

## Tuairisc/Reporting Template for Galway City Community Network Representatives

Please complete and email to [communications@gccn.ie](mailto:communications@gccn.ie) at your earliest convenience, preferably one week after the meeting and no later than two weeks.



<b>1. Cruinniú / Name of Meeting</b>	<b>Housing SPC</b>
<b>2. Ionadaí LPCG (glacadóir - nótaí) / Name of GCCN Rep (note-taker)</b>	<b>K Golden</b>
<b>3. Dáta &amp; Suite / Date &amp; Location of Meeting:</b>	<b>24/2/2023</b>
<b>4. I láthair / Attendance</b>	<b>Clr Donal Lyons (Chair)</b> <b>Clr A Cheevers</b> <b>Clr T O'Flaherty</b> <b>Clr I Byrne</b> <b>Clr D McDonnell</b> <b>Clr E Hoare</b> <b>Clr M O'Connor</b> <b>M Lohan</b> <b>K Golden</b>  <b>B Barrett</b> <b>H Martyn</b> <b>E Fanning</b> <b>A Brett</b> <b>D Healy</b> <b>C Fahy</b> <b>Maria Fallon Ward</b>

## 5. Príomhphointí pléite / Key Issues Discussed:

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved, Cllr Terry O’Flaherty proposed. Matters arising to be raised under Agenda items.

Ms E Fanning presented Affordable Housing, Capital Updates and Traveller Accommodation Programme updates as per reports

### Affordable Housing, Capital Updates

Housing Needs Analysis demonstrates that 20.4% of households in the City will have affordability challenges. Affordable purchase and cost rental housing are part of the policy responses.

#### *Questions and Responses*

Cllr McDonnell

Raised a number of queries in relation to specific sites

Have we organised a meeting with the Department?

Have we recruited additional posts to enable the Council to deliver on targets?

Has the Scheme of Priorities for Affordable Accommodation been developed yet?

Mark Lohan

Thanks for the presentation

114 Affordable in process – delivery date in mind?

Leana Mór, Cappagh Road – is this Part 5, 20%; Or Turnkey? More clarity please?

Cllr E Hoare

Emphasised the need for joined up thinking between Housing and Transport Departments in light of recent decisions.

Is there coordination between Housing, Planning and the CEO in relation to correspondence responding to these decisions?

In the Emergency we’re in, will the criticality of the situation be reflected in CE’s response?

Leana Mór, very concerning trend – developer using turnkey finance, and then going to the market. Notes that this was an RCT issue. Is there something being done by the AHBs to curtail this happening in future?

Cllr A Cheevers

The Pipeline for Social and Affordable is very prevalent to constituents on the East of the City and he is getting a lot of enquiries.

Seeking assurance on schemes being completed in 2024. Do we have clarity yet on the criteria for Affordable Housing?

Over dependent on AHBs and on Developers for delivery. What are we doing to go out and get brownfield sites?

On the social and affordable sites, budget approved for 5 posts. Where are we on this?

Signing of contracts going forward is very important.

K Golden

On behalf of the Housing Linkage Group expresses deep concern in relation to achieving only 50% of target in 2022. While delivery under Housing for All is front loaded, it was loaded to the end of Rebuilding Ireland which coincided with the Covid Pandemic and as such, there was significant under delivery over the period of the Plan.

To be starting again under Housing For All at 50% of target with the deepening Housing and Homelessness Crisis and Emergency is putting huge pressure on people waiting on housing, on staff within the Council and staff in Service Provider NGOs.

Is it the intention of the Council to progress with dorm style accommodation in Seamus Quirke Road? Concerns have been raised in relation to the dorm style accommodation by Dr Kieran Coleman, Nurse Regina Boyle, COPE Galway, Galway Simon Community and members of the Linkage Group over the last number of years. Further, the Department's guidelines in relation to Emergency Accommodation published last September indicates that one or two bed accommodation is preferable. Will these concerns be taken on board?

Cllr D Lyons

Received commitment from Dermot Mahon here in the Chamber that there would be no more social housing on the Ballymoneen Road, that it would be Affordable..... concerned that there appears now to be a change in this position.

Very disappointed with Respond situation.

#### *Responses*

Executive Architect and Executive Engineer appointed. Other posts appointed also, but need to be back filled.

Scheme of Priorities for Affordable Housing still a work in progress

3 sites being refused is a serious set back to targets. The Council is re-strategising in relation to Transport and Connectivity, and developing a combined approach with Housing. Will only progress in future on sites that have a high chance of success in order to try to avoid what has happened in Keeruan and elsewhere happening again.

Merlin Park queries – will take up these queries with the team.

Delivery date for Affordable Housing? Will have a programme with more defined timelines once a developer is appointed, and will update then.

It is not right that a developer could pull out of a contract at the last minute. Different AHBs have different processes so hopeful that this issue will not recur. A matter of getting the wording correct in the agreement. The entire industry likely to rise to that. The signing of the agreement is between the developer and the AHB.

In response to Cllr Cheevers query in relation to the pipeline, GCC has plans to build more directly. Will need to continue to work in collaboration with AHBs and developers/turnkeys also in order to achieve the targets.

In response to K Golden, agrees that 50% of target housing delivery in 2022 is very disappointing albeit that the target was probably too high in the first instance. Confident we will achieve the full target over the 6 years of the Plan. Expected delivery of 274 in 2023 against a target of 219.

It is the intention of the Council to proceed with dorm style accommodation in Seamus Quirke Road. This is within the Department's guidelines. Need space desperately, hence design of Seamus Quirke Road.

Clarification. K Golden agrees that space is needed. However, designing in dorm bedroom spaces in a new building that the City will have for 25-30 years is a retrograde step. She read from the Department's Guidance published last September

Careful consideration should be given to the maximum number of persons sharing bedrooms. Whilst the provision of individual or twin rooms (of a minimum 7.2 sqm or 11.4 sqm respectively) is considered the ideal, this may well not be possible, particularly in the conversion of an existing building  
.....

Ms Fanning agreed to follow up on this after the meeting.

In response to Cllr O'Flaherty, legal advice is that it is not possible to penalise a contractor under contract law. Liquidated damages are possible, and as such can only recoup losses.

In response to Cllr Lyons – Ballyburke has changed from Affordable to Social. Quality of design will be excellent. Cllr Lyons requests that this would be relooked at, and mix would be revisited.

H Martyn

Brothers of Charity – has gone to site investigation. Issue with Section 183, will come back before Councillors in April.

B Barrett

In relation to Léana Mór, pretenancy training had taken place. However, no one had received an allocation. Acknowledges that it is hugely disappointing for people who did not get an allocation. It has worked well in the past when pretenancy training was done in advance, and as soon as keys were received the Council could move to tenancing as quickly as possible. In light of what has happened recently, the Council will change this now, which may lead to some delays in tenancing.

H Martyn

Further clarifies that no house numbers had been given, no keys allocated. Tenants are advised not to give NTQ until they have notification of the details of the allocation.

Ms Fanning

In relation to Keeraun, only option now is judicial review. No-one wants to do this. Looking at other options for the sites.

Cllr Cheevers

On Coast Road development, what is mix between City Council and AHB allocations?

Response: Garraí Caol – all GCC.

AHBs have responsibility for delivering cost rentals. They are finding it extremely difficult to make this work. AHBs have gone back to Department to relook at the Scheme.

A Brett

Since Dec 2021, maximum rent increase allowed under HAP is 2%. The Council consults with Threshold in relation to claims and when legality confirmed, increase of 2% can be processed.

Director of Services asked to convey the concern of the Housing SPC in relation to Planning Matters.

#### 4. Traveller Accommodation Programme

Updates presented as per report. Again, ABP decisions in relation to Keeraun and Headford Road very disappointing.

K Golden queried the number of units delivered in 2022, and the number anticipated over the next couple of years.

Response: 4 years of anticipated TAP

2022 – 0 Units Delivered

2023 – 0 Units Expected to be Delivered

2024 – 5 Units Anticipated

2025 – 4 Units Anticipated

B Barrett

Keeraun and Headford Road a significant setback. Now looking at other options. Reality of 5-6 years to get through the regulatory and planning process. Need to build resilience among the Traveller Community.

ClIr Hoare

Crucial that we make the point to the Department now that the Council is being frustrated in trying to spend TAP monies and deliver housing.

B Barrett

It's not the design that is the issue. It's getting it through the regulatory and planning process. Getting a development through the various stages takes time.

The Council has already made this point to the Department via the Galway Social Housing Taskforce and other fora.

Acknowledges the frustration of the Traveller Community and the Council staff. The Council has emphasised the negative impact of the ABP decisions on the relationships that the Council has built up with the Traveller Community.

Hope to build positively on relationships with LTACC in bringing other sites to fruition.

## Update re Croí Cónaithe - Martha

Started accepting applications last December.

5 applications received. None approved as yet. Awaiting further information on all applications.

## Acquisition Procedure

Martha will share with everyone electronically after the meeting. Under the SHIP Programme, (Social Housing Investment Programme), the Council can acquire properties. Dermot Mahon had requested that the procedures would be documented, and this is now outlined in these documents.

ClIr A Cheevers – what level of funding is available for SHIP?

Response – no set budget, guidance on ceilings for individual properties. Two properties acquired under this process last year. So far this year, 9 offers on the table. Generally to prevent homelessness when there is an NTQ in place.

ClIr Byrne – do we promote?

Director Barrett – don't promote it actively as do not wish to get involved actively in private market. Aim is to manage it well so as to prevent homelessness, and to balance not promoting additional sales.

## Homeless Update

H Martyn delivered report

Housing First – 32 tenancies created in City, 52 in the Region.

14 singles in PEA

25 families between Hub and Corrib Haven

Council has received 397 NTQs since September

CWR – coming to an end on March 31<sup>st</sup>. Some good outcomes in CBH. Waiting on funding allocations from Department. Likely to retain 3-4 CBH properties. Clients settling in very well into the Community.

Seamus Quirke Road - Need another site for Day Centre during build, will go back to Service Providers to work on this.

Newcastle Road development – positive news that this is progressing

Significant progress being made in relation to Prevention of Homelessness. Credit to Service Providers, particularly in light of shortage of accommodation.

New Youth Homelessness Strategy published by Department in November, and this will continue to be an area of focus in Galway.

In relation to Rough Sleepers on the streets, Councillors have made representations. Non HRC issues continue to prevail. There is some work being done at a national level in relation to a response.

The Social Housing Taskforce has developed 7 actions in relation to the County area and the City will be working with the County on these.

K Golden

Thanks H Martyn for report.

Acknowledges support of Council for work in preventing Homelessness. In 2018 homelessness was growing faster in the West than in any other region. In Nov/Dec 2022, the yoy increase in homelessness in the West was 3-7%, significantly lower than the National increase of 27-31%.

In relation to Youth Homelessness, Galway City Council, Túsla and Galway Simon created a dedicated Youth Service in the City in 2016. The Service worked with 70 young people last year. There was no increase in the number of young people (18-24) in Emergency Accommodation in the West in 2022 while the National increase was 49%. The Department consulted with young people with lived experience of homelessness in Dublin and in Galway when developing the new National Strategy, and Minister O'Brien had written to clients of the Galway Service who had participated in the consultation to thank them for their input.

K Golden expressed the collective concerns of members of the Linkage Group and those working to combat homelessness in the City over several decades in relation to the period ahead.

Demand for CWR beds exceeded supply over the Winter period. This put significant pressure on people looking for shelter, and on teams who had responsibility for admitting or turning away people who were presenting on a nightly basis.

Demand for housing continues to far exceed supply, and that only 50% of the target number of social housing builds were delivered in 2022 is deeply concerning.

The moratorium on evictions is most likely going to expire at the end of March, and lead to a significant upsurge in NTQs.

Landlords are continuing to exit the market, further reducing supply in the private rental market.

All of these factors are adding to the pressures on Service Providers, and funding is not keeping pace with the level of increase in demand for Services.

Further compounding the challenges ahead is the increasing likelihood of strike action, due to funding not being provided to Section 39 organisations (including homeless service providers) to restore pay parity with staff in equivalent roles and on the same payscales in public sector and Section 38 organisations. If strikes go ahead, there will be a number of risks. First and foremost, ensuring client safety. Further, protecting the dignity of clients in Services that may be picketed, risks to the culture within the sector and risks to fundraising.

The NGOs continue to engage with rough sleepers. Significant progress has been made in reducing rough sleeping through the Housing First Programme. The NGOs have also been engaging with the business

community, the Council and the Gardaí in relation to our collective response to people without HRC, and work on a national response is to be welcomed.

Cllr Lyons

Acknowledges that some people do not wish to engage with Services, and the work being done to bring in rough sleepers is to be welcomed.

Cllr O'Connor

Thank you for the presentations and for the work that is being done.

Is there any protection in law to protect the nomadic lifestyle of Traveller and Roma peoples?

Cllr O'Connor to follow up with K Golden following the meeting.

Cllr Cheevers

Requests clarification in relation to 35% discretionary HAP

A Brett clarified that the council has visibility on HAP via the HAP database and they are currently targeting the most vulnerable. The Department has set rigid guidelines.

Cllr O'Flaherty

Thanks the Council and the NGOs for the excellent work being done.

Clarification on progress on retrofit programme. The programme is behind, the Council sought additional resources and they are limited in implementation due to the lack of resources.

#### **5. Socruithe déanta / Key Decisions Made:**

#### **6. Gníomhaíochtaí / Action(s) required from GCCN:**

--

<b>7. Dáta don chéad chruinniú eile / Date of next meeting :</b>	
--	--



**8. Moltáí breise /Any Other Comments:**