Housing & Community SPC
Minutes of Meeting 6th November 2019

In the Chair: Cllr Joe Sullivan

Present: Mr William Considine, Cllr Lisa McDonald, Cllr John O'Rourke, Cllr Fionntán O'Suilleabháin, Ms Breda O'Sullivan, Ms Clair Walsh, Mr Padraig O'Gorman SEO Housing, Ms Liz Burns, Arts Officer, Ms Amanda Byrne SEO Community, Mr John Carley Director of Service, Ms Caroline Creane SSO Housing, Ms Martina Donoghue AO Housing, Ms Helen Meehan SSO Housing, Ms Eileen Morrissey Co Librarian, Mr Michael Sweeney SSO Community and Ms Annette Dupuy, PPN Support Officer.

Apologies: Cllr David Hynes

The Chairperson welcomed all members to the meeting and hoped that a good working relationship would be had by all over the next 5 years.

Minutes

The minutes of the SPC meeting dated 3rd April, 2019 were approved on the proposal of Cllr John O'Rourke and seconded by Mr Padraig O'Gorman.

The Community SEO informed the meeting about the proposed workplan of the Community Dept in line with the Corporate Plan. A more detailed report will be presented at the next SPC meeting.

Role of the SPC

The Director of Service outlined the role of the SPC. It was noted that it's not an operational role but an important role in the formulation of policies. The SPC prepares policies which are then submitted to and decided on, by the Council *(either at Municipal District level or full Council)*. Each SPC will have a work programme in line with the Corporate Plan. A Director of Service will attend meetings and provide support to each SPC.

Public Participation Network (PPN)

The PPN Support Officer addressed the meeting about the work of the PPN. The membership is free but a group must re-register each year. The PPN provides groups with an opportunity to have a seat at the table on policy formation. The key benefit of the PPN is keeping members informed through information bulletins and newsletters on grants, funding, events and news worthy items.

Cornmarket Project

A presentation was given to the meeting on the work of The Cornmarket Project by Mr Declan McPartlin and Mr Paul Delaney. It was noted that Cornmarket was established in 1999 as an inter-agency community based treatment and rehabilitation programme supporting ex-prisoners. Today Cornmarket is a drugs and alcoholic taskforce, totally voluntary and non-statutory.

Statistics show that within 3 years, half of prisoners in Ireland reoffend. Over 90% of prisoners who work with Cornmarket do not reoffend. They thanked the Chairperson for allowing them address the meeting. They requested that WCC change its policy whereby a person has to have a clear Garda record for 5 years before being considered for social housing. It was noted that Cornmarket has a low tolerance on anti-social behaviour and drug dealing.

A lengthy discussion took place on the work of the Cornmarket Project and the positive impact on the communities in Co Wexford. The meeting was informed that the Michael D Higgins is visiting the Cornmarket Project at the end of November, 2019.

The Director of Service praised the work of Cornmarket which is vital for communities. It was noted that the housing application form is a national form and cannot be amended by individual Local Authorities. He also informed the meeting that when outside groups present at the SPC meetings, any discussion on changing policies should be conducted after the group leaves the meeting. The Director of Service informed the meeting that applicants without a clear Garda record have been accommodated under the Housing First Initiative. This will be monitored to see how people interact with support services.

Correspondence

A memo was received from the Rosslare District Administrator regarding members concerns about health and safety issues around oil spills and the high percentage of tenants not ensuring their smoke and carbon monoxide alarms are working. The meeting was informed that all new builds have electric smoke alarms fitted. The old ones are battery operated. It was noted that housing resources are stretched with the Dept increasing the inspection targets for the private rented sector each year. For 2019 the target is 1,251 inspections. A short discussion took place about the budget allocation for housing maintenance for 2020.

A memo was received from Cllr John O'Rourke regarding a letter he received about stolen items from a grave in St Mary's, Enniscorthy. It was agreed that this was an operational matter and will be dealt with by the Community Section.

Member's Motions

The following motion was brought to the October Meeting of the Council and has been referred to the Housing & Community SPC:

"That Wexford County Council amends our Allocation Scheme for Social Housing to provide that, as and from 1st January, 2020, that each month, at least one in ten houses be offered to applicants who have been on our housing lists for at least seven years."

The above motion was discussed and the meeting was informed that WCC currently exceed the 'one in ten' proposed so the motion was not adopted. WCC have allocated an average of 31.25% over to past 3 years to applicants on the housing list over 7 years.

Public Art Policy

The Arts Officer gave a presentation to the meeting about the work of the Arts Dept. Wexford is very active and is used as a model by other Local Authorities. The meeting was informed that the Percent for Art is funded by the Dept of Environment, Heritage and Local Government. One per cent of the overall cost *(up to certain limitations)* of a construction project is ring-fenced and allocated to an art project. WCC has implemented this scheme and commissioned 34 art

commissions in the period 1997 to 2008. A discussion took place about the current art commissions on the N25 New Ross and Enniscorthy Bypasses and the M11 Gorey to Enniscorthy PPP Scheme. Art on roundabouts throughout the county was also discussed.

Libraries

The County Librarian gave a presentation to the meeting on the work of the Library Service. The membership is now over 31,000, there were 500,000 books borrowed in the last year. Over 2,000 events have been hosted in the libraries throughout the county. The meeting was informed that membership has increased since fines were abolished. The Library Service implements the Health & Positive Aging Initiative (HAPAI), New Ross Library is age friendly and it is hoped to roll this out to the other libraries also.

A short discussion took place about the "My Open Library" in Gorey whereby the library is open 98 hours per week. There are plans to expand this to other libraries throughout the county. The Library Service also offers a home-bound service, on a pilot basis, liaising with the HSE and Public Health Nurse to deliver books to people's homes.

Revised Draft Burial Ground Bye-Laws 2019

The Community SSO outlined the proposed amendments to the Draft Burial Ground Bye-laws, 2019. Wexford County Council has responsibility for the maintenance of vested burial grounds. The bye-laws will apply to these in addition to the 14 open burial grounds under the control of WCC.

The Director of Service informed the meeting that this is a very sensitive issue. Bye-laws need to be strengthened and also to take account of the new Columbarium wall in Crosstown, Wexford. The Bye-laws are currently with the solicitors for legal advice and they are being brought to the SPC for information only at this time.

A short discussion took place on the new Bye-laws and it was noted that members were not familiar with the previous Bye-laws. It was agreed that if members had any queries they could email the Community SSO for more information. Once the Bye-laws are finalised, they will go to public consultation, to the SPC and full Council for adoption. It was noted that burial grounds are places of importance for genealogy.

Rebuilding Ireland Housing Programme

The Housing SEO outlined the capital projects ongoing throughout the county. It was noted that there were a number of projects completed and occupied in 2019 with more to complete by year end. All new builds are to nZEB standard. A short discussion took place on the numbers on the housing list, in 2014 there were 3,600 on the list while in 2019 that has fallen to under 2,000 applicants.

The Director of Service informed the meeting that the SPC meeting is not the place to discuss individual cases but if members had any queries they can refer them to the housing staff. A lengthy discussion took place on the Approved Housing Bodies, homelessness, the Repair and Lease scheme, vacant homes and the allocation scheme.

Housing Grants

The Housing SSO informed the meeting that the grant scheme is currently under review by the Dept and changes are expected in 2020. The members will be notified as soon as they are announced.

Qualification policies implemented by WCC for grants have been amended as follows:-

- Applicants must be resident in the property for at least 5 years before applying for a grant (no longer applies)
- Grant funding up to the max for each grant scheme is available in a 5 year period (no longer applies, applicants can apply for multiple grants)
- All householders applying for a HOP must be over 66 (no longer applies, it is sufficient for one householder to be over 66)

Schedule of Meetings 2020

It was agreed that the 2020 SPC meetings will be held on the first Wednesday of every second month *(excluding August)* at 2.15pm as follows:-

5th February	1st April	3rd June
2nd Sept	4th Nov	

Any other business

It was noted that this is the last SPC meeting for the Director of Service, the Chairperson wished the Director of Service well in his upcoming retirement. The Director of Service thanked the SPC members for their help throughout the years.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: _____
Chairman

Dated: 5-2-2020

Housing, Community & Environment SPC
Minutes of Meeting 6th February 2019

In the Chair: Cllr John Fleming

Present: Cllr Tom Forde, Cllr David Hynes, Ms Marie Therese Power, Cllr John O'Rourke, Ms Dolores Stacey, Cllr Joe Sullivan, Cllr Oliver Walsh, Mr John Carley, DOS, Mr Padraig O'Gorman SEO, Ms Caroline Creane SSO, Ms Michele Bridges-Carley AO, Mr Ger Mackey A/SEO and Ms Liz Burns, Arts Officer

Apologies: Mr James Brennan, Ms Ann Walsh, Cllr Fionntán O'Suilleabháin, Mr Ciaran Scallan and Cllr Mary Farrell

Minutes & Matters Arising

The minutes of the SPC meeting dated 7th November, 2018 were approved on the proposal of Cllr Oliver Walsh and seconded by Cllr Joe Sullivan. The Chairman welcomed Ms Dolores Stacey to the meeting.

Correspondence

One item of correspondence was received and discussed, a letter from the PPN advising that Ms Dolores Stacey is the new PPN Social Inclusion representative who is replacing Ms Kathleen Fitzpatrick.

Arts Dept

The Arts Officer informed the meeting of the Framework for Collaboration which is a new agreement between Wexford County Council and the Arts Council will be signed within the next month. This will outline strategic priorities for developing arts in the county. The Arts Council funds the arts in Ireland. WCC will prioritise the following:-

- Artists Supports
- Young people, children and education
- Public Engagement with the Arts

It was noted that County Wexford has circa 400 professional artists which is one of the highest number in Ireland. A short discussion took place about the Per Cent for Art whereby three visual artist commissions were selected. A newspaper article by Maria Pepper was circulated to the meeting showing details of the art commissions selected.

The Music Generation Programme was briefly discussed, it was noted that 8 schools are participating in the programme.

Vacant Homes Strategy

The Housing AO gave an update on the Vacant Homes Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2021. The meeting was informed that a number of expressions of interest in the Repair and Lease Scheme have been assessed. Eleven homes have been refurbished through the scheme and 10 homes have been acquired through the Buy and Renew Scheme.

A number of queries arose regarding the National Vacant Housing Reuse Strategy 2018-2021 and the Bring Back Homes – Manual for the reuse of existing buildings, which were circulated to the members. It was noted that up to €40,000 can be spent on repairs but members wondered if this amount was enough. The Department are looking into this. It was noted that the schemes are time consuming a technical inspection and costings need to be carried out. The progress is slower than expected.

Work is continuing on identifying the owners of houses found during the pilot scheme under the Vacant Homes Strategy. It was noted that there is potential for units over commercial properties in towns.

Housing First Initiative

The rollout of the Housing First Initiative was discussed. It is due to commence in April 2019. The service provision is out to tender. The service will be based in Wexford town where all the services are located. It will target rough sleepers. It is a 2-year programme WCC will have to provide 4 (1-bed or small 2-bed units) or apartments in 2019 and additional 4 units being provided by the service provider.

A discussion took place about the emergency cold weather initiative which was set up recently in St Joseph's, Wexford. A question was asked whether the old hospital in St Johns could be used for rough sleepers. The SEO will be meeting with the HSE next month so he will raise the matter.

Traveller Accommodation Programme (TAP)

An update on the preparation of the draft Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024 was given to the members. It was noted that the travellers who are illegally camped in Park, Wexford will be dealt with as part of TAP. It will be presented at LTACC and the next SPC. A short discussion took place about ensuring that the Travellers are integrated into local communities.

Choice Based Letting (CBL)

Wexford County Council is piloting the choice based letting of a house in Great Island, New Ross. An advert was place in the local newspaper asking for expressions of interest the closing date is 15th February 2019 so far 7 were received. An analysis will be carried out and the family with the highest need will be allocated the house.

Rebuilding Ireland Programme 2016-2018

Wexford County Council has exceeded the Dept target under the Rebuilding Ireland Programme 2016-2018. The numbers on the social housing supports list was discussed, it was noted that the number has fallen over the past 3 years. A total of 419 allocations have been made in 2018. There is an increase in the number of houses currently being built. A discussion took place

about the housing assistance payment (HAP) and that the tenants have no security of tenure in private rented. The advantages are that you won't lose HAP if you take up employment and if your income increases you will not be removed from the housing list.

Community Resilience

The Community A/SEO outlined the Community Resilience framework. This initiative will benefit local communities for Blue Light Services ie whereby an ambulance, Gardaí or the Fire Service are not required. It is a local service involving designated contacts from the GAA and IFA with local knowledge in each parish. There will be a Community Resilience desk in County Hall during red weather warnings.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 3rd April 2019.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: _____
Chairman

Dated: 3rd April 2019

Housing, Community & Environment SPC
Minutes of Meeting 3rd April 2019

In the Chair: Cllr John Fleming

Present: Mr James Brennan, Cllr Ger Carthy, Cllr Mary Farrell, Cllr Tom Forde, Cllr John O'Rourke, Cllr Fionntán O'Suilleabháin Cllr Joe Sullivan, Cllr Oliver Walsh, Mr Padraig O'Gorman SEO, Ms Caroline Creane SSO, Mr Gerry Forde, Senior Engineer, Ms Hazel Percival, Senior Executive Librarian

Apologies: Ms Ann Walsh and Cllr David Hynes

Performance of nZEB and Pre-retrofit dwellings

The Environment Senior Engineer welcomed Dr Shane Colclough, Ulster University to the meeting. Dr Colclough completed his PhD in Low Energy Housing and he is a Chartered Engineer. He gave a presentation on comparing performance of nZEB and pre-retrofit dwellings. He believes in the potential of the Passive House Standard in conjunction with renewables in providing a better standard of housing. He noted that Wexford are leading the way. His reports are evidence based and the data gathered are from Wexford County Council's scheme in Enniscorthy. Four of the houses were monitored over the space of a year. The meeting was informed that all WCC built housing have been nZEB standard for the past year.

Minutes

The minutes of the SPC meeting dated 6th February 2019 were approved on the proposal of Cllr Ger Carthy and seconded by Cllr Tom Forde.

Matters Arising

Cllr John O'Rourke left the meeting. Cllr Joe Sullivan informed the members present that he was not happy by the way the Environment staff were disrespectful to him so he left the meeting. The Environment Senior Engineer agreed to look into the matter. Other elected members expressed similar experiences throughout the organisation. It was noted that as 34 directors of the Council, staff should be respectful to the elected members.

As Cllr O'Rourke and Cllr Sullivan left the meeting there was no longer a quorum present.

Members Motions

This Agenda item was deferred to the next meeting of the SPC as there wasn't a quorum.

Traveller Accommodation Programme (TAP)

The Housing SEO gave a presentation on the draft Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024. This TAP will be for the 5-year period from 1st July 2019 to 30th June 2024. It has been approved as draft by the LTACC on 20th March 2019. It will be presented to the full Council in April for approval as draft. A notice will then be published in newspapers giving interested parties 2 months to make submissions. The TAP 2019-2024 was noted by all present.

Rebuilding Ireland Programme 2016-2018

A short discussion took place about the 2019 targets under the Rebuilding Ireland Programme. It was noted that Wexford County Council exceeded the 2018 targets by 47%. A discussion took place about the HAP limits in Gorey, the SEO informed the members present that this is currently under review and that WCC have a discretion of up to 20%.

Creative Ireland

The Senior Executive Librarian presented an update on the Creative Ireland Programme 2018/2019. She outlined projects funded under the strategic priorities of Wexford's Culture and Creativity Strategy 2018-2022:-

Strategic Priority	Projects
Cultural Engagement	Cruinniú na nÓg, Creative Communities Scheme and Civic Events Programme
Economy and Culture	Better Business Support for Creatives
Our Place, Our Identity	Irish Language and Heritage
Culture and Learning	Digital Strategy and Living Arts

The meeting was informed of the Commemorative Events over the next 5 years. A timeline of important events focusing on personnel from Wexford is planned it will be rolled out locally with consultation with historically societies. A discussion took place about the Service Level Agreement that will be signed by Wexford County Council and Creative Ireland. A grant of €96,744 has been allocated by the Dept of Housing, Planning and Local Government in addition a further €15,000 has been allocated to Wexford County Council by the Dept of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

Any other business

A short discussion took place about the possible appointment of a Heritage Officer, it was noted that other Councils have them in place.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: _____
Chairman

Dated: 6.11.2019.