

**Minutes of Meeting of the Social Development Strategic Policy Committee
held in the Council Chamber on Tuesday 7th March 2023 at 2.30pm**

Present: Cllr. Gerard Flynn, Chairperson
Cllr. Ann Norton
Cllr. Paul Murphy
Cllr. Donna McGettigan
Cllr. Tom O'Callaghan
Larry Brennan
Tommy Guilfoyle
Noel Kearney
Anne Haugh, Director of Service
Padraig MacCormaic, A/Senior Executive Officer
Adrian Headd, A/Senior Engineer
John Corry, Administrative Officer
Helen Walsh, County Librarian
Morgan Lahiffe, Senior Engineer
Julie Brosnan, Social Worker
Paula Carroll & Leonard McDonagh, Cuimhneamh an Chlair

Apologies: Cllr. Tony O'Brien; Cllr. Joe Garrihy; Mary Leahy; William Cahir.

1. Minutes of Social Development SPC meeting held on 6th December 2022

Minutes of meeting held on 6th December 2022 were proposed by Cllr. Donna McGettigan, seconded by Cllr. Paul Murphy and agreed.

2. Matters Arising

No matters arising.

**3. Climate Change & Biodiversity
Climate Action Plan – Presentation by Morgan Lahiffe**

Morgan Lahiffe, Senior Engineer, presented to the SPC on the Climate Action Plan.

Cllr. Gerry Flynn thanked Morgan for the presentation and will welcome further presentation when Climate Action Plan finalised.

Cllr. Donna McGettigan queried the effectiveness of Zero Waste Policy and the possibility of solar powered compacted bins being used which would mean less collection and less fuel consumption.

Morgan advised solar bins are in place in some MD's and not in others. Waste management will be discussed in each MD area as part of the consultations on the Plan.

Housing team working on retrofit scheme for Council housing stock to bring to a B2 rating. Plan will be formulated for Library buildings also.

Project Management Office working consistently with OPW identifying schemes through CFRAMs process.

Cllr. G. Flynn referred to the urgency of these measures so people can get cover for water damage.

4. Library, Arts & Culture Update

Helen Walsh updated the members on Library Capital project - construction end date of end October 2023; referred to prototype of temporary tented structure in car park of which 15 will be available county wide to supports festivals and events.

Leonard McDonagh & Paula Carroll gave presentation on Cuimhneamh an Chlair.

The Chair and Members commended Cuimhneamh an Chlair on the tremendous work they do.

Paula advised the repository is currently held digitally; a certain amount available on website; additional access can be gained by contacting them; currently looking for permanent home for archive.

5. Quarterly Briefing on Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022-2027

John Corry advised a total of 11% of households on waiting list have been identified as having a basis of need disability – Physical 128; Intellectual 92; 72 Mental Health 72; Sensory 6.

446 housing allocations made in 2022 – 94 to people with disabled needs (21%) – Physical 56; Sensory 6; Mental Health 18; Intellectual 14.

National target is 10%; CCC well above expected requirement.

Grant assistance also available – mobility aid grant & disabled persons grant.

Launch of National Disability Implementation Plan imminent.

Cllr. Ann Norton queried if funding received for grants is covering applications.

Padraig advised it does not fully meet the costs and that CCC adds additional funding from own resources in order to support level of application funding that we approve.

6. Central Placement – Clare County Council Assessment and Placement Service for Homeless Individuals

Julie Brosnan advised this policy is to be brought into place for staff and service users in the homeless action team; to bring clarity around delivery of service; will also help other providers as to what can and can't be done.

7. HSE & Clare County Council Homeless Action Team – Joint Working Protocols

Julie advised protocols to be brought into place which will outline policies and procedures with the HSE and other external agencies and also in relation to Terms of Reference for staff.

Will be brought to next SPC for approval.

8. Review of Differential Rent Scheme

Padraig advised that the following changes would be made to Clare County Council's Differential Rent Scheme;

1. Increase the income bands to minimise impact of recent social welfare increases.
2. Remove the €150 maximum rent.
3. Apply a €20 penalty per week for the non-completion/submission of income details, and/or rent review form, when same is requested by CCC.

Amendments proposed by Cllr Donna McGettigan, seconded by Cllr. Paul Murphy and agreed.

9. Local Authority Home Loan Scheme – Updates to Scheme

Padraig advised as follows:

From 1st April variable rate for new and existing customers going from 2.8% to 3.8%; currently 112 customers on variable rate with Clare County Council.

From 1st March : Changes to Loan Amounts

- Maximum Market Value / Purchase price increased to €300,000 on property being mortgaged. *[Was 250K]*
- 90% => Max Mortgage will be €270,000 *[Was 225K]*

Increase in Income Eligibility limits

- Individual from €50,000 to €70,000
- Couple from €75,000 to €85,000

Noel Kearney queried number of Home Loan applications received; Padraig advised 57 applications received last year and 28 were approved.

10. Affordable Purchase Scheme and First Home Scheme

Padraig advised the meeting as follows in relation to the Affordable Purchase Scheme:

- Scheme to support households buy new build properties at reduced/discounted price
- Councils maintain the discount as % equity on property and this will sit as charge on Folio
- Homeowner may redeem LA equity share, in full or part, at any time (minimum payment of €10,000)
 - No general obligation for homeowner to redeem any of the equity share.
 - Not a debt obligation, no repayments due
- LA entitled to realise value of equity share in certain circumstances, including:
 - Sale of the home
 - Home ceases to be purchaser's primary residence
 - Death or bankruptcy of homeowner

Larry Brennan indicated the only way it will work is through private development as the Council has no sites; queried if certificates would issue to purchasers prior to purchase.

Anne Haugh admitted a lot to be learned on this Scheme; LA job is to send eligible applicants to private developers; Scheme of Priorities to be brought to the full Council for adoption.

Tommy Guilfoyle suggested the Council put people on to Council sites to buy or rent houses rather than to the private market.

Cllr. Gerry Flynn agreed; substantial amount of land available in Shannon to go ahead with an Affordable Scheme; would expect CCC would acquire the land and put it out to tender when Contractors needed.

Anne Haugh confirmed both options are available to the Council – either the LA owning the land and contracting out to build affordable homes for the Council or through the developer who has a scheme the Council can engage with. Croi Conaithe Scheme also being looked at where serviced sites could be offered for sale.

Padraig advised as follows re. First Home Scheme:

- Supporting purchases of new homes in the private market.
- Not LA Scheme and not applicable to Affordable Housing Scheme.
- One national provider of support – the First Home Scheme Ireland Designated Activity Company (DAC)
- Scheme is between State and Mortgage providers
- Must use full Mortgage capacity
- Maximum 30% equity allowed.
- First Home entitled to realise value of equity share in certain circumstances – sale, death/probate, and ceasing to be principal residence
- Homeowner can redeem equity in full or partially in accordance with regs
- Moderate service charge on the equity from year 6 onwards

11. Social Housing Delivery – Progress Report

Adrian Headd updated the meeting as follows:

Target 2022 – 200 units – provided 256; 118 direct build; 3 buy & renew; 69 refurbishment; 66 direct turn keys AHB delivery.

Target 2023 – 149 units – potential delivery currently 168 by year end.

Overall Housing for All targets 2022-2026 – 833 units; on way to exceed targets.

Larry Brennan queried Monthly Management report figures.

Anne and Adrian explained the figures are a reflection at a point in time in that particular month and don't account for contracts that have been entered into or approvals that have been received at that point in time.

Cllr. Tom O'Callaghan expressed concern re. loan rate increases.

Cllr. Gerry Flynn complemented the Housing staff on tremendous job being done on housing delivery.

12. Defective Concrete Blocks Scheme

Eoghan Kelly circulated letter to the DHLG detailing Elected Members response/comments on the draft Defective Concrete Block regulations.

Cllr. Gerry Flynn recommended draft letter be circulated to the Councillors for comment.

Adrian agreed with a closing date for comments of 9th March.

Cllr. Donna McGettigan queried if it was going as one submission or 28; thanked the Team for all work done on this.

13. AOB

No matters arising.

The meeting then concluded.

Signed: _____ **Signed:** _____
Cllr Gerard Flynn **Anne Haugh**
Chairperson **Director of Service**

Date: _____