

Minutes of Strategic Policy Committee 4 – Housing

Held on 9th November 2017 at 11.00 a.m. in John's Green House

Present: Cllr. Andrew McGuinness, Cllr. Michael McCarthy, Cllr. Joe Malone, Cllr. Melissa O'Neill, Cllr. Fidelis Doherty, Yvonne Moriarty, Linda Tierney, Mary Egan, Brian Dunlop.

In Attendance: Martin Mullally, Mary Cashin, Lindsey Butler, Eimear Cody.

Apologies: Declan Murphy, Margaret Newport.

1. Adoption of Minutes of 20th June 2017

Proposed: Cllr. O'Neill

Seconded: Yvonne Moriarty

2. Matters Arising

Cllr. O'Neill requested an amendment to previous minute to include her proposal for inclusion of Disability Strategy agenda of current meeting. It was noted while this proposal was not in the minutes of the previous meeting the item had been included on the agenda for the current meeting.

Cllr. O'Neill also requested more content in minutes going forward and it was agreed to include this comment in matters arising.

Cllr. McGuinness, Chairperson, announced the resignation of Cllr. P. O'Neill from the committee and the appreciation of the committee was extended to Cllr. P. O'Neill for his contributions to date.

Cllr. McGuinness also requested reply to letter forwarded from Katherine Peacocke, PPN Development Officer.

Cllr. O'Neill advised the incorrect information had been published on KK Journal and that she had complained this page to Facebook. Cllr. McGuinness advised that he had spoken with the Chief Executive regarding same and will report back to Council. He also advised that the Refugee Resettlement Programme is an item on the agenda for discussion later in the meeting.

3. Mortgage to Rent Scheme (MTR) – Claire Feeney, National Co-Ordinator, Housing Agency

Claire Feeney provided a PowerPoint presentation outlining the Mortgage to Rent Scheme and gave an overview of the operation of the scheme. She detailed the 4 models of MTR namely:-

- Local Authority MTR
- Approved Housing Body MTR
- Icare Housing and AIB MTR
- Private Company MTR

Contributions: Cllr. O'Neill welcomed the presentation. Queries raised by Cllr. O'Neill were answered by Claire Feeney.

Claire advised that she would forward sample letters, details on eligibility criteria and leaflets for dissemination.

This presentation was also provided in hard copy to committee members.

4. Disability Strategy

Martin Mullally advised that the updated Draft Strategy had been discussed at meeting of 26th January, 2017 and had been submitted to the Housing Agency for inclusion in the National Disability Strategy, 2016-2020. He also advised that Kilkenny's Disability Strategy Steering Group representing the four pillars of sensory, mental health, physical and intellectual and/or autism meet four times per year. The HSE and Local Authority Executive are also represented on the Steering Group.

Martin provided an update on targets and the decongregation of S. Patrick's, Kells Road, Kilkenny.

Claire Feeney advised that the CAS scheme is now open for applications with no closing date and this will facilitate the availability of funding for new builds which are deemed better value for money in comparison with retrofitting. She acknowledged that the challenge would be the acquisition of sites for new builds.

Martin Mullally acknowledged the work of the Steering Committee and Claire Feeney's support in her capacity as National Disability Co-ordinator.

Contributions: Cllr. Malone, Cllr. O'Neill and Yvonne Moriarty contributed to this item and queries raised were answered by Martin Mullally and Claire Feeney.

An overview of the Disability Strategy presentation and a copy of the National Disability Plan, 2016-2020 was provided to committee members. The Strategy is also available on Council's website.

5. Homeless Update

Martin Mullally provided homeless update and gave overview of statistics for September and October 2017. He advised that there had been 271 presentations to 31st October, 2017 and that there were currently 53 in homeless services.

Cllr. McGuinness requested that any questions in relation to this presentation be e-mailed to Martin Mullally for reply.

A copy of this presentation outlining statistics was provided to Committee members.

6. Capital Schemes Update

Eimear Cody, Acting Senior Executive Engineer, provided a presentation on Kilkenny County Council's Construction Programme totalling 278 units. She advised that this information had been e-mailed previously to Elected Members and Oireachtas Members.

Eimear outlined the status of various sites including Broguemaker site on Castlecomer Road, Kilkenny. Martin Mullally requested members to contact him or Eimear with any queries/concerns regarding Broguemaker site.

Contributions: Cllr. McCarty, Cllr. O'Neill, Cllr. Malone, Cllr. Doherty and queries raised were answered by Eimear Cody and Martin Mullally.

Action: Eimear Cody to provide timeframes for delivery of 278 units.

7. Refugee Resettlement Programme

Lindsey Butler, Refugee Resettlement Project Co-ordinator provided an overview of resettlement process.

She advised that Kilkenny is one of six counties providing asylum and protection to people from Syria.

A statutory inter agency group has been set up to facilitate the needs of the Refugees for when they arrive in Kilkenny and Kilkenny County Council had also entered a tender on E-Tenders inviting tenders for the provision of a 27 month Resettlement Programme to include a Resettlement Worker and Cultural Worker which was won by RESPOND Support. Funding is 75% European and 25% exchequer with a total of €378,000 for the integration process.

Lindsey advised that the Red Cross had taken pledges and are organising the housing of single men and women therefore Kilkenny will deal with families in terms of resettlement.

Lindsey mentioned that it was important that the families maintained contact with their extended families in Syria and therefore would need access to broadband to do so.

Contributions: Yvonne Moriarty, Cllr. McCarty, Cllr. O'Neill, Cllr. Doherty and queries raised were answered by Lindsey Butler.

Cllr. O'Neill requested to meet families when they arrive in Kilkenny and was advised by Lindsey that Syrian families will not be hosted in the same manner as Sudanese families.

Cllr. Doherty requested that the Committee support Deirdre Clune, M.E.P., in her action to secure €120m funding for broadband.

Yvonne Moriarty advised that Noreside Resource Centre can be used by Refugees to access broadband.

8. Dates for 2018 Meetings

25/01/2018

29/03/2018

07/06/2018

06/09/2018

08/11/2018

Proposed: Cllr. O'Neill

Seconded: Cllr. McCarthy

Cllr. McGuinness advised that there would be scope for calling an emergency meeting should the need arise.

9. A.O.B.

Tenant Handbook

Martin Mullally advised that the Tenant Handbook would be disseminated to members shortly.

Cllr. McCarthy queried inspection level of existing stock and was advised that inspection would take place during retrofitting and in response to a tenant making contact with a maintenance issue or visit by Tenant Liaison Officer.

The issue Stock Survey was discussed and Martin advised that Limerick & Clare County Councils had been nominated as pilot projects and had tendered for same. It is the intention that Kilkenny County Council will work towards a standard stock survey.

It was noted that Kilkenny County Council is still responsible for larger structural work to its stock and therefore it is not envisaged that there would be a decline in condition of stock.

Cllr. O'Neill

Cllr. O'Neill requested that Kilkenny County Council liaise with Brothers of Charity regarding acquisition of four bungalows that are for sale.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

**Cllr. Andrew McGuinness,
Chairperson,
SPC 4 – Housing.**