**MINUTES OF CAVAN HOUSING & DISABILITY STEERING GROUP MEETING via Microsoft Teams at 11.00 a.m. on 3rd December 2020**

**Present:** Grainne Johnston, Housing Agency

Collette Ferguson, Mental Health, HSE

Denise Downey, Mental Health, HSE

Jeanette Cummings, Mental Health, HSE

Rosie McCarthy, Mental Health, HSE

Aileen Gallagher, Tuath Housing

Bridget Boyle, CLDC

Bridie McBrearty, Cavan County Council

Seamus McLaughlin, SEE, Cavan County Council

Eoin Doyle, Director of Service

**Apologies:** Miffy Hoad, MH Ireland

Padraig O’Beirne, MH Services

Aileen Gallagher, Tuath

ED opened the meeting by welcoming everybody in attendance and noting that it had been some time since last meeting due in no short way to the unforeseen circumstances being experienced at present. It was noted that Bridget Boyle has retired and is now representing the Cavan Disability Network and Louise Cahill is the new Manager of the IWA and should be invited to next meetings.

**1. Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting of 20 January 2020 were proposed by ED, seconded by JC with the following amendment at No. 7. BMcB advised that new private house grants forms had been developed by the Department and were available of the Council’s website in respect of the three existing grant schemes.

**2. Disability Strategy and National Update**

GJ provided the national update to the meeting as follows:

* The National Strategy for Housing People with a Disability due to expire by year end however, due to the unprecedented circumstances regarding Covid pandemic, it was not possible to complete consultation on new Strategy this year.
* Work has commenced and the key Government Depts. involved are Dept., Health, Dept of Housing and the new Dept of Disability and Youth Affairs – a new Terms of Reference will be devised to deliver the new strategy. This draft document is expected to be ready for consultation at end Q2.
* In the interim, the Housing Agency is making headway with the administrative groundwork to prepare for the New Strategy by undertaking a survey to examine the existing strategy to determine what worked well and what has not, the results of which will inform the new Strategy.
* A PHD student has been engaged to carry out research on the collaborative working of HDSGs and this will also feed into the new strategy. A survey will be circulated to all the Steering Groups in new year.
* The Housing Agency will provide each LA with an updated template on which each LA can base its new Strategy.

**3. Allocations 2020**

BMcB advised that there were 12 lettings in 2020 to date to persons with a disability: Intellectual 3; Mental Health 4 and Physical 5. She also advised that a further 5 x 2 beds were being let the following week to people with physical disabilities.

Furthermore 6 houses had been purchased and were currently being made ready for 6 families who have a member with a disability. It is expected that these units will be ready in first six months of 2021.

Approved waiting list: She informed the group that there is a total of 59 listed with disabilities on the approved social housing waiting list; Intellectual 12; Mental Health 15; Physical 30 and 2 Sensory. 66 households are also listed as exceptional medical and therefore there is a total of 135 persons on the list with specific accommodation needs. Persons with disabilities represent 12% of the total waiting list and letting to date represent a similar percentage of the overall lettings.

BMcB advised that there is no way of knowing if the above numbers represent the total need for such accommodation in the County. In this regard she again asked that the HSE representatives meet with her to discuss, identify gaps and agree the actual housing needs in each of the categories for the short, medium and long term so that plans can be made to meet this need.

JC agreed that there were gaps, and it was most important that this matter is addressed going forward. She advised that there is a deficit of accommodation for young single persons both with mental health and intellectual disabilities across the region but that agreement on numbers was needed in order to plan for this need and provide the supports required.

GJ advised that a Task Group has been set up to examine and report on Strategic Planning for Supported Accommodation requirements so this should be a benefit to all steering groups. She also advised that the new Social Housing Application Form would be coming out in January.

**4. Accommodation Pipelines**

SMcL informed the Group that there are 19 new builds for 2021 and a further 80 for 2022. He advised that they were being designed on the basis of a universal design with soft walls and wheelchair accessible. He advised that there is a contradiction in policy in that in order to meet needs of persons with disabilities schemes need to be designed with a reduced housing density but that the Department’s current guidelines do not support this – it is an issue that needs to be addressed.

It was noted that the Council have lands in Bailiborough and Cavan Town and that plans are currently being developed for housing on the sites – this presents an opportunity to provide specific accommodation for persons with disabilities in each area. BMcB agreed to contact Bernie Donaghy, Service Manager (Adults), Cavan/Monaghan Disability Services in this regard.

**7. Any other Business**

CF asked if there were any grants other than the Housing Aid for Older Persons grants available for persons with disabilities to carry out day to day maintenance of their properties as this was causing an issue, BMcB advised that currently there was no such grant but that she would bring this to the attention of the Department.

**8. Dates for 2021 Meetings**

Dates agreed for next meetings: 28 January, 22 April, 30 September and 25 November, all at 11 a.m. January meeting to be on Microsoft Teams and other meetings will be reviewed in due course.

This concluded the business of the meeting.