

Loughrea Area Meeting held on 26th September 2011

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE
MINUTES OF LOUGHREA AREA COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT COUNTY HALL, PROSPECT HILL, GALWAY ON MONDAY
26TH SEPTEMBER 2011

I LATHAIR

Baill:

Cllr. B. Willers, Chairperson
Cllr. M. Fahy
Cllr. P. Feeney
Cllr. G. Finnerty
Cllr. P. Hynes
Cllr. M. Maher
Cllr. J. McClearn

Oifigigh:

Mr. Eugene Cummins, D.O.S. Housing, Corporate & Emergency Services
Mr. Alan Farrell, Senior Executive Officer, Housing Services
Mr. J. Cullen, Director of Services
Ms. Donna Sheppard, Housing Unit

1. LAND AGGREGATION SCHEME

Mr Eugene Cummins thanked the Chairperson for facilitating the meeting and gave an overview of the scheme. He advised the members that in April 2010 the Department in recognition of the fact that housing authorities have significant amounts of land purchased with a view to development for Social and Affordable Housing purposes but for which there is little prospect of advancing in the current environment, introduced the Land Aggregation Scheme. Under the terms of this Scheme, housing authorities may, subject to approval from the Department, transfer lands on which there are outstanding loans from the Housing Finance Agency (HFA) to the Housing and Sustainable Communities Agency (HSC Ltd) when the loans fall due for redemption and on the basis that there are no short to medium term plans for the development of the land. He said that there is no onus on local authorities to partake in the scheme, but that it will be of benefit to local authorities who are servicing land loans where it is unlikely that the land in question will be developed in the short to medium term. Under the scheme local authorities must decide on the HFA loans falling due for redemption over a six month period (1st January to 30th June and 1st July to 31st December each year) what land it intends to submit for inclusion in the Land Aggregation Scheme. Local authorities must submit within this period if they wish to avail of the scheme.

Mr Alan Farrell outlined the process for including lands in the scheme as set out in Circular SHIP 2010/18. He said that the circular sets out the arrangements for the redemption of HFA loans and transfer of associated land from the local authority to HSC Ltd. The key stages are as follows

Stage 1: Preparatory Stage and Formal Submission
Stage 2: Assessment Stage
Stage 3: Redemption of Loan
Stage 4: Transfer of land to Agency including 'Due Diligence Assessment' to be undertaken by HSC Ltd

Stage 5: Operational Management of the Land Transferred to HSC Ltd.

Maps of the lands in the Loughrea Electoral Area which were proposed to be included in the scheme were circulated to the members and details on each piece including the size and matters impacting on them were outlined to the members. The lands in question were located as follows.

- Ardrahan
- Bullseye Wood Woodford
- Courtney's Lane, Gort – Lavally Townland
- Lavally, Gort – Lands purchased from the Sisters of Mercy
- Magheramore, Killimor

Mr Farrell said that in order to include the lands in the scheme that a Section 183 notice under the Local Government Act, 2001 would have to be approved by the Council and that it was proposed that the matter would be considered at the October monthly meeting. He advised the members that the application for inclusion in the scheme had to be made before the end of the year and that once the application had been made that each plot was subject to examination under the due diligence process.

The members asked a number of questions regarding the scheme and the lands in question which were answered by Mr Cummins and Mr Farrell. Following discussion on the matter it was unanimously agreed by the committee on the proposal of Cllr Jimmy McClearn, seconded by Cllr Bridie Williers that the five plots of land in the Loughrea Electoral Area which qualify for the scheme would be included.

2. Any other business

The members raised the issue of the proposal to develop a swimming pool in Loughrea and the position with regard to the site which was owned by the Council. Mr Cullen and Mr Cummins answered a number of questions relating to the matter. They clarified the position saying that the proposal to develop the pool in partnership with the developer was not in a position to progress and that the grant was not transferable. Mr Cummins expressed his disappointment saying that he had met with the developer and that he had been very impressed by him but due to current climate the project could not now progress. Any new proposal would be subject to the normal transparent process including planning, procurement and the funding application process.

Cllr Willers asked that a pedestrian access from the housing estates located behind the site to the main road opposite the hotel would be provided. Cllr Hynes added his support for this proposal.

The meeting then concluded.