

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

**Minutes of Housing, Culture and Recreation SPC Meeting held on Thursday, 14th
February 2019 in Meeting Room G01, County Hall at 2.00pm**

I Láthair:-

Baill: Cllr. S. Walsh, Chairperson
Cllr. D. Killilea
Cllr. M. Fahy
Cllr. P. Hynes

Oifigigh: Mr. M. Owens, A/ Director of Services, Housing
Ms. J. Brann, Senior Executive Officer, Housing
Ms. N. Heffernan, Administrative Officer, Housing
Mr. K. Finn, Senior Executive Engineer, Housing
Ms. U. Ní Eidhin, Oifigeach Forbartha Gaeilge, Corporate Services
Ms. E. McKiernan, Assistant Staff Officer, Housing

1. Presentation of Scéim Teanga Chomhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe 2019-2022

Ms. Una Ní Eidhin, Irish Officer gave a presentation on the final draft Galway County Council Language Scheme 2019 -2022.

The draft Galway County Council Language Scheme 2019 -2022 was proposed by Cllr. S. Walsh, seconded by Cllr. D. Killilea and agreed.

2. Minutes of the SPC meeting held on 6th December 2018.

The minutes of the Housing, Culture and Recreation SPC meeting of the 6th December 2018 were proposed by Cllr. D. Killilea, seconded by Cllr. T. McHugh and agreed.

3. Tenancy Induction Programme

Ms. Heffernan gave a presentation on the new Tenancy Induction Programme. The programme will involve a multi-agency approach. There will be input from Housing, Environment and Maintenance Sections of Galway County Council. The following areas will be covered:

- Waste Disposal / Waste Management.
- Presentation from an Garda Síochána.
- Management of Income and Spending (presented by MABS).
- Presentation from Tusla.
- Presentation from Department of Social Welfare.

Induction programmes have proven successful and will be a pre-cursor to the establishment of Residents Associations.

The Tenancy Induction Programme was proposed by Cllr. S. Walsh, seconded by Cllr. T. McHugh and agreed.

Ms. Heffernan in reply to Cllr. D. Killilea confirmed that the programme would apply to new tenancies. Mr. Owens advised that existing tenants can access the same information and supports through their Housing Liaison Officer and the Tenancy Sustainment Strategy.

4. Rebuilding Ireland Update

Mr. Owens provided an update following the Housing Summit. Galway County Council targets were 118 for 2018 across building, acquisitions and leasing. Our build target was 64 units, we delivered 76 units therefore exceeding our target. Our acquisitions target was 14 units, we delivered 27 units therefore exceeding our target. Our leasing target was 40 units we were unable to meet this target. This reflects the rental increases and the demands on the sector. The intention is to double our build output for 2019 and remain on target to achieve a total of 926 units by 2021.

Cllr. Killilea enquired if there was funding for new builds on Council lands

Mr. Owens advised that we are due to receive a circular in respect of Affordable Housing Scheme. There is also a service site fund to open up sites, with up to €50,000 available as a subsidy per site. There is a circular to follow from the Department.

Cllr. Killilea asked if there has or will be a survey of available sites. Mr. Owens replied that Galway County Council had undertaken a survey of its own landbank. Only three sites were identified that proved viable under the criteria as set out by the Department (10% differential between build costs and market price inclusive of site subsidy). The site at Station Road, Oughterard is proving most feasible and Irish Water have indicated that they could service 50 units on the site subject to the outcome of a CCTV survey of the network. There are constraints with the site at Athenry in relation to Irish Water and in Ardahan in relation to water treatment plant and social housing scheme.

Cllr. Hynes asked if there are social housing builds or affordable housing planned for Loughrea.

Mr. Owens advised that there is a proposal for 5 units at Barrack Street Loughrea which will hopefully go for Part 8 in the first half of the year. The Gaelscoil site is not zoned residential and the Council cannot contravene its own County Development Plan. The Council have no landbank available in the Loughrea Municipal District because of zoning and servicing. Cllr. Killilea asked about turnkey proposal. Mr. Owens responded that turnkeys will now be considered on build cost. Cllr. Hynes added that this was not encouraging and asked if there were any plans to acquire turnkeys in Loughrea. Mr. Owens advised that there is funding available for turnkey properties. Cllr. Fahy expressed concern that the construction of 12 units in Ardahan might be delayed because of the capacity of the Council's waste water treatment plant. He also added that a Developer has an application submitted for planning permission for 12 units in Ardahan. Mr. Owens assured Cllr. Fahy that the treatment plant has capacity for the Council's 12 units but that there may be constraints regarding the management and tenure of the treatment plant if it were to be used to support affordable and private builds. Cllr. Fahy suggested a potential site for development in Gort located beside the Garda Station that is owned by the O.P.W. Mr. Owens said that this site was being reviewed currently. Cllr. Fahy said that as it was a small site it could be used for a modern Health Centre. Mr. Owens responded that the HSE would also have been advised of the availability of this site.

5. Traveller Accommodation Programme Update

Mr. Owens presented an update on the Traveller Accommodation Programme. During the 2014 – 2018 period of the programme we have accommodated 262 households. Galway County Council is now in the process of consultation having regard for culturally appropriate accommodation and preferred areas and locations. There will be a draft programme made public in April 2019 and it must be made available for three months prior to going before the members for adoption.

6. Any Other Business

Cllr. Hynes asked did the Council still provide improvement works in lieu loans for members of the public. Mr. Owens advised that all applicants for this scheme would have to qualify for social housing and they must be the owner of the property they propose to improve. Galway County Council has not operated the scheme for some time due to lack of demand. Cllr. Hynes asked if City Council tenants could transfer to a County area. Mr. Owens responded that there is a national policy governing this and there are no transfer permitted between local authorities. Housing passport has not been finalized.

Cllr. Hynes expressed concerns about a property in St Laurence Fields with a serious refuse problem which was upsetting the other residents in the Estate. Mr. Owens advised that the property in question was subject to legal proceedings and once the property reverts to Galway County Council we will be able to address these issues. HLO will be asked to prioritise tenancy sustainment visits in the estate.

There followed a discussion regarding the date of the next SPC as the proposed date clashes with the Municipal District for Loughrea. The next SPC meeting was scheduled to take place on 4th April at 11am.

Meeting concluded.