Housing SPC
Minutes of Meeting 4th June 2025

Chairperson: Cllr. Jim Codd

Members Present: Cllr. Barbara Ann Murphy, Cllr. John Dwyer, Cllr. Tom Forde, Cllr. John O'Rourke, Cllr. Joe Sullivan; Cllr. Mary Farrell, Mr. Michael Wall

Executive: Ms. Carolyne Godkin Director of Service, Mr. Stephen O'Connor, SEO Housing, Ms. Martina Donohue, AO, Ms. Sharon Ryan SSO Housing, Ms. Kerrie Hayes, CO Housing, Eoghan Nolan, Executive Planner.

Apologies: Jackie Carroll, Director of Service.

Minutes of Meeting 4th April 2025
The minutes of the meeting of 4th April were proposed by Cllr. O'Rourke and seconded by Cllr. Farrell.

Modular Homes
Eoghan Nolan, Executive Planner gave an overview of the legislation in relation to modular homes and answered the members questions.

Following a query from Cllr. Farrell regarding the types of modular homes that were likely to be approved, it was clarified that each application was taken on its own merits. All approved applications must be in line with the County Development Plan.

Cllr. Forde asked for the members to be provided with the number of planning applications in this area and how many of these applications were approved. For those that were not approved he asked that the reasons be given to the members.

Cllr. Sullivan stated that some of these buildings are exempt from planning. The Executive Planner clarified that a certificate of exemption must be sought from planning in any case. He also clarified that only sheds/home offices fall into this category; the building must be ancillary to the existing property. There have been no further instructions from the Minister in relation to these exemptions.

Following a query from Cllr. Murphy, it was noted that the County Development Plan is due to be reviewed in 2028 and the members will have an opportunity to contribute to this.

The Director of Service pointed out that the reasons for refusal need to be examined. There may be other issues involved, e.g. environmental.

The Executive Planner agreed to send the members the numbers that have been approved and the numbers and reasons that have been rejected.

The members thanked the Executive Planner for attending the meeting.

AHB Presentation
Mr. Gavin Connolly and Mr. Paul Braiden from Circle Voluntary Housing Body were in attendance to answer questions regarding Approved Housing Bodies.

The members complimented Circle on the standard of their properties.

Cllr. Forde queried whether AHB properties could be sold to tenants in a similar way that council properties can. Mr. Connolly clarified that it is currently not possible because, under legislation, AHB properties cannot be currently used for anything other than social housing. The members noted that there is a CALF Agreement in place which is 25 years in duration.

Cllr. Dwyer expressed concern at the large number of AHBs. Mr. Braiden believes that consolidation of AHBs will take place in the future.

Mr. Braiden confirmed that tenant engagement is ongoing and AHB tenants are well integrated into the estates. Consultation also takes place with existing residents. Non-AHB tenants often take part in the tenant information sessions.

Following a question, from Cllr. Murphy, it was clarified that the AHBs contact the council for support with developments. The council assesses the development for need in the area and if it is viable.

Cllr. Murphy queried the procedure for handling anti-social behaviour. Circle has an early intervention approach which includes a social worker. The next step is mediation and adjudication. They also provide targeted supports where appropriate – e.g. addiction supports.
The last resort is a NoT when the tenant fails to engage. It is a long process and can take up to 18 months.

Circle clarified that 25 – 30% of its funding is made up of CALF payments. The remainder is from the Housing Financing Agency.
When this finance is paid back, Circle intend to continue to have social tenants in the properties. There is no intention to sell their housing stock.

WCC Allocation Policy

The Members noted the WCC Allocation Policy which was circulated for their information.

Cllr. Dwyer asked what applicants should do if they are in crisis between submission of their application and approval which can take up to 12 weeks under housing legislation. The Housing AO explained that people in crisis should present through the HSSU and are then processed immediately.

It was clarified that, in cases where applicants have an interest in a property, they are given HAP only until their interest is sold.

Cllr. Forde said that the Allocation Scheme needs to be updated this year. Cllr. Forde and Cllr. Farrell would like the categories of special priority need to be clarified. At present, they are open to discretion and there is confusion over which cases are special priority.
The members agreed that tenants who experiencing serious anti-social behaviour should be looked at for transfers.
The Housing SEO suggested that a workshop be held to discuss this.

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Motions

Cllr. O'Brien spoke on her motion. She notes the legislation but says that there are problems with barring orders and that tenants are left in properties in which they feel unsafe.

Cllr. Farrell supported the motion, asking what can be done to protect the victim. We currently have a situation where the perpetrator won't leave the property so the victim(s) have to leave instead.

Cllr. Forde supported the motion, saying that it is important not to punish the victim. He stated that people in this situation should not have to start again from scratch.

Cllr. Dwyer said that this should be incorporated into the Letting Agreement – that if someone is convicted of this crime they should be removed from the tenancy.

Cllr. Sullivan supported the motion.

Cllr. Murphy asked what is within the council's remit to change.

The DOS clarified that civil and tenancy law are separate. The council has received some legal advice and are not in position to change this at the moment. There is another meeting with the council's legal team tomorrow to discuss this matter. She agreed to investigate and do what we can and, also, to raise it the relevant organisations.

Cllr. O'Brien stated that the anti-social policy in the Tenant Handbook is to protect tenants. She questioned if this could fall under that category. She says that it can't be all left to the gardaí but it must be a holistic approach.

The SEO, Housing said that he is cognisant of the complexities of these cases but that WCC must act legally.

Cllr. Forde queried a motion which was previously passed by the SPC regarding housing those who have shared custody of children.
The DOS said that only in the case of shared custody, by court order or joint affidavit, will both parties be given a property as described in the motion.

Disability Targets

The members noted the quarterly disability targets which were circulated to them.

Any Other Business

Cllr. O'Rourke queried whether it is possible for WCC to take any action if a tenant is not living at their property. The DOS confirmed that all reports of this nature were followed up on.

Following a query, the DOS explained that there is positive discrimination towards prisoners when they are released from prison. If there are no special terms around their probation regarding them returning to their home, they are entitled to reside there.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: _____
Chairman

Dated: _____