Council has paid 102 Housing grants to date, it is anticipated full spend by the end of the year.
- Through the Traveller Accommodation Programme, 37 Housing solutions have been provided since July 2019.
- A presentation on Shannonside View was presented to the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee at their meeting on Thursday 16th November 2023 and potential options for the future development of the site are under consideration.
- A total of 4 properties have been sold to date in 2023 under the Tenant Purchase Scheme with a further 2 properties at an advanced stage in the legal process.
- A detailed Housing Needs Assessment was completed in 2023 and will be submitted to the Department in the coming week.
- Temporary Emergency Accommodation has been provided for 20 Households including 2 families in 2023.
- A new Regional Homelessness Action Plan 2022-2026 for Sligo, Leitrim and Donegal was approved by the three Local Authorities in March 2023.
- As part of the Housing Strategy for Disabled People funding has been allocated for the provision of a Mental Health Tenancy Support Officer in each county. The contract to provide this service in Leitrim has been awarded to Sophia Housing.
- The National Strategy for Disabled People 2022-2027 plan was launched on the 22nd June, 2023.
- Under the Local Authority Tenancy Scheme, Local Authority tenants will be permitted to rent a room to students. This may not impact Leitrim County Council, but it may be necessary to amend our various schemes to adequately provide for these new arrangements.

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

- Councillor Enda Stenson noted that work on the traveller halting site at Shannonside View is ongoing.
- Councillor Mary Bohan queried the completion date for the houses in Dromahair.
- Councillor Mary Bohan questioned the turnover time from when a tenant leaves a property until it is re-tenanted.
- Councillor Pdraig Fallon stated how positive it is to see Leitrim County Council

providing housing through building and acquisitions. He outlined that due to inflation, building and materials costs may have risen substantially from when a Housing grant was approved. He asked is there anything Leitrim County Council can do to increase grants.

In response to the queries raised by the elected members Ms Mary Quinn advised the following:

- It is anticipated the substantial completion date for the houses in Dromahair will be in end December with allocations in Q1, 2024.
- The turnover time for reallocation of a local authority unit is approximately 22 weeks, however, this figure may be impacted slightly due to various factors. She highlighted the number of voids has reduced to approximately 9 which is a significant reduction from previous years.
- Leitrim County Council can review their expenditure on grants at the end of the year, as part of an internal year end review unit costs will be compared to markets costs.

24 Receive update on preparation of the Leitrim Arts Strategy

Mr Philip Delamere gave a presentation on the preparation of the Leitrim Arts Strategy. He advised the new Leitrim Arts Plan looks ahead to nurture and sustain an active, diverse, thriving, and ambitious Arts community within the broader community in Leitrim.

In the preparation of the Leitrim Arts Plan, three separate public consultation processes took place, firstly with groups of different backgrounds such as youth and community groups, secondly an online survey was carried out to seek opinions on the priorities of the previous Arts Plan and emerging priorities for the new plan. Lastly, an external researcher conducted interviews with 11 key stakeholders to gain their views on different aspects of the plan.

The feedback received is that Arts have been effective and impactful in the community, however, there are gaps in the service where we could be getting more people involved.

The three core priorities in this new Arts Plan are:

- **Community Engagement**
this is how we serve communities in Leitrim.
- **Children and Young People**
this is how we make sure children can make, share, and enjoy the arts.
- **Professional development**
this is how we support artists.

There will be two cross cutting priorities across all the programmes looking at:

- how we respond to the climate emergency,
- how we promote Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion through our work in the arts.

Mr Philip Delamere advised the other key component in the strategy is the Creative Ireland programme on which policy was agreed previously. Furthermore, he advised the elected members the draft of the Leitrim Arts Strategy should be ready for presentation by the end of the year.

In response to the presentation on preparation of the Leitrim Arts Strategy, the members raised the following queries:

- Councillor Paddy O'Rourke queried is there any part of the arts programme that is dependent on receiving funding through PEACE.
- Councillor Mary Bohan acknowledged the tremendous work been carried out in the County, stating a lot of new people have taken up residence in the County and are making a major contribution to the Arts in Leitrim.
- Councillor Paddy O'Rourke queried is there any scheme under which a community group could make an application to secure funding for arts materials.
- Councillor Pdraig Fallon queried if Comhairle na nÓg engage with the Arts Office of Leitrim County Council.

In response to the queries raised by the elected members Mr Philip Delamere advised the following:

- No core part of the programme provided is reliant on PEACE for funding, Creative Ireland and the Arts Council are the 2 main stakeholders and are of paramount importance to the Arts office. PEACE is in addition to these funding streams.
- Creative Ireland has an open call program which opens up twice a year and provides community groups with support and helps them develop projects within their communities.
- Alice Dixon, Creative Leitrim Engagement Officer is available to liaise with community groups to support them in their various projects.
- Comhairle na nÓg have engaged in the past with the Arts office. As a group they do not engage regularly however, they play a very important role in communicating information to young people on the services, policies and issues that affect them in their local communities.

25 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.

26 Date and Time of the Next Meeting

It was agreed the next meeting of the Housing, Cultural, & Community SPC will take place on Wednesday 31st January 2024 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, 31 January 2024