**MINUTES OF STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING ON HOUSING COMMUNITY, SOCIAL & CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, COURTHOUSE, CAVAN**

**18th May 2017.**

**Present:-** Cllr. Madeline Argue, Chairperson

Mr. Joe McLoughlin, Director of Services

Ms. Lynda McGavigan, Cavan County Council

Mr. Seamus McLoughlin, Senior Executive Engineer

Cllr. Paddy O’Reilly

Cllr. Noel Connell

Mr. Larry McCluskey, CPPN

Ms. Madelieine Ui Mhealoid, Society of SVP

Mr. Thomas Maughan, Cavan Traveller Men’s Shed

**Apologies:** Apologies for inability to attend were received from:

Cllr. Shane P. O’Reilly

Cllr. Clifford Kelly

Ms. Orla Brady, Cavan County Council

Cllr. Madeline Argue, Chairperson, welcomed all present to the meeting.

1. **MINUTES**

On the proposal of Mr Larry McCluskey, seconded by Mr Thomas Maughan, the minutes of the meeting held on 16th February, 2017 were confirmed and signed.

1. **HOUSING PROGRAMME:**

Ms. Lynda McGavigan circulated a Housing Programme Update Report. The main points are as follows:-

* **Programme of Works to Void Units** – 2017 Allocation

€ 221,950 - 12 no units

* **Energy Retrofit Works** – Phase I works completed, awaiting allocation and conditions associated with Phase II works. 2016 allocation for phase 1 works €732,700.
* **2016 Programme for DPGs and Extensions to Council Houses**  -Allocated interim budget of 65% of 2016 Budget which equate to €215,012
* **Construction Programme**
  + **4 Units in Butlersbridge**

Consultants (Michael Fitzpatrick Architects Ltd., Butlersbridge) appointed as Lead Architects for the Project. Tenders have been received for construction of 4 units. Approval has been granted from Department to proceed with construction. Construction works to start in May/June 2017. Cost €585,000.

* **8 Units in Woodlands, Ballyhaise**

Consultants (MH Associates, Letterkenny) appointed to prepare tender documents for construction of 8 No. units in Woodlands, Ballyhaise. Stage 3 approval has been sought from the Department. Awaiting Stage 3 approval from the Department - can go for tender after stage 3 approval has been received. Proposed site start by July 2017. Cost €1.4 million.

* **8 units in Mullagh**

Consultants (DMC Architects Ltd., Cavan Town) appointed to prepare documents for construction of 8 no. units in Rosehill, Mullagh. Approval for Stage 2 and 3 has been received from the Department. Documentation being prepared to go out to tender for construction of 8 units. Expected site start –July/early August. Cost €1.3 million.

A discussion followed where the following items were queried; the house types of new houses proposed, whether they are in areas of demand, are there caps on the size of estates – stating that Rosehill, Mullagh is very large. Seamus McLoughlin explained that the houses being proposed include 2/3& 4 bed houses. He said there is a housing need in these areas but unfortunately the council does not have land in all areas which are in high demand. Seamus explained Rosehill will be finished after the construction of the next 8 units, totalling 68 units.

**Activity Report Quarter 1 2017**

Waiting List: 1003

Total Stock 2034

Vacant Property 89 (4.3%)

**Statistics Quarter 1 2017**

Offered 44

Appointed 26

Refusals 12

Vacated 26

**Reasons Vacated Quarter 1 2017**

Abandoned 0

Deaths 10

House Surrendered 12

Other 0

Purchased Outright 0

Transfer 4

26

**Homelessness**

**2013 -** 22 presentations (28 people in total)

**2014 -** 60 presentations (115 people in total)

**2015 -** 90 Presentations (172 people in total)

**2016 -** 105 Presentations (131 Adults + 109 children = 240 people in total)

**2017 -** 15 Presentations (22 adults + 13 children = 35 people in total)

A discussion took place on the Housing Programme during which the following points were raised:

* Where are the people presenting as homeless coming from? Are they from outside of the area? Lynda McGavigan explained that those presenting as homeless include people who have received eviction notices; which is happening more and more. There are also people who find themselves in unfortunate circumstances e.g. domestic violence and others who were in community care. Lynda explained that presentations from people outside the area are not an issue as they are sent back to their originating local authority.
* Refusal of housing offers – reasons include in private renting, not wanting to move, not happy with size of house offered. Lynda McGavigan said this is being monitored.
* Rent owed to County Council and looking for Social housing support again – Lynda McGavigan explained that anyone who owes rent is not considered for support until rent is cleared or an agreement in place.
* Vacant properties not been offered – Q1 2017, 44 offered with 12 refusals, efforts being made on an on-going basis in this regard. Joe McLoughlin explained some of the vacant houses are in areas where there is no demand.
* Homeless presentations – it was queried whether people present as homeless in order to ‘jump the queue’ on the housing list. Joe McLoughlin explained this is not the case, they do not jump priority.
* How the 15 homeless to date were dealt with – Lynda McGavigan explained that the some were on the housing list, therefore HAP was arranged when they sought private rented. Others applied for housing in order to avail of HAP.

1. **REPAIR & LEASE SCHEME**

Ms. Lynda McGavigan outlined this week the department would be advertising/promoting the scheme nationally on social media. To date Cavan County Council have received 20+ applications for the repair and lease scheme. While 20 + may not go ahead, positive to see the numbers applying so far.

1. **HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENT (HAP)**

Ms Lynda McGavigan explained, to date Cavan County Council has 40 active HAP tenancies.

Discussions have taken place with the Department of Social Protection in relation to organising the transfer of current rent supplement recipients to HAP.

Lynda McGavigan also explained that the Department have issued updated guidelines to include ‘Inter-Authority Movement’ – i.e., when on the list in Cavan you can source accommodation in another county and avail of HAP. As Cavan falls into the lowers income band for Social Housing Support, those on the list in Cavan can move to any county. However, anyone on a housing list in a county on a higher income band cannot move to a county with a low income band.

1. **Housing Needs Assessment (HNA)**

Lynda McGavigan outlined a change in the Housing Needs Assessment in that it is now taking place annually, previously this used to be every three years. She also explained that this year’s HNA will be taking place from June so advised all to expect queries. The purpose of it is to see if people are still interested on being on the Social Housing List and therefore determine the net need for Social Housing Support. It is carried out on applicants, not tenants.

1. **A.O.B**
2. Cllr Noel Connell raised an issue concerning the Tenant Purchase Scheme. He explained that the criteria to be in employment is causing some people to not be eligible to purchase their house, giving the example of someone who is a pensioner or someone who has saved money from employment yet not currently employed. Further to this queried what happens in cases, where the tenant dies, and a family member is left in the LA house.

Lynda McGavigan explained, this is a national scheme and therefore the local authority has no discretion. Lynda explained where a tenant is deceased and a family remains in the house, they can apply for a succession of tenancy.

1. Mr Larry McCluskey requested that a representative from the Arts and Culture be asked to attend the next SPC meeting and that they provide information on any events taking place in the county.
2. Cllr Paddy O’Reilly asked for information on who qualifies for HAP – Lynda Mc Gavigan explained HAP is available for anyone who qualifies for the housing list. Madelieine Ui Mhealoid complimented the HAP scheme in that it facilitates people in allowing them to go back to work while in receipt of the payment.
3. Lynda McGavigan informed the meeting that she is leaving he Housing Dept to take up a new position in the council. She thanked everyone for their help and assistance.
4. Cllr Madeline Argue thanked Lynda for her work and help while in the Housing Department and extended her compliment to the staff of the housing section.
5. **DATE AND VENUE FOR NEXT MEETING:**

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on 14th September 2017 at 2.30pm.

**Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Chairperson**