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Minutes of Meeting of Housing, Community and Culture Strategic Policy Committee held in via MS Teams on Wednesday, 31 January 2024.

Members Present:

Councillor Thomas Mulligan (Cathaoirleach)
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
Suzanne Duffy, SEO Corporate Services
Aine Carr, Administrative Officer
Kieran Brett, Meetings Administrator
Aideen Kelly, Assistant Staff Officer

Apologies:

Councillor Mary Bohan

1 Adoption of Minutes

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Enda Stenson
SECONDED by Cllr Padraig Fallon

It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of 29th November 2023.

2 Consider SPC Work Programme for 2024

Ms Mary Quinn, Director of Services, outlined the suggested policy areas for consideration under the SPC Work Programme 2024 to members. A copy of the Draft Work Programme appears as **Appendix 1** to the minutes of this meeting.

Ms Quinn advised the work programme will largely reflect what was carried out this year. She outlined that in the context of the local elections in June, the SPC committee will be reconfigured, and if necessary the SPC Work Programme can be reviewed during the year.

Mr Kieran Brett referred to the dates scheduled in the programme for 25th September 2024 and 27th November 2024, however, these dates will be reviewed after the local elections.

3 Housing Update

Ms Mary Quinn provided the members with an update on the delivery of Housing:

- The delivery target for Housing for all outputs for 2023 was achieved with 28 new units delivered in 2023.

- An Expression of Interest was issued for Turnkey Developments.
- An Expression of Interest was issued for the supply of lands and/or completed units to provide a delivery mechanism to meet the affordable housing needs in the county.
- Temporary Emergency Accommodation continues to be provided for a number of households that are homeless.
- Preparation of the new Traveller Accommodation Programme 2024 to 2029 has commenced. The new Traveller Accommodation Programme must be adopted no later than 31st December 2024.
- The Implementation Plan for the National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022-2027 was launched on 22nd June, 2023. There is a Housing and Disability Steering Group in place.
- The Tenant Purchase Scheme 2016 was revised on 29th January 2024.
 - The minimum income requirement for an applicant to be eligible to apply under the scheme has been revised from €12,500 to €11,000.
 - The primary sources of income have been expanded to include social welfare income, previously only income from employment was considered.
 - The Leitrim County Council website will be updated with the Tenant Information Booklet which sets out the eligibility criteria and general information on the Scheme.
 - While changes have been introduced to the scheme, there is still a need to impose restrictions on some properties given the housing crisis.

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

- Councillor Padraig Fallon queried if would it be possible to seek extra staff particularly outdoor maintenance staff to assist with the minor works programme.
- Councillor Padraig Fallon welcomed the changes to the Tenant Purchase Scheme stating the change to income eligibility is positive, however, he questioned could the properties excluded be reviewed as the makeup of individuals on the housing list has changed over the last decade.
- Councillor Padraig Fallon sought clarification on a person's housing status if there is a breakdown of the family unit, and one person remains in the family home following an agreement or court order; does the other person have to abandon their interest in family home?
- Councillor Enda Stenson supported Cllr Fallon's comments in relation to employing additional staff. Cllr Stenson also queried if there is enough land zoned for social housing if funding becomes available to develop more housing schemes.
- Councillor Paddy O'Rourke welcomed the changes in the Tenant Purchase Scheme. In relation to voids, he highlighted that a contractor has expressed an interest in carrying out some of this work for the Council, and asked if someone from the Housing Department would contact them and seek a quote for the work as it would be more beneficial to employ a contractor that would be available for the duration of the job.

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

following:

- The Tenant Purchase Scheme will be kept under review.
- The comments regarding Voids were acknowledged.
- The Carrick Local Area Plan will take into consideration expansion of housing in Carrick-on-Shannon. The County Development Plan will have zoned lands identified. Leitrim County Council would have to acquire zoned land for the purposes of housing provision.
- The employment of additional staff would depend on funding and capacity within the revenue budget.

Once the date for the Housing Framework for Contractors is clarified, Cllr O'Rourke will be notified and the contractor in question can apply to get on the framework.

4 Update on Love Where You Live awards 2024

Ms. Aine Carr, Community Development, gave the members an update on the "Love Where you Live 2024" awards.

The event is an annual competition run jointly by Leitrim County Council and Leitrim PPN to promote sustainable communities where people work together to make their community the best place to live, and to recognise and nurture the unique environment and heritage where they live.

There are six categories of awards in total:

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|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Primary Schools: | sponsored by Leitrim County Council |
| 2. Green Community of the Year: | sponsored by Leitrim County Council |
| 3. Estate of the Year: | sponsored by Leitrim County Council |
| 4. Diaspora: | sponsored by Leitrim County Council |
| 5. Social Inclusion: | sponsored by Leitrim PPN |
| 6. Community Resilience: | sponsored by Leitrim PPN |

There will be a separate competition held for each Municipal District. In the Community Achievement Award sustainability is an important criterion in this category.

Ms Aine Carr advised the objective of the Diaspora Award is to celebrate the hard work and dedication of individuals who have made significant difference in Leitrim Communities around the world. Ms Aine Carr advised it was agreed between the Heritage Group and Diaspora Group to alternate the award each year between both groups.

Cllr Mulligan welcomed the awards stating the awards help motivate community groups particularly when it is hard to get volunteers.

Ms Suzanne Duffy informed the elected members some of the category names have changed, adding the Diaspora award may have to be promoted further internationally.

Cllr Stenson concurred with Cllr Mulligan's remarks. He said the work community groups carry out is invaluable advising everyone has to play their part, and he pleaded with young

people to get involved in this work.

5 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.

6 Date and Time of the Next Meeting

It was agreed the next meeting of the Housing, Cultural, & Community SPC will take place on Wednesday 1st May at 10am.

Councillor Pdraig Fallon asked for the meeting to be held in person as opposed to online. This was agreed.

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, 1 May 2024

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