

Minutes of Housing Strategic Policy Committee (SPC4) Meeting held 31st March, 2016

Present: Cllr. Andrew McGuinness - Chairperson , Cllr. Michael McCarthy, Cllr. Melissa O'Neill, Cllr. Joe Malone, Brian Dunlop, Declan Murphy , Yvonne Moriarty

Apologies: Cllr. Fidelis Doherty, Cllr. Patrick O'Neill

In Attendance: Maria Melia, Martin Mullally, Lisa Bourke, Margaret Newport, Eimear Cody, Cllr. Maurice Shortall, Cllr Pat Fitzpatrick, Cllr Breda Gardiner, Fergus Keane, Jean Murphy, Caroline O'Brien, Deirdre Kehoe, Susan Doherty

1. Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 21st January, 2016 were adopted on the proposal of Cllr Michael McCarthy and seconded by Cllr. Melissa O'Neill.

2. Presentation by the Kilkenny Homeless Action Team (KHAT)

Margaret Newport gave a presentation on the Kilkenny Housing Action Team (KHAT) stating that KHAT was established in June 2007 with the aim of “developing and enhancing the delivery of Homeless Services in an integrated, efficient and effective way” and gave details of the aims, objectives and membership of KHAT. The following members of KHAT each spoke about the roles played by the organisations they represent on the KHAT:

- Margaret Newport for Ciara O'Neill, HEO, Department of Social Protection
- Jean Murphy , A/Manager, Amber Women's Refuge
- Fergus Keane, Manager, Good Shepherd Centre
- Susan Doherty, Ardú, Carlow/Kilkenny Substance Misuse Team
- Margaret Newport, Senior Social Worker, Kilkenny County Council
- Deirdre Kehoe, Project Worker, Focus Ireland
- Caroline O'Brien, Social Work Team Leader, Mental Health Services

Margaret Newport in conclusion stated that KHAT has established an effective and efficient model of service provision to homeless service users in Kilkenny and is seen as a “Best Practice Model” nationwide for other counties considering the introduction of homeless action teams. She stated that an increase in housing supply is the only answer to meeting the long term secure and sustainable accommodation where the necessary support service can be provided, as a result the Kilkenny Housing Action Team are recommending the establishment of a Kilkenny Interagency Task Force to address the housing crisis in Kilkenny City & County.

Cllr. Andrew McGuinness thanked the members of the KHAT for their presentations and requested that a special meeting of the full Council be called, where this presentation could be given to members and to discuss the recommendation for the establishment of a Kilkenny Interagency Task Force and potential solutions.

Some discussion followed regarding lack of accommodation in Kilkenny, the recent rent review, RAS, HAP, Anti Social behaviour policies and supports given to clients by the agencies represented on KHAT with contributions from all present.

With regard to the lack of rental accommodation it was suggested by Cllr. Andrew McGuinness that an advert be placed in local papers advertising the benefits to Landlords joining the HAP scheme. Maria Melia confirmed that the executive would look at progressing this proposal and the request for a special Council meeting.

Cllr. Melissa O'Neill suggested that this SPC put forward a proposal for the inclusion of more two bed, four bed and disabled access properties on future housing developments.

3. Department Allocations 2016

Martin Mullally outlined the allocations received to date from the Department of Environment and agreed to circulate a copy of the final allocations once available.

4. AOB

Tenant (Incremental) Purchase Scheme 2016 – Members were advised of public Advertisement to be placed in local newspapers and completion of application form with the introduction of a fee €20 (refunded in cases of successful purchases) and a fee of €100 towards the costs of an independent valuation. Agreed to send information pack to all elected members.

Maria Melia stated that the Management Company engaged to manage Traveller accommodation will commence work on Monday 4th April, 2016.

The next meeting of Housing SPC will be held on Thursday 9th June, 2016 at 11am in Johns Green House, Johns Green, Kilkenny.