

## ***Minutes of the Social Development Strategic Policy Committee held in Áras Contae an Chláir on Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup> December 2017 at 2.30pm***

### ***Present:***

Cllr Gerard Flynn, Chairperson  
Cllr Pat Burke  
Cllr Tom McNamara  
Cllr Paul Murphy  
Cllr Tony O'Brien  
Cllr Ann Norton  
Cllr PJ Kelly  
Dermot Hayes  
Thomas Guilfoyle  
Liam Conneally, Director of Service  
Siobhán McNulty, A/Senior Executive Officer  
Helen Walsh, County Librarian  
Robert Burns, A/Senior Executive Engineer  
Liam O'Connor, Administrative Officer  
Congella McGuire, Heritage Officer  
Valerie Fleming, Assistant Staff Officer

### ***Apologies:***

Pat Keogh  
Geraldine Hetherton

### ***1. Minutes of meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2017.***

The minutes of the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2017 were proposed by Cllr Pat Burke, seconded by Cllr Tom McNamara and agreed.

### ***2. Matters Arising.***

Liam Conneally confirmed that the acquisition of premises for a Homeless Action Team (HAT) office is currently being finalised and the facility should be in operation by Q1, 2018. He said the office will be led by Clare County Council staff with support from staff of other relevant agencies such as Department of Social Protection, HSE, etc. The office will be open to the public during office hours as a walk in facility. Currently there are 53 homeless adults and 58 minors in Clare with 13 of these in Laurel Lodge and the remainder in private emergency accommodation. Liam added that the figures for Clare homelessness are not escalating at the same rate as other parts of the country but were a matter of concern to the Social Development Directorate staff. He said Clare County Council is also

working on the provision of a 'Family Hub' facility in Ennis and more information will be provided on this at a future meeting of this SPC.

Cllr Gerry Flynn told the meeting that Rosalind Carroll of the Residential Tenancies Board will address the next meeting of the SPC regarding rental property standards.

In response to a query from Cllr Pat Burke Liam confirmed that there was one rough sleeper recorded in Ennis in November 2017. This person is fully aware of the state supports that are available to him.

In response to a query from Dermot Hayes Liam confirmed that it is difficult to establish when homeless people will be offered accommodation but they are prioritised when housing stock becomes available.

### **3. *New Housing CRM system.***

Using a PowerPoint presentation Padraig MacCormaic outlined the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system which is being designed for the Housing Section.

Cllr Ann Norton thanked Padraig for the presentation and queried if all staff will have access to customer details on the CRM system. Padraig confirmed that the system is password protected and different users will have different levels of access to customer information depending on their professional requirements.

Liam Conneally stated that the implementation of this system will ensure more efficient operation of the housing section and the system will be fully capable of protecting data in line with forthcoming Data Protection legislation. Liam thanked Niall O'Keeffe, Padraig MacCormaic and all staff involved in the implementation of this system.

### **4. *New Housing Planned Maintenance Programme.***

Using a PowerPoint presentation Robert Burns outlined the Planned Maintenance Programme for housing stock.

This preventative maintenance programme will ensure stock is kept in good condition and thereby protect the Council's assets. It will reduce reletting times for properties and will be of great benefit to all tenants.

**Cllr G Flynn then suggested dealing with Item No 6 before taking comments.**

### **6. *Vacant housing tracking system.***

Robert advised that information regarding the turnaround time for properties returned to the Council or purchased by the Council is already recorded and provided to the monthly meetings of

Clare County Council. In November 2017 the turnaround time was an average of 106 days and Robert indicated this was because much of the stock is quite old and requires significant maintenance work before reletting.

Tommy Guilfoyle suggested the Council use direct employment rather than subcontracting maintenance work as he wants to ensure public funds remain in the local public domain. Robert reassured the meeting that all work carried out by subcontractors is carefully supervised in terms of quality and value for money.

## **5. Clare Pre-Tenancy Policy for Local Authority Housing.**

Liam O'Connor advised that all tenants are Garda checked and the Council implement an Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy. He said any breach of tenancy can result in enforcement action being taken by the Council. Additional support is provided to vulnerable tenants in the form of Homehelp etc. Liam added that Council's Clerks of Work advise tenants on how to operate the various heating systems installed in Council properties but as the Council do not provide household appliances to tenants they do not instruct tenants in their use.

## **7. New County Library Project update.**

Helen Walsh advised that a planning decision is expected in February 2018 in relation to the New County Library. It is hoped to bring the project to the February Council meeting followed by advertising the construction contract on *etenders*. The aim is to be onsite by August 2018.

Liam C. referred to construction price inflation which he said is giving the Council a cause for concern.

Tommy Guilfoyle stated that it is vitally important that this project come in on time and on budget.

## **8. Clare County Heritage Plan 2017 – 2023 and Clare Biodiversity Action Plan 2017 – 2023.**

Congella Maguire, Heritage Officer, presented both plans to the SPC members for their information.

Dermot Hayes queried if any thought had been given to restricting the number of visitors to certain amenities such as the Cliffs of Moher, Mullaghmore etc.

Congella responded that limits are placed on the number of visitors to Inis Cealtra and that a similar request has been made regarding the Burren National Park.

**9. *Schedule of Meetings for 2018.***

The proposed Schedule of Meetings for 2018 which was circulated with the Agenda was proposed by Cllr Tony O'Brien, seconded by Dermot Hayes and agreed.

***The meeting then concluded.***