

Minutes of Strategic Policy Committee 4 – Housing Meeting

Held on 14th February, 2019 at 11.00 a.m. in John's Green House

Present: Cllr. Michael McCarthy, Cllr. Maurice Shortall, Cllr. Joe Malone, Noel Sherry, Cllr. Andrew McGuinness, Cllr Melissa O'Neill, Declan Murphy

In Attendance: Mary Mulholland, Director of Services, Martin Mullally, Martina Comerford, KCC

Apologies: Cllr, Fidelis Doherty, Brian Dunlop, Yvonne Moriarty,

A vote of sympathy by members was extended to Denis Lawlor, Senior Executive Engineer on the passing of his brother.

Item 1 Adoption of Minutes

Proposed : Cllr McCarthy

Seconded : Cllr Shortall

No Matters arising

Item 2 Homeless Update

Martin Mullally referred to handout on homeless presentations, showing details of presentations in 2018, along with the comparative monthly presentations for 2016 and 2017. Number of Homeless/Potentially Homeless presentations to 31/12/2018 was 273, it was noted that this figure is a decrease on previous years. Martin outlined a reduction in expenditure on B&B and Emergency Accommodation in 2018 & noted the input from Noel Sherry at the Good Shepherd centre, Greensbridge House and the appointment of HAP Place finder, in securing accommodation as reasons for the reduction in emergency accommodation costs.

Cllr Malone noted the good work of the Good Shepherd Centre and also asked if there are currently rough sleepers in Kilkenny. Martin reported that following our two rough sleepers counts in 2018 there were no incidents of rough sleeping recorded. There may be incidental cases of rough sleeping in Kilkenny.

Item 3 Capital Programme

Martin Mullally gave a report on 2018 Capital delivery programme and proposed delivery for 2019 noting that Kilkenny County Council exceeded its target numbers for 2018. Whilst the Department have not outlined actual target figures for 2019 to date, it is estimated that the numbers will be similar to 2018. Questions raised by members included penalty for those not achieving their targets, nominations for Nuncio road development, traveller accommodation programme, progress on housing schemes at Station Road, Ballyraggett, Donaguile, Castlecomer, Broguemaker, Castlecomer Road and the need to purchase land and create a land bank to meet current and future need.

Mary Mulholland outlined the role of the Land Development Agency and the challenge for individual Local Authorities is the financing of same.

Action: Martina will circulate “commonly used terms” and a list of acronyms to each member of the SPC.

Item 4 Refugee Resettlement Programme Update

Referring to the report on Refugee Resettlement programme, Martin Mullally confirmed Kilkenny County Council’s commitment to resettle 140 refugees by mid 2019. Martin explained how properties were sourced and the challenges in acquiring suitable properties in some areas. Martin confirmed that the inter agency Resettlement group, were liaising with all service providers in the areas, in relation to school placements, medical and all other supports. Cllr McCarthy congratulated the programme and staff who supported it but proposed that the SPC request the Department of Justice for the continuation of the current Resettlement workers contract after 2019 in order to provide continued supports to the families. Cllr Shortall seconded this request.

Cllr Melissa O’Neill again congratulated the success of the programme and requested details of family composition, if families had sourced employment and if CE schemes would be made available to families. Martin confirmed that in total 111 persons had been accommodated to date, totalling 20 families. He stated that these families now have the same rights as any other Irish citizens with regard to accessing CE schemes, services and supports and the resettlement team is supporting family members to source local training and employment opportunities.

Item 5 UPDATES

- **Mary Mulholland gave an update on the proposed Incremental Purchase Scheme (IPS).** This scheme allows for both tenants and housing applicants to apply to purchase a number of Council built properties at a reduced cost and a percentage of these could be offered to tenants/applicants to purchase. This scheme encourages mixed tenure in estates and contributes to good estate management. Louth and Mayo have implemented the scheme to date.

Action : IPS Scheme to be circulated to SPC members for review and comment. Members are asked to send comments/changes directly to Mary Mulholland. Final draft of document will be made available for the next SPC meeting. If agreed at SPC the draft policy document will go to the Department of Housing and Local Government and brought to full Council for adoption.

- **Affordable Housing Update.** Mary Mulholland gave an update on the proposed national Affordable Housing scheme. New legislation introduced in June 2018 requires each Local Authority to have a scheme adopted by June 2019. To date, the statistics show there is not an affordability issue county wide and may be limited to specific areas. The real issue is supply.
- **Extensions Policy .** Deferred to next meeting.

Item 6 AOB

- **Dates for 2019 meetings** – Next meeting agreed for 4th April, 2019 and remainder will be agreed after local elections.
- **Policy on Downsizing/Rightsizing.** Martin Mullally outlined that a body of work needs to be done in relation to under occupancy and the need to have a policy in place to determine how this can be achieved within Kilkenny. A number of Councillors has raised this matter in the Chamber and at previous SPC meetings. A body of work needs to be done identifying the number and location involved that will inform the drafting of the policy.
- **Cllr. Melissa O’Neill** – Thanked all who attended the sod-turning event in Piltown

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Chairperson

SPC 4