

## **Minutes of Meeting of SPC 3 – Housing**

**Held on 24<sup>th</sup> October, 2019 in the Main Meeting Room, John's Green House.**

**Present:** Cllr. Joe Malone, Cllr. Andrew McGuinness, Cllr. Eamon Aylward, Cllr. Eugene McGuinness, Cllr. Martin Brett, Mags Morrissey, Lisa Morris, John Bourke, Yvonne Moriarty.

**In attendance:** Mary Mullholland, Martin Mullally, Margaret Newport, Mary Cashin.

**Apologies:** Cllr. Joe Lyons, Cllr. Denis Hynes, Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick, Brian Dunlop.

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Joe Malone, Chairperson, facilitated introductions for new committee members and thanked Cllr. Andrew McGuinness for his Chairmanship of the committee during the last Council.

Cllr. Malone requested that the committee appoint Cllr. Eamon Aylward as Vice Chairperson of the committee.

**Proposed:** Cllr. Andrew McGuinness

**Seconded:** Cllr. Martin Brett

and agreed that Cllr. Eamon Aylward act as Vice Chairperson of SPC 3 – Housing.

### **Item 1 – Minutes of Meeting of 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2019**

Minutes taken as read by Committee.

### **Item 2 – Strategic Policy Committee Scheme (a) Membership (b) Role**

Martin Mullally advised that the Strategic Policy Committee Scheme was the overarching policy giving direction regarding the role and operation of Strategic Policy Committees.

An overview of committee membership, meeting arrangements, attendance of media, quorums, and method of notification was provided to members.

Members were provided with a copy of the Strategic Policy Committee Scheme and hand out on committee structure.

**Action 1:** Administration to liaise with I.S. regarding e-mail issues raised by Elected Members.

### **Item 3 – Allocation Policy (a) Transfers (b) Downsizing**

Mary Mullholland advised that Kilkenny County Council's current allocations policy was adopted in 2011 and that it was timely that a review was undertaken given the introduction of new policy at National level and the subsequent changes in facilitation of social housing locally over the preceding years.

An overview of key factors within the current scheme was provided and areas for consideration were highlighted. The overview provided dealt with items (a) to (i) as outlined in the 2011 Allocations Scheme for Social Housing which was provided in soft and hard copy to members.

The following areas were highlighted for consideration by the members: -

- Clarification of terms and inclusion of relevant supporting policy which denote order of priority particularly in relation to unfit accommodation, overcrowded, elderly, disability and traveller priority terms.
- Time on list needs to be clearer and needs to have a stronger priority.
- A new Incremental Purchase Scheme will be active from 2020 and consideration should be given for inclusion in a new scheme.
- Choice Based Letting while included in KCC's 2011 Allocation Scheme has not been activated. Mary provided an overview of how Choice Based Letting operates and advised that KCC is working on the introduction of same.
- Refusal by the local authority to allocate on anti-social behaviour grounds can only be based on factual legal outcomes and not on complaints. A fair and equitable approach must be accommodated.
- Mary requested that particular attention be given to the area of transfers, in particular, inclusion of Hap and defined circumstances that should facilitate a transfer. It was noted that 12% of allocations in 2018 arose from transfer requests and that large volumes of transfer requests are difficult to deal with in a housing crises as concentration should be placed on those who have no housing solution.

Mary Mullholland advised that it would be necessary to have a robust policy that is understandable for the reader.

**Action 2:** Legal clarification required regarding refusal of offer under Choice Based Letting Scheme

**Action 3:** Draft policy document to be circulated before next meeting for consideration by the members.

**Contributions:** Cllr. Andrew McGuinness, Cllr. Eamon Aylward, Yvonne Moriarty, Cllr. Martin Brett.

#### **Item 4 – Housing Capital Update**

Martin Mullally provided an overview of the Capital Programme, 2019 and a copy of the report was provided to members.

The members were advised that Kilkenny County Council will surpass its target of 190 units as provided for in Rebuilding Ireland. Members were provided with details of Kilkenny County Council's Construction Programme and Acquisitions by Municipal Districts.

**Action 4:** Committee to write to Respond! to query delays which have delayed the allocation of dwellings.

**Contributions:** Cllr. Joe Malone, Cllr. Andrew McGuinness.

#### **Item 5 – Homeless Update**

Martin Mullally provided the committee with an overview of current homeless trends noting a small increase in presentations for Quarter 3, 2019. It was noted that there was cost reduction of 22% for emergency B&B which was attributed to alternative homeless solutions/initiatives and prevention work by Homeless Team.

Mary Mullholland advised that prevention work undertaken by the Homeless Team goes under the radar and she wanted to commend the work of the Homeless Team. This commendation was supported by Cllr. Joe Malone.

**Contributions:** Cllr. Andrew McGuinness, Cllr. Martin Brett, Cllr. Joe Malone.

### **Item 6 – Refugee Resettlement Strategy**

Martin Mullally provided overview of Resettlement Strategy Report which was provided to members. He advised that 8 towns had been identified to accommodate 25 families and that it had taken a period of 2 years to deliver the programme with a final family to be accommodated in November. The contracts for the support worker and interpreter provided by the Department of Justice will end in March, 2020.

A discussion regarding social media coverage of direct provision centre in Ballyragget was discussed and Mary Mullholland advised that the Department of Justice had confirmed that there were no plans for same and as such the social media coverage was fake news.

The sympathy of the committee was also extended to the families of the victims of people trafficking recently found dead in the U.K.

Mary Mullholland provided members with overview of Department of Justice process for provision of reception centre.

**Contributions:** Cllr. Andrew McGuinness, Cllr. Eamon Aylward, Yvonne Moriarty, Cllr. Joe Malone.

### **Item 7 – Date for Next Meeting**

The next meeting to take place on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> December, 2019.

Cllr. Malone requested that two of four of next year's meetings take place in alternative locations namely the Tholsel and a rural location.

### **Item 8 – Any Other Business**

Make Ireland Sustainable for All submission brought to attention of members.

Mary Mullholland asked members to consider policy areas they may wish to bring forward for discussion/review.

This concluded the business of the meeting.