Housing & Community SPC
Minutes of Meeting 4th May, 2022

In the Chair: Cllr Joe Sullivan

Present: Cllr Jim Codd, Cllr David Hynes, Cllr Lisa McDonald, Cllr John O'Rourke, Cllr Fionntán O'Suilleabháin, Ms Breda O'Sullivan, Cllr Frank Staples, Mr Michael Wall, Mr Brian Galvin Acting Director of Service, Mr Michael Drea, SEO Housing, Mr Ger Mackey, A/SEO Community, Mr Claude Clancy, AO Community, Ms Caroline Creane SSO Housing, Ms Annmarie Laffan SO Community, Ms Tara Farrell SO Community, Dr Yvonne Byrne.

Apologies: Mr Gerry Forde Acting Director of Service

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Minutes

The minutes of the SPC meeting dated 2nd February 2022 were approved on the proposal of Cllr John O'Rourke and seconded by Cllr David Hynes.

Matters Arising

A query arose about the mid-term review of the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024 which was due to be completed prior to 31st December 2021. The meeting was informed that the Dept issued a letter to Local Authorities that the review will be delayed and that a circular and guidance will be issued however, the circular hasn't been received to date.

A short discussion took place about Traveller Accommodation funding and the houses at Airhill, the Housing SEO informed the meeting that there is ongoing mediation with the families involved and that a decision will be made shortly whether the houses will be allocated to these families or if they will be offered to other applicants.

A discussion took place about the relet time of properties and the Housing SEO informed the meeting that the relet time is dependent on the work required on the property. He also informed the members that the introduction of Choice Based letting will cut down on the current refusal rate of 30%. The housing maintenance handbook was also discussed.

Age Friendly Strategy 2022-2026

The Community A/SEO presented the Age Friendly Strategy 2022-2026 to the members. He informed the members that this is a parent document and that he hopes to have it officially launched within the next few months. He introduced Dr Yvonne Byrne to the meeting who gave a powerpoint presentation to the members on the Strategy.

She outlined the population projection growths based on the census data which showed a huge increase in the 65+ and the 80+ categories. It was noted that Enniscorthy was a pilot town with a number of initiatives being implemented eg walkability audits, age friendly business training and new toilets and bus shelters.

In drafting the strategy, wide public consultation was conducted getting older people's views. This entailed holding workshops, completing surveys and focus groups. It was noted that over 55's is the target age for this Strategy and it contains 9 themes. The Strategy will be reviewed by the Age Friendly Alliance who meet every 3 months.

A lengthy discussion too place about the Strategy and it was noted that a radio slot on South East Radio has been identified as the best method of communication for this age group. The Strategy was approved on the proposal of Cllr Lisa McDonald and seconded by Cllr David Hynes.

Energy Efficiency Programme

The Housing SEO presented the Energy Efficiency/Retrofitting Programme – Property Selection Criteria to the meeting. The meeting was informed that Wexford County Council have been informed by the Dept the number of units to be completed under the programme for 2022 is 68. The funding will allow an average spend of circa €33,000 per housing unit. It is proposed selection criteria will be to prioritise the poorest BER rated houses ie G to D across the County. A short discussion took place about the programme and it was then approved on the proposal of Cllr Lisa McDonald and seconded by Cllr David Hynes.

Motion

A motion was received from the County Secretary that was submitted to Wexford County Council by Cllr Tom Forde regarding the policy on mutual transfers, this was not discussed as Cllr Forde did not attend the meeting to present the motion. It was agreed to defer this item to the next SPC meeting.

Any other business

- **Single Stage housing** – A short discussion took place about single stage approval for Capital housing projects. It was noted that projects costing less than €6 million can be submitted to the Dept under the single stage approval process. The Housing SEO informed the meeting that while it can be quicker, the Local Authority takes on additional risks and the single stage process is only suitable for straight forward sites. If the 4 stage process is used, the Local Authority is guaranteed any expenditure up to that point in the process whereby this is not guaranteed under the single stage process.

- **Acting Director of Service** – Mr Brian Galvin introduced himself to the members and explained that he is taking on the remit of the Housing Capital under the Housing for All programme as well as Special Projects.

- **Single House** – A short discussion took place about a house on the New Line road that has been vacant for a long time. The Housing SEO informed the meeting that when the Vacant Homes Officer is appointed, this will be part of their remit.

Next Meeting

It was agreed that the scheduled meeting in June will not go ahead so the next SPC meeting is Wednesday, 7th September 2022. This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: _____
Chairman

Dated: _____