

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

Minutes of Housing SPC Meeting held on Wednesday, 3rd February 2021 via Microsoft Teams at 10.00am

I Láthair:-

Baill: Cllr. J. Byrne, Chairperson
Cllr. J. McClearn
Cllr. J. Charity
Cllr. E. Mannion
Cllr. C. Keaveney
Cllr. S. Walsh
Mr. E McGuane (Business)
Ms. C. McGrath (Social Inclusion)
Ms. T. Flynn

Oifigigh: Mr. L. Hanrahan, Director of Services, Housing
Ms. J. Brann, Senior Executive Officer, Housing
Ms. N. Heffernan, Administrative Officer, Housing
Ms. R. Lowe, Senior Executive Engineer, Housing
Mr. K. Murphy, Senior Executive Engineer, Housing
Mr. K. Keon, Senior Social Worker, Housing
Ms. G. Byrne, Staff Officer, Housing
Ms. M. Ward, Vacant Homes Officer, Housing
Mr. E. Mulvey, Tenancy Enforcement Officer, Housing
Ms. E. McKiernan, Assistant Staff Officer, Housing

Apologies: Ms. M. Conneely

1. Minutes

Minutes for the SPC meeting held on 4th November 2020 were proposed by Cllr Colm Keaveney and seconded by Cllr James Charity.

2. Housing Update

Rebuilding Ireland Homes (RIH) is the primary vehicle for reporting back to Department. Approved Housing Forum – giving guidelines update on projects and their LTL. RIH task force meetings were held quarterly and updates were provided to SPC. Recommendations from SPC need to feed back to Taskforce.

Private Housing Grants – increase in applications received, difficulties for applicants with construction restrictions.

Home Loans – a lot of new enquiries

Homeless update. CWR going well. Glen Oaks property acquired by City working well.

New refugee programme update. Galway County Council are responsible for providing units for Syrian refugee programme, this will be fully funded by Dept. of Equality.

Housing Disability Strategy set up a mental health subgroup with HSE.

Major issue is the affordable Housing bill. SPC will need to approve a scheme before Summer. GCC have several sites ready to go. Need to get housing mix and price right. Crucial piece of economics to be tackled there.

Maintenance – lot of work on voids, refitting, its ongoing. Tenants have responsibilities in relation to plumbing and boiler. Annual boiler service is the tenant's responsibility, this will feed back into the new tenant handbook.

Inspectorate – National Standards they can give help and advice to private sector. We are required to do that as a Housing Authority.

Following the Peter McVerry Trust presentation other AHBs have expressed a wish to present to the SPC.

The SPC proposed schedule (as circulated to members prior to this meeting) may be subject to change. Policy documents or central government mandatory requirements may affect the work programme.

J. Byrne invited comments from members.

J. McClearn expressed concerns in relation to the document setting out the responsibilities of tenants. A lot of local Authority tenants are low income families and the items that are their responsibility are costly for low income families. He cites the requirement by the tenant to service the boiler annually and queried whether the LA will not take responsibility for repairs to a boiler if a tenant did not regularly service their boiler.

Proposed schedule and agenda for year ahead was proposed by C. McGrath seconded by E. McGuane

L. Hanrahan raised the schedule of meetings for year ahead. The SPC is required to have four meetings during the year. This is an insufficient number due the huge work programme in Housing. It was suggested that the meetings be bi-monthly on the first Wednesday at 10am in April, June, September, November and a specific meeting for the Affordable Housing piece to be decided later in the year. This meeting schedule was proposed by E. Mannion seconded by S. Walsh.

3. Vacant Homes update

M. Ward presented an update on Vacant Homes. There has been quite a lot of interest. GCC received 160 proposals of which 100 were accepted and 60 refused. Of those accepted they may not all materialize for a range of reasons.

30 units proposed to us in January 2021. In 2020 we delivered 37 enhanced lease units, 19 long-term leasing including 4 units with Peter McVerry Trust. Also, units at Cricket Court Tuam and single units in Ballinasloe, Claregalway and Dunmore.

Peter McVerry Trust had 19 repair and lease units but only delivered 4 as these can be slow to deliver due to the nature of the scheme.

E. McGuane asked how many units are required for an enhanced lease. M. Ward advised that it's a minimum 20 units for such a scheme. Millrace in Ballinasloe was three apartment blocks of 37 units. L. Hanrahan said M. Ward brings these types of lease schemes to an internal committee that looks at housing supply to establish if there is a need for scheme in the area. If it is in an area where GCC have a large building programme it may not suit. Often proposals come for stand-alone properties in rural areas which do not suit our requirements. A lot of interaction is involved in bringing all properties under this scheme forward. J. Byrne thanked M. Ward for the update.

4. Capital Update

Rebuilding Ireland 2018 – 2021 Targets – update presented by R. Lowe.

	TARGET	Delivered 2018	Delivered 2019	Delivered 2020
Build	620	76	152	115
Acquisition	120	29	47	24
Leasing	185	1	54	21
	926	106	253	160

The building programme was impacted by first lockdown and it delayed other projects in terms of the tendering process.

Housing build programme can be seen in the table below.

Area	2021	2022	2023	Comment
Roundstone	6			8 Units in 2020, 6 units in 2021 -to be completed soon
Barrack St, Loughrea	5			Construction underway
Clifden	16	10		Construction underway - lockdown may delay units to 2022
Fana Bhui Tuam	49			Construction underway – lockdown may delay units to 2022
Kinvara		10		Planning granted on 28th Sept. Tender docs published
Bridge Ct Ahascragh		18		Due to be decided by 24.03.2021 Tenders docs started
Moycullen		31		Design being finalised, planning pack to be finalised
Weir Rd Tuam		30		JR ongoing
Athenry			27	Irish Water sewer extension required
Ardrahan		12		Design being finalised, planning pack to be finalised
Oughterard			30	Zoning and flooding to be finalised per draft CDP
Single rural		6		Part 8 advertised
Claregalway			85	Tender for Architects to be advertised shortly
Voids	5	5	5	
	81	122	147	

St Joseph's Clifden, Kinvara documents will be up on e-tenders this week. Bridge Court Ahascragh is with An Bord Pleanala. Site in Athenry for SHL & affordable but we need sewer extension by IW, Zoning for the lands in Oughterard is being considered under the County Development Plan.

We have to deliver affordable housing at 10% discount of the market price so it's a balancing act.

Acquisition of land in Ballymoe (previously had planning for 8 terrace houses)

Turnkey

	2021	2022	2023	Comment
Kylebroughan Phase 4	9			Phases revised
Kylebroughlan Phase 5	10			Phases revised
Tubber Rd Gort	31			Construction underway
Cois na hAbhainn Tuam	2			Completed
Tubber Rd Gort	53			Construction underway may be delays until 2022
Tullahill Apartments	9			Construction underway
	114	0	0	

CALF

	2021	2022	2023	Comment
Riveroaks Claregalway	24			Construction underway
Oranhill		22		
Cosmona	12			
	36	22	0	

CAS

	2021	2022	2023	Comment
Mountbellew		5		
South Connemara		8		
Inverin	4			Construction underway
Springfield Ballinasloe		4		
Letterfrack	11			Construction underway
Portumna		4		
Dunlo Street Ballinasloe				
Tubber Rd Gort	11			Construction underway
	26	21	0	

The total projected build is 279, this also includes 22 Part V units for 2021 and 21 Part V units for 2022. Project were delayed due to Covid the only exception to public housing were sites where delivery was due for completion in February 2021. If this exemption is extended some construction will resume. E. Mannion thanked R. Lowe for her presentation. J. Byrne suggested that there be an update on Capital every second SPC meeting.

5. Retrofit Programme

Retrofit of houses in the East of the County that were going to be impacted by the closure of peat were approved. Criteria for scheme was to remove fossil fuel heating and replace with air to water heat pump. Insulation of walls, attic, replacement of windows etc. Heat loss indicator (air tightness test as per SEAI)

It was decided to divide the project into 3 separate lots.

Lot 1 consists of 21 houses in Shannon Park, Portumna. This was tendered on e-tenders and a contractor was appointed in December 2020.

Lot 2 consists of 19 houses in St Joseph's Place, Ballinasloe. This was also tendered on e-tenders with a closing date of 3rd December 2020 and a contractor is due to be appointed in early February 2021.

Lot 3 Consists of the remaining 31 houses and it is anticipated this will be published on e-tenders by end of March 2021.

As the windows have been previously replaced under other schemes GCC have no funding for this so will be repairing the locking mechanisms and seals and servicing the windows. Front and rear doors are to be replaced.

The cost of these works is typically between €25,000 and €35,000 depending on the house type, age, construction method and works required. Demand control ventilation will be funded from GCC's own resources. Air tightness tests highlighted other areas that showed up heat loss. The current BER rating of the selected houses ranges from C3 to F. Once the works are completed the BER will typically be between A2 and C1 depending on the house type size and layout.

This work is intrusive and will require an easing of restrictions before works can commence. E. McGuane commented that these systems are complicated so times should be allocated to training the occupants so that they get the best benefit. For quantifying the improvements, he suggested that NUIG could be approached to carry out a project on this. J. McClearn questioned who will maintain these once completed. It was highlighted that LA tenants that purchased their properties will not benefit. J. Byrne thanked K. Murphy for the presentation. There were questions in relation to the existing chimney stacks for these properties.

K. Murphy explained that chimney (not a shared stack) would be taken down to joist level and insulated and a shared stack would be sealed. Very little maintenance in heat pump system but it is included with the installation price for 5 years (inspection), most of the controls are disabled. NUIG are involved in a health survey and have written out to the occupants of these properties.

6. Control of Horses

E. Mulvey gave a presentation on the proposed draft bye laws in relation to the 1996 Control of Horses Act. GCC byelaws in relation to the 1996 Act remain unchanged since their introduction in 1998. In 2020 GCC seized 35 horses at a cost of €76,000 only €13,000 was reimbursed by Dept. Rehoming horses does not exist in the current bye laws it is proposed to change this as this will reduce costs to GCC. The City and County Authorities are considering having joint bye laws. L. Hanrahan explained that Senior Counsel is looking at draft bye laws and then they will be brought before the SPC for recommendation. Bye laws must go before Plenary for adoption and there needs to be a period of public consultation. J. Charity wanted to reserve full comment until SPC could see full bye laws as he would like them to be more robust. E. Mulvey explained that a court case following the February 2018 seizure of a horse highlighted the need for revised bye laws. J. Charity explained that he had previously brought it before SPC in 2015 but it was never discussed. He raised the issue of how can it be determined that 3 sulkies racing on a main road driven by very young children, gliding across the road are formally racing? Perhaps there should be an outright ban on any horse drawn vehicle on a public road in County Galway unless you have a licence. No mention of a minimum acreage for having a horse or that there should be exclusion zones. It was asked if the Memorandum of understanding between LA and Gardai could be seen by the members.

J. Byrne welcome the discussion on the topic and shared a lot of the concerns expressed by members. In response to the concerns raised E. Mulvey explained that the issue of animal welfare is the responsibility of the Dept of Agriculture, the LA's responsibility is the issue of the horses on public roads. Kildare County Council had exclusion zones and it led to horses being abandoned in these areas so that the LA could dispose of the horses at a high cost to the

LA. L. Hanrahan said that the full set of bye laws need to go before the SPC, this is the time to add items to these. Given the issues J. Byrne suggested that there be a dedicated discussion prior to the April SPC meeting on these bye laws

Meeting concluded.

Next meeting set for Wednesday 7th April at 10am.