

# Minutes of the Housing & Social Inclusion Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) Meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> September, 2018.

<b>In Attendance:</b>	Cllr. D. McDonnell, Chairperson, Housing SPC Cllr. M. Lohan, Galway City Council Cllr. M. Cubbard, Galway City Council Cllr. N. McNelis, Galway City Council Cllr. M. Farrell, Galway City Council Cllr. O. Crowe, Galway City Council Mr. A. Daly, Irish Congress of Trade Unions Ms. K. Golden, GCCN Representative Ms. K. Timothy, GCCN Representative Mr. P. Carey, Construction Sector
<b>Officials:</b>	Ms. P. Philbin, Director of Services, Housing Department Mr. D. Mahon, Senior Executive Officer, Housing Department Mr. T. Prendergast, A/Senior Engineer, Housing Department Ms. A. Brett, Administrative Officer, Housing Department Ms. S. Carroll, Administrative Officer, Housing Department Ms. K. Fahy, Homeless HAP Placefinder Officer.
<b>Present</b>	Ms. K. Lohan, Assistant Staff Officer, Housing Department
<b>Apologies:</b>	Cllr. J. Walsh, Galway City Council Cllr. M.J. Crowe, Galway City Council

At the outset of the meeting the Chair Cllr. D. McDonnell welcomed Ms. K. Golden and Ms. K. Timothy as new members to the SPC replacing Mr. D. O'Sullivan and Mr. P. Hargaden as GCCN Representatives. He advised the meeting that these appointments would be noted at the October Ordinary Council meeting.

## **1. Presentation from Students Union on student housing issues in Galway City.**

Cllr. D. McDonnell welcomed Mr. Aaron Burke, GMIT Students Union President and Ms. Megan Reilly, NUI Galway Students Union President to the meeting and to make a presentation regarding student accommodation in Galway City.

During the course of the presentation Mr. Burke and Ms. Reilly highlighted the issues students face in securing accommodation in the city and in particular they highlighted the following issues:

- The number of students living in Galway has risen to approximately 26,000 students, however the accommodation available has not increased and little new student specific accommodation has been delivered.
- Due to the difficulty in sourcing accommodation students are availing of short term solutions such as renting in hostels or availing of short term leasing platforms.
- Lack of regulations around Air B and B and similar platforms.
- The hidden homelessness amongst students including sofa surfing.
- The accommodation standards and tenancy rights.
- Students renting properties long distances away from colleges.

- Students are looking at colleges close to home due to the difficulty in accessing accommodation.
- Communal space in some rented properties is withdrawn to increase bed size of properties.
- The cost of living is rising year on year however the student grant has not increased since 2012.

Following the presentation and discussion the following motions were proposed by members:

The following motion was proposed by Cllr. M. Farrell and seconded by Cllr. M. Lohan:

“That Galway City Council’s Housing SPC call on the Minister for Housing Eoghan Murphy and Richard Bruton T.D. Department of Education to work with NUIG and GMIT to develop a programme to provide purpose built, publicly funded student accommodation”

It was agreed to forward this motion to the full Council.

The following motion was proposed by Cllr. M. Cubbard and seconded by Cllr. N. McNelis:

“I propose this Housing SPC contact Minister Richard Bruton and request a review of the third level student grant as current levels are not sufficient in supporting students when sourcing suitable accommodation”.

This was agreed.

## **2. Minutes of last meeting 24<sup>th</sup> May 2018**

The Minutes of the Meeting of 24<sup>th</sup> May, 2018 were proposed by Cllr. M. Lohan and seconded by Mr. A. Daly and agreed.

### **Matters of Accuracy:**

None.

## **3. Matters Arising**

Mr. D. Mahon responded to matters arising from members as follows:

- CENA is developing a proposal regarding Circular Road and it is expected to go to Planning in mid-2019 and it is anticipated that work on Fana Glas will commence in late 2019.
- There is a commitment to restart the LTACC as required under the Traveller Accommodation Act
- Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) – c.300 applications were closed, phone calls were made, 3 letters issued prior to the removal of applicants who had not returned a HNA form. The final figures for the HNA will be available near the end of the year.
- Officials met with O’Culainn Housing Association at the end of June and they are available to provide assistance if an affordable scheme is announced.
- Choice Based Letting will move forward by the end of 2018.
- Questions regarding Capital Programme will be dealt with under Item Number 6.

Ms. S. Carroll, Administrative Officer responded to matters arising from members as follows:

- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy details what happens for low level nuisance and the procedures followed.
- Figures of rent review can be circulated.
- CCTV – there is ongoing meetings between the CCMA and the Department of Justice regarding the changes in legislation around installation of CCTV and therefore programmes cannot start until these issues are resolved.

During the discussion on the minutes the following motion was proposed by Cllr. M. Cubbard and seconded by Cllr. M. Lohan:

“The Housing Department do their utmost to contact those who failed to respond to the Housing Needs Assessment to date”.

This was agreed.

It was agreed to take Item Number 6 as the next item on the agenda.

## **6. Capital Programme Update – (including Service Site Fund)**

Mr. T. Prendergast, A/Senior Engineer provided members with an update on the current status on planned projects as follows:

Ard Cre:	Phase 1 – fully completed Phase 2 – tender process commenced with a completion date of 2020
Ballyburke PPP:	Tender competition underway and expected on site in mid-2019, PPP is a 25 year period and properties will revert to control of Galway City Council after 25 years.
Monivea Road:	Publish Part VIII in Quarter 4 2018 and Part VIII before Council in Quarter 1 2019.
Headford Road:	Stage 1 approval received and expected to go to Procurement in early 2019
Keeraun:	Proposal currently with Department, cost benefit analysis in preparation, pending outcome stage one approval anticipated in November 2018.
Baile an Choiste:	Issue with access, applied for funds to upgrade road.

Infill sites at Castlepark, Corrib Park and Ballinfoile: Part VIII anticipated before Council in late 2018 or early 2019.

Over 500 units will be built on Galway City Council land up to the end of 2021 and Voluntary Housing Associations will build 250-300 units over the same period. Following a detailed discussion Mr. T. Prendergast replied to queries raised by members as follows:

- The 3 Part VIII proposals for the infill sites can be presented to Council separately.
- The Carn Ard plans relate to an adjacent land owner, Galway City Council gave a letter of consent, the Planning Permission can be viewed on-line, the Planning Permission number can be provided to members. He understands that access will be available on both sides.
- Public open space is still available in estate – the zoning on the land is zoned R.
- The 1,100 housing delivery target includes acquisitions, leasing units, delivered units to date and Approved Housing Bodies units approved.
- One site has been submitted under the Land Service Site Fund.
- Galway City Council’s bid for the Galwegians site was not successful and Galway City Council’s current land bank is almost exhausted.
- The access road for the Headford Road development will be near the new ring road.
- 81 units at the Headford Road are included in the Approved Housing Bodies figures.

## **4. Homeless Report and update (including HAP Homeless Placefinder)**

Mr. D. Mahon, Senior Executive Officer provided members with an update on the current homeless figures. He advised that the Cold Weather Response is planned to run similar to last year with a capacity of 30 beds over two locations during the period November to April.

A premises has been acquired to run as a family hub. Tenders for a provider have been issued and it is envisaged to have the provider in place with the hub operational in Quarter 1 2019. The hub will provide accommodation for up to 12 families. He advised that Galway City Council has been selected as a pilot for modular housing to meet the needs of homeless families and that 15 units are planned.

Ms. K. Fahy, HAP Homeless Placefinder gave members a briefing on the role of the Homeless HAP Placefinder. She also advised members of number of tenancies signed to date and tenancies in progress since the establishment of the role in June 2018.

## **5. Private Rented Market in Galway - overview**

Ms. A. Brett, Administrative Officer gave members a summary of the difficulties tenants and the local authority face in the private rented market. In particular she outlined:

- Galway has a high percentage of rented properties, however Galway City is a rent pressure zone and that high demand and low supply is an issue, effectively meaning rent caps are not effective.
- The number of terminations of tenancies is increasing and it is therefore hard for families to put down roots due to uncertainty of tenure.
- Large number of RAS and LTL Notice-to-Quits issued to tenants.
- Increasing sale of rented properties.
- 60% of HAP tenancies require discretionary payment and at least 40% of tenants are known to pay a top up to the landlord, however this figure may be higher as the Local Authority possibly does not know about all top ups tenants pay to landlords.
- Galway City Council cannot match the rent asking price on the open market.
- Short-term (holiday lettings) is becoming an increasing issue for the availability of long term letting properties.
- Bills are currently going through the Oireachtas to address some of the issues in the rental sector.
- National Government have an over-reliance on the private rented sector.
- PTR can only act upon a complaint.

## **7. Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014-2018 - update**

Mr. D. Mahon advised members that an assessment of need is currently taking place. He advised that this assessment will include assessment of:

- Existing and projected accommodation needs during the period of the Traveller Accommodation Programme.
- The types of accommodation required.
- Information will be gathered by the Local Authority and consultation with Stakeholders.

## **8. Any Other Business:**

The next meeting was scheduled for 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2018.

This concluded the business of the meeting.