

Minutes of the Housing & Social Inclusion Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) Meeting held on 2nd May 2019.

- In Attendance:** Cllr. D. McDonnell, Chairperson, Housing SPC
Cllr. J. Walsh, Galway City Council
Cllr. M. Lohan, Galway City Council
Cllr. M. Cubbard, Galway City Council
Cllr. M. Farrell, Galway City Council
Mr. A. Daly, Irish Congress of Trade Unions
Ms. K. Golden, GCCN Representative
- Officials:** Mr. D. Mahon, A/Director of Services, Housing Department
Mr. T. Prendergast, A/Senior Engineer, Housing Department
Ms. A. Brett, Administrative Officer, Housing Department
Ms. S. Carroll, Administrative Officer, Housing Department
Ms. A. Lyons, Administrative Officer, Housing Department
Ms. L. Sharkey, A/Administrative Officer, Housing Department
Ms. S. Lawless, Senior Staff Officer, Housing Department
- Present** Ms. K. Lohan, Assistant Staff Officer, Housing Department
- Apologies:** Cllr. M. Farrell, Galway City Council
Cllr. M.J. Crowe, Galway City Council
Cllr. N. McNelis, Galway City Council
Cllr. O. Crowe, Galway City Council
Mr. P. Carey, Construction Sector Representative
Ms. K. Timothy, GCCN Representative

1. Minutes of Meeting held on 28th February, 2019

The Minutes of the Meeting of 28th February, 2019 were proposed by Cllr. M. Lohan and seconded by Cllr. M. Cubbard and agreed.

2. Matters Arising

None.

3. Homeless Report and update

Ms. A. Lyons, Administrative Officer gave an update on the number of people currently accommodated in emergency accommodation in Galway City and County administrative areas. She updated the meeting on the number of tenancies signed under Homeless HAP since January 2019 and the number of people who availed of the Cold Weather Response during its operational period. Updates were also provided on Housing First, Homeless funding for 2019 and she confirmed work had commenced on the Homeless Regional Action Plan 2019. She also confirmed that the Homeless Hub at Corrib Haven will be operation in Quarter 2 2019.

Mr. T. Prendergast, A/Senior Engineer advised that the procurement process for modular homes at Westside will shortly be underway and the project will include the boundary wall with Camillaun Park.

4. Draft Scheme of Priority for Affordable Purchase Arrangements

Ms. L. Sharkey, A/Administrative Officer provided a presentation to the meeting on the proposed Scheme of Letting Priorities for Affordable Purchase Arrangements. In particular she highlighted the affordable housing process and emphasised that prospective applications would be on a scheme by scheme basis, the dwelling types and household sizes each unit size would propose to accommodate. She also explained the five classes of eligible households and the eligibility criteria within each category.

Following the presentation a detailed discussion ensued and Mr. D. Mahon and Ms. L. Sharkey clarified issues raised as follows:

- Allocations will be made in the fairest way possible.
- Applications will be date stamped and time stamped if necessary.
- Income limits have yet to be set but it is expected the limits will be the same as Rebuilding Ireland loan limits.
- No national criteria requirement for first time buyers.
- The minimum time frame to houses on the ground will be two years, unless units currently/or proposed for construction can be transferred to be included in the scheme.
- The verification of documentation submitted by applicants can take place after an application is received.
- There is no provision to make changes to the Scheme after it is adopted but reviewing the document may be possible at a later date.
- The claw back is set nationally.
- No funding is currently available for construction of properties under this scheme.
- Following a detailed discussion on whether the distance from work criteria should be increased, it was agreed not to alter the 5km proposed in the Scheme.

It was proposed by Cllr. M. Lohan seconded by Cllr. J. Walsh and agreed, to recommend the Scheme of Letting Priorities for Affordable Purchase Arrangements to the full Elected Council as presented to the Housing SPC.

5. Report on 2019 Housing Needs Assessment

Ms. A. Lyons provided an update on the Housing Needs Assessment 2019 progress to date and advised the meeting as follows:

- The number of applicants contacted.
- The last date to report figures to the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government is the 24th June, 2019
- The staff resources available to complete this project.

6. Draft 2019 Differential Rent Scheme

Ms. S. Carroll, Administrative Officer provided members with a summary of the Rent Review 2019 Scheme and responded to members queries as follows:

- The rent will be based on household income and will be 17% of the eligible household income which will simplify the rent calculation method.
- The minimum rent will be €32.00, there will be no maximum rent, however rent will be capped at 50% increase on the current rent per year.
- The average rent increase will be between 2 and 5%

- Rent increase on households/individuals in receipt of Social Welfare will be based on 2019 Social Welfare rates.
- All tenants will have their rent reviewed and no backdating will be applied.
- Tenancy warnings will issue if documents are not returned.
- €2.00 per week will be included for households where communal waste collection services are in operation.
- 3 addition temporary staff have been recruited to complete the project.
- Rent Reviews using this policy will take place bi-annually.
- A small number of households are currently on maximum rent.

Mr. D. Mahon replied to the following queries under this item:

- Post of Resettlement Officer is advertised.
- Ring-fencing of income can only occur by resolution of the full Elected Council.
- Full housing stock conditioning survey will take place over the next few years.

7. Any Other Business:

Cllr. M. Cubbard requested an update on maintenance calls.

The Chair, Cllr. D. McDonnell thanked members of the SPC and housing staff for their co-operation over the term of this Council.

Mr. D. Mahon thanked Cllr. D. McDonnell for his chairing of SPC meeting over the past 5 years, his co-operation with staff and representing the views of the Housing Department at CPG meetings.

This concluded the business of the meeting.