

## COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

### Minutes of Housing SPC Meeting held on Wednesday, 4<sup>th</sup> November 2020 via Microsoft Teams at 10.00am

#### I Láthair:-

**Baill:** Cllr. J. Byrne, Chairperson  
Cllr. J. McClearn  
Cllr. J. Charity  
Cllr. E. Mannion  
Cllr. T. Broderick  
Cllr. C. Keaveney  
Cllr. S. Walsh  
Mr. E McGuane (Business)  
Ms. C. McGrath (Social Inclusion)  
Ms. M. Conneely  
Ms. T. Flynn

**Oifigigh:** Mr. L. Hanrahan, Director of Services, Housing  
Mr. G. Scully, Senior Executive Officer, Housing (via MS Teams)  
Ms. N. Heffernan, Administrative Officer, Housing  
Ms. R. Lowe, Senior Executive Engineer, Housing  
  
Ms. E. McKiernan, Acting Staff Officer, Housing

**Apologies:** Ms. J. Brann, Mr. K. Keon

## **PRESENTATION FROM PETER MC VERRY TRUST**

Mr. Pat Doyle Chief Executive Officer and Mr. Francis Doherty Director of Housing gave a presentation on the work of the Peter McVerry Trust to the member of the Strategic Policy Committee.

They outlined the work of the Peter McVerry Trust to date and detailed how they are expanding delivery of the Housing First model. They stated that they have a high success rate with 89% of their clients successfully maintaining their tenancy. They stated that they achieve this by offering intensive support to tenants. They advised that they have over 60 houses in the pipeline to be delivered under the Repair and Lease scheme. They also referred to their delivery of housing under the Buy and Renew scheme and their regeneration work with Limerick City Council. They stated that they offer wrap around support to their tenants and are specialists in working with people leaving care, individuals with addictions and people with a variety of complex needs.

## **MINUTES**

The minutes from the SPC meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2020 were proposed by Cllr. Keaveney, seconded by Cllr. Charity and adopted.

It was noted that the Tenancy Sustainment Strategy which had been discussed at the previous meeting of the Strategic Policy Committee had been adopted by the Plenary Council.

## **CAPITAL UPDATE**

Ms. Lowe provided an update on the delivery of social housing under the capital scheme:

- Contract for construction of Fana Bhuí has been signed for 49 houses.
- Craughwell Traveller Specific Group Housing Scheme will be finished in early 2021.
- Part 8 planning application has been submitted for 10 units in Kinvara.
- The plan for the major reconstruction of Bridgecourt, Ahascragh is with An Bord Pleanála for consideration due to environmental concerns.
- The second phase of turnkey housing units at Tullahill, Loughrea has been completed.
- The first phase of 8 turnkey units at Kylebroughlan, Moycullen has been completed.
- Land has been acquired for social housing at Claregalway and a Stage 1 approval request submitted to the Department of Housing.

## **DRAFT ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR STRATEGY 2021**

Cllr. Byrne explained that the Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy follows on from the Tenancy Sustainment Strategy which had been approved at the previous meeting of the SPC. He noted that the ASB Strategy had been circulated to the members of the SPC prior to the meeting for their consideration. He commented that it had been circulated to all members of the Council and submissions had been invited from them. He said that some submissions had been received, all of which had been considered and amendments had been made to include some of the suggestions made.

Ms. Heffernan outlined the contents of the Draft Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy for the consideration of the members. She advised that submissions had been received from Cllr. Curley, Cllr. Killilea and Cllr. Broderick in relation to the draft document. Ms. Heffernan stated that as a Housing Authority Galway County Council is required to have an Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy. She read the proposed Mission Statement of the Strategy which had been revised from the previous one.

She noted that Cllr. Killilea had requested that the definition of anti-social behaviour from the Housing Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2014 be amended to include reference to, in addition to “a person’s use or enjoyment of his/her home” - a place of work/place of worship/place of recreation. She advised that it is not possible to make this amendment as the definition as stated is enshrined in legislation.

She noted that the categories of complaints of anti-social behaviour were similar to the previous strategy with some additional complaints categorised in Category C. She advised that whilst some complaints listed in Category C are not covered in Housing Anti-Social Behaviour legislation they are a cause of nuisance and disturbance to neighbours and a threat to sustainable communities, eg. noise, refuse. They are also considered breaches of tenancy agreements.

Ms. Heffernan said that prior to an allocation of a tenancy the Housing Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1997 permits a Local Authority to vet the housing applicants and other persons deemed relevant to the allocation of a tenancy. Mr. Scully added that there is a vigorous matrix applied to all applicants that looks at convictions in the previous five years as provided by An Garda Síochána and the behaviour in previous tenancies. He said that the process had been tested in the Courts on several occasions in the last year. Ms. Heffernan advised that Cllr.

Killilea had requested that if a negative Garda report was received in the three years following an allocation that the Council could initiate proceedings to gain vacant possession of the property. However, legislation does not allow for the Council to re-vet tenants each year.

Ms. Heffernan said that the Council has established multi-agency contacts which may assist in addressing anti-social behaviour issues and to providing supports to households with complex needs such as mental health issues or addiction problems. The Council cannot address such issues on its own. The stakeholders which the Council liaises with have been expanded since the previous Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy was adopted and includes the Revenue Commissioners as proposed by Cllr. Broderick.

The Draft Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy was welcomed overall by the Committee. Mr. McGuane made an observation in relation to the wording of the process in relation to a more serious breach or category of breach. He proposed that in this instance that the Strategy should state that the Council could forgo the verbal warning and it reserves the right to advance the process. Mr. Hanrahan advised that this request would be reviewed in conjunction with the legislation. Cllr. Byrne raised the issue of the disposal of refuse and that there should be a refuse collection service in place with an Authorised Service provider as part of their tenancy conditions. He also said that Councillors are often a conduit for complaints of anti-social behaviour. Ms. Heffernan advised that the requirement to have a facility for refuse disposal in place is included in tenancy agreements. She noted that it is intended to develop an on-line training course for prospective tenants in 2021. She said that Councillors can report complaints received to the relevant Housing Liaison Officer for their area or alternatively could log any complaints with the Tenancy and Enforcement Section directly. She added that it is her intention to develop a Tenant Responsibilities document for tenants in 2021 which will be circulated to the members of the Strategic Policy Committee prior to its implementation.

Mr. Hanrahan thanked Ms. Heffernan for her hard work on developing the Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy. The query regarding reserving the right to enter the process at a later stage depending on the complaint will be reviewed by Ms. Heffernan and the relevant housing staff in conjunction with the legislation.

On the proposal of Cllr. Walsh and seconded by Cllr. Charity, it was agreed to recommend the adoption of the Draft Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy to the Plenary Council, to include the agreed proposed changes.

## **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The items for inclusion on the Agenda of the SPC in 2021 were discussed. It was agreed that the following non-exhaustive list of items would be considered:

- Draft Control of Horses Bye Laws to be compiled by the Tenancy Enforcement Officer and presented for consideration by the members of the SPC in early 2021.
- Update to be provided on the Housing Needs Assessment and Housing Lists in early 2021.
- Details of the new Affordable Housing Scheme to be discussed when the Council has been advised on same by the Department of Housing.
- Update on Housing First proposals – it is anticipated that confirmation will have been received from the Housing Department regarding same early in 2021. This will require changes to Galway County Council's Homeless Action Plan which is in place until 2022.
- Tenants and Councils Responsibilities document to be reviewed.
- Update on the Council's Disability Action Plan – early 2021
- Update from the Building Inspectorate on house inspections
- Regular updates to be provided on ongoing and future social housing developments

Cllr. Byrne thanked the members and staff for their contributions today and throughout the year. This concluded the meeting.

