

Minutes of the Housing Strategic Policy Committee Meeting

Friday 24th November, 2023

In Attendance: Cllr. D. Lyons, Galway City Council (Chair)
Cllr. T. O' Flaherty, Galway City Council
Cllr. D. McDonnell, Galway City Council
Cllr. E. Hoare, Galway City Council
Cllr. A. Cheevers, Galway City Council
Cllr. I. Byrne, Galway City Council
Cllr. M. Cubbard, Galway City Council
Mr. M. Lohan, ICTU Representative
Ms. M. Conneely, GCCN Representative

Officials: Ms. H. Martyn, A/Senior Executive Officer, Housing Department
Ms. M. Gibsey, Administrative Officer, Housing Department
Ms. A. Brett, Administrative Officer, Housing Department
Ms. M. Fallon Ward, Administrative Officer, Housing Department
Mr. M. Cormican, Senior Engineer, Housing Department
Mr. D. Healy, A/Administrative Officer, Housing Department

Apologies: Cllr. I. Byrne, Galway City Council
Cllr. M. O'Connor, Galway City Council

Present Ms. F. Griffin, Assistant Staff Officer, Housing Department

1. Minutes of Meeting held on 29th September, 2023

The Minutes of the Meeting of 29th September, 2023 were proposed by Cllr. T. O'Flaherty and seconded by Ms. K. Golden and agreed by all.

2. Matters Arising

- An update was sought in relation to void properties – It was advised GCC had approx. 100 surrenders in 10 Months which will be under 50 still void going into 2024. Efforts are ongoing to reduce the amount of time it takes to return a property to ready to let status.
- A query on the retrofitting programme was requested – It is a yearly funded programme in which GCC top up 70 – 75% of the cost. Once 2024 funding has been established more information will be released in relation to the projected number of properties that will be completed in 2024, it was advised the focus at the moment is to target properties that use solid fuel as their primary heat source.

3. Traveller Accommodation Plan update

An update was provided on the Traveller Accommodation Plan and queries responded to as follows:

- Are any of the properties in Fana Glas currently occupied – A maximum of 2 units are currently occupied.
- Have sites in the West of the City been established for Traveller Housing Schemes

4. Housing Capital & Affordable Housing update

An update was circulated to members in advance of the meeting. Queries raised by the members were responded to on

- Clybaun Scheme breakdown of units;
- No update on Merchants Road Scheme as still with An Bord Pleanala; -
- Proposed to revisit the schemes at Keeraun and Headford Road;
- Carnmore Fire – Insurance matters not resolved ;
- HAP Rates.

5. Introduction of Tenant Purchase Application Fee

Following consultation with other Local Authorities it is has been agreed that Galway City Council will introduce an initial Tenant Purchase Application Fee of €20 and a fee of €100 for all subsequent applications.

The council's loans department are experiencing high volumes of applications for the Tenant Purchase Scheme. Many of these applications are closed within 6 months as the applicant does not provide information on how they are going to finance the purchase. In the meantime, Galway City Council seeks a valuation on the property at a cost of €130.00 each. The fee will be introduced for all new applications from 4 December 2023.

The introduction of the Tenant Purchase Fee was agreed by the members.

6. Homeless Update

Ms. H Martyn provided an update on a report which was circulated to the members in advance of the meeting and responded to queries raised by the members as follows:

- Number of rough sleepers
- Tenant in Situ
- COPE Outreach

7. A.O.B

- The SPC draft work programme for 2024 was agreed by the members along with proposed meeting dates for 2024.
- It was noted that the meeting had experienced sound issues throughout and a request was made that the IT Department be contacted to ensure it does not occur going forward.

Next Meeting scheduled for Friday 23rd February, 2024 at 9.30 am.