

**Tuairisc/Reporting Template for Galway City
Community Network (GCCN) Reps**

Please complete and email to
communications@gccn.ie



Galway City Community Network
Lionra Pobail Chathair Na Gaillimhe

Cruinniú /Name of Meeting	Housing SPC
Ionadaí FPCG (glacadóir - nótaí) Name of GCCF Rep (note-taker)	K Golden
Dáta & Suite Date & Location of Meeting:	24/11/2023
I láthair/ Attendance	<p>Cllr D Lyons in the Chair Cllr T O'Flaherty Cllr M Cubbard Cllr D McDonnell - from 10.10 Cllr A Cheevers, from 10.20 K Golden M Lohan</p> <p>L Fanning H Martyn D Healy F Griffin A Brett A Falvey M Cormican</p> <p>Apologies: M Conneely</p> <p>There were others present at the meeting, but I was unable to make out names on the screens. Full attendance will need to be taken from the minutes.</p>

Príomhphointí pléite / Key Issues Discussed:

Minutes and Matters Arising

Minutes proposed by Cllr O'Flaherty, seconded by K Golden

Cllr Cubbard – awaiting report on vacant properties, how many voids do we have, are resources within the Council an issue?

What is the policy in relation to allocations to people who have been convicted for sexual offences?

Response: getting extra resources to address vacancies within the Council, working on retrofitting on an ongoing basis, plan in place for 2024, awaiting funding allocation – yearly funded model, approx. 70-75% of the cost covered by funding with Council using own resources for the balance, generally prioritise properties with lowest BER and using solid fuel heating sources; email to go to Cllr Cubbard in relation to allocations, with the offer of a meeting to discuss further.

100 surrenders this year, up approx. 25% on previous years. By end of this year, will have approx. 110 properties completed in the voids program. Project that number of voids going into new year will be under 50, down significantly on earlier figures.

Capital Program

M Cormican:

Taking capital report as read

Updates were requested in relation to Clybaun Road and Merchant's Road, and these were provided.

Cllr Lyons – four bed houses? Not seeing any coming through, are we acquiring to meet the needs of those requiring four beds?

Response: development focus is on 1,2 and 3 beds. Will revert on figures relating to 4 beds – build and purchase.

House in Kiltullagh?

Are the family still waiting to go into this, or have they been rehoused?

Are we purchasing new houses only, or are we purchasing second hand houses also?

Response: family not yet rehoused. Purchasing second hand also via tenant in situ.

K Golden

We are in the middle of significant housing and homelessness crisis. Sharpest end of housing crisis is the homelessness crisis. Ireland has signed up to the Lisbon Declaration, and eliminating homelessness by 2030 is a key aim under Housing for All. Welcome that this is a focus of the Homeless Action Plan which is currently being worked on.

Social Housing Waiting List – 4,600

Housing Needs Assessment – was approx. 1,700 households in 2022. Are there any updated 2023 figures?

Delivery Targets – approx. 220 for 2023

Projected Delivery – 181

Over recent years, we are targeting delivery that is well below need, and we are consistently falling short of the targets. And there are a lot of distressed people facing homelessness, as we are not delivering sufficient housing. Can we look collectively at what the blocks are, and look to increase the number of units delivered over the coming years, in order that the capital program can contribute positively to aim of eliminating homelessness in Galway by 2030.

Response: 181 units to be delivered, not including acquisitions and vacancy

Projecting 193 units for 2024, down on our strategy for a number of reasons

Decisions on Ballyburke and Merchants Road outstanding

Headford Road and Keeraun – 100 units off our programme, which were lost through the Board

Working towards increasing the 193

Croí Conaithe opportunities also being explored

Housing Needs figures – can't complete Housing Needs Assessment for 2023 before end of November, and will provide full details when complete

The 1,700 on the Social Housing Needs Assessment are not in receipt of any other housing assessments ie excludes RAS and HAP recipients

Council also delivering HAP Tenancies

K Golden – acknowledges work done by Council team, and Galway Simon and COPE Galway in supporting people into HAP tenancies. However, reality on the ground is that the supply continues to shrink and it is getting ever more challenging to find HAP tenancies.

Response – there are challenges for single people, and for people who are finding new tenancies.

Some who are in tenancies that were taken up some time ago do not face the same level of challenges.

Hardship clause in differential rent scheme is being used.

Single people paying for two beds, and this creates challenges. Council seeking to address challenges for single people

Finding that rents can go from say 900 to 1,200 outside the RPZ areas.

There are cases that those working in HAP are increasingly worried about

1,950 people in HAP at any given time, putting on 5-6 people per week

HAP discretionary rate increased from 20% to 35%

K Golden – acknowledges increase in discretionary rate, and that this is a help. However, must be viewed in the context of base rate not increasing since 2016, and rents in the City increasing by approx. 50% over the same period.

Response: agrees that base rate has not increased.

Cllr Lyons: Is there any way to revisit Headford Road and Keeraun?

Response: They fell down on permeability, and Council looking at roads and access with a view to revisiting. Still on workplan.

At Housing Taskforce on Tuesday, Council advised that their targets will increase and that they are not meeting current targets

Council will look to increase delivery through AHBs also

K Golden – it might be helpful to look at collaboration to remove blocks for AHBs in delivering units.

Traveller Accommodation

Cllr O'Flaherty – suggest different kind of scheme to what might be envisaged down the line

Response: More plans to do more social inclusion, mixed development

Cllr O'Flaherty: What is the expected timeframe in relation to the knotweed?

Response: Looking at specialist physical removal of knotweed, awaiting licence from MPWS and once licence received will remove and development can commence. Removal rather than treatment process could expedite.

Cllr Cheevers – in relation to integration, aware that Traveller Accommodation turned down in Ballymoneen Road, any other sites being looked at in the West?

Cllr O'Flaherty – important that there is equal distribution across the three areas

Response: Acknowledge there is no similar group scheme currently in the West of the City. There had been one planned for Keeraun. Families in Cul Tra have expressed a preference for group housing scheme – 13 families. 20

families in Carrowbrowne, preference for standard LA social housing. 12 further families in Carrowbrowne Temporary Site, cannot discuss further as subject of action by IRHEC.

Circular Road site development commenced in September with 5 traveller specific Homes.

LTACC meeting in December, can circulate report to the SPC Members.

All social housing developments going forward will be mixed tenure, and will have traveller specific homes.

K Golden – very welcome to see work outlined in the report. What is the level of demand, relative to the housing being delivered.

Response: New review of TAP next year will look at need versus delivery

Traveller Liaison Officer starting on Monday and another post being taken up the following week, so from Council perspective will have a team to work with Travellers.

Team know the families, know their preferences, family sizes etc

Tenant Purchase

Introduction of fee, for noting.

CLlr Cubbard – can it be refunded if sale goes through?

Response: no, this cannot be done (stipulated on the application form). First application is €20, €100 fee is for repeat applications only and non refundable.

Homeless Update

Report taken as read

Housing Taskforce Meeting for Galway City and County held last Tuesday

Update given to that meeting, similar to report provided for SPC

79 families in Emergency Accommodation in October

Preventions and exits reported on

Tenant in situ supporting preventions, a lot of work going into this currently

Moving families and singles from PEA is a priority

D McDonnell – CWR has now commenced, will we be able to cope?

For people who are under NTQs, and have a number of years on the SHWL, are we able to cope? Are we prioritising people who will be made homeless or who cannot find alternatives? While we try to do something on allocations, can we solve other problems first?

Response: Tenant in Situ is an Emergency Scheme, with the main aim of preventing homelessness.

Are we holding a number of houses in each development for these people?

Response: no

CLlr O'Flaherty: how many rough sleepers on the streets?

Rec'd call from someone who is involved with psychiatric services, people who are in long term psychiatric care, told to go city and county councils and present themselves, no back up from psychiatric services after

Response: 16 Rough Sleepers currently, many are non HRC, do not wish to engage with Services

In extreme weather conditions, activate humanitarian response

Generally non HRC who are rough sleeping, in some cases they come and go from the City

Many rough sleepers have been brought in through the Housing First program.

In relation to discharge for psychiatric services, H Martyn and K Golden outlined the My Home program which Galway Simon have been running in the West in collaboration with the Local Authorities and Mental Health Services in recent years. To follow up with Cllr O'Flaherty in relation to individual case.

Cllr Cheevers:

On tenant in situ what is the total amount this year?

How does the Council arrive at completing a purchase? Has a tenant a better chance of getting a long term social housing tenancy through tenant in situ, if they are longer on the SHWL?

Landlords advising Cllr that they wanted to go through with tenant in situ sale, because they had very good relationship with tenants, but valuation received by Council was €20k-€30k less

Response: must be risk of homelessness before Tenant in Situ scheme will be used

Choice based letting – CBL, on larger schemes. Variety of criteria.

Tenant in purchase – length on waiting list is not a criteria, NTQ and at risk of homelessness are the key criteria

Two auctioneers on panel, only get one valuation on each property

Must remain within cost acquisition guidelines

On target to achieve 50 acquisitions, though may not be fully signed, sealed and delivered by year end given time it takes for conveyancing to go through.

Cllr O'Flaherty – thank you to Galway Simon Community, COPE Galway and Council team for excellent work being done. Has experience of how strong the work is from recent case she dealt with herself.

Other Councillors echo Cllr O'Flaherty's comments.

Cllr McDonnell – is it correct to say that cost acquisition guidelines need to include for refurb works as well as acquisition cost?

Response: yes, this is the case. Technical assessment carried out, and estimate given. This is taken into account with the acquisition cost in relation to the cost acquisition guidelines..

Cllr McDonnell – open to landlord to get their own valuation also.

Pay awards

Very welcome that strike was averted.

Awaiting ballot results and NGOs advised that it is not a given that this will go through. While the 8% is a welcome development, it leaves staff still behind parity, and there are further public sector talks to commence on Monday which will widen the gap again.

Also awaiting further communication with agencies (awards apply to HSE/Section 39 and Túsla/Section 56 as well as Local Authorities/Section 10 funding)

AOB

Condolences to K Golden and Uinseann Finn on recent bereavements.

Quality of sound to be looked at prior to next meeting.

K Golden thanked the Executive and Committee for the work during the year.

Socruithe déanta/ Key Decisions Made:

**Gníomhaíochtaí
Action(s) required from GCCN:**

Dáta don chéad chruinniú eile Date of next meeting :	

Moltaí breise /Any Other Comments:

Please complete email to communications@gccn.ie