

Housing & Community SPC

Minutes of Meeting 22nd June 2020

In the Chair: Cllr Joe Sullivan

Present in meeting room: Ms Carolyne Godkin A/Director of Service, Cllr Joe Sullivan, Ms Caroline Creane SSO Housing, Ms Martina Donoghue AO Housing, Ms Eileen Morrissey County Librarian and Ms Liz Burns, Arts Officer.

Present via teleconference: Cllr Jim Codd, Ms Alice Doyle, Cllr John O'Rourke and Mr Michael Wall.

Apologies: Cllr Fionntán O'Suilleabháin and Cllr David Hynes

The Chairperson welcomed all members to the teleconference meeting. As this was not a statutory meeting Mr Michael Wall was present instead of Ms Clair Walsh, Trade Union rep.

Minutes

The minutes of the SPC meeting dated 5th February 2020 were discussed briefly at the meeting and will listed for the next SPC meeting for approval.

Correspondence

A letter was sent to the Chairperson from the Rosslare District Administrator raising concerns regarding the lack of Rural Housing Schemes in the District. The Councillors requested information from Housing Dept on the number of schemes that have Dept approval in the Rosslare Municipal District.

A short discussion took place and it was noted that 12 units were delivered in 2018 / 2019 a further 18 units will deliver in Q2 2020. There is stage 2 approval for 36 units in Rosetown, Rosslare. Four turnkeys were delivered in 2019. There is an application for funding with the Dept for 12 units in Bridgetown and there is an agreement in principle to acquire 20 new builds in Murrintown subject to planning and Dept funding. In addition, there are private rented houses available to encourage people to stay local supported by HAP.

Film Development

The Arts Officer informed the meeting that the Film / Audio-visual sector is a fast growing industry worth over €1 billion to the Irish economy. In March 2019 a report '*TV & Film Production & Development in Wexford*' was produced. One of the recommendations was to appoint a part-time Film Co-ordinator who will work closely with the Local Enterprise Office. The job spec is being finalised this week. The Arts Officer outlined the key tasks that the Film Co-ordinator will be responsible for and she informed the meeting that the Arts and Economic Dept's are co-funding this role. It is hoped that the person would be in place by Sept / Oct 2020.

Library Update

The County Librarian presented an update on the Library and Archive Services. All public libraries and archive buildings closed to the public on 12th March 2020 due to Covid 19. A number of staff were re-deployed to the Community Call Helpline. The 3D printers were utilised for the printing of PPE.

The meeting was informed of the new initiatives that the Library Service implemented during Covid 19 the 'Book Call Home Delivery Service' and the 'Contact and Collect Service'. A publicity campaign was launched in early March to encourage the public to join the library and use the free e-services during lockdown. It was noted that Wexford have one of the highest users in the country for the e-book service. The opening of the Libraries will be guided by public health advice.

Housing Update

The acting Director of Service informed the meeting that the Housing Section continues to provide Essential repairs and Homeless Services which have been identified as critical services during Covid 19. Private Rented inspections have been suspended for the time being. HAP and Rent continue as normal. The Grants Section continues to process applications but no inspections are being carried out at present.

The meeting was informed of the Housing Supply programme and it was noted that all sites were closed in March but have now re-opened on 18th May 2020.

Questions

One question was received from an SPC member prior to the meeting in relation to families on the housing list and landlords refusing to take children and HAP. The meeting was informed that it is up to each landlord to decide who they rent their property to. It is illegal for landlords to refuse to accept HAP. It was noted that this is something that Local Authority cannot influence or control.

Any other business

A short discussion took place about the housing list and the number of people presenting homeless within the County. The housing stock was briefly discussed.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday, 2nd September at 2.15pm

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: Joe Sullivan (JOE SULLIVAN)
Chairman

Dated: 3-12-2020