Housing & Community SPC
Minutes of Meeting 3rd December 2020

In the Chair: Cllr Joe Sullivan

Present in meeting room: Ms Carolyne Godkin A/Director of Service, Mr Niall McCabe A/SEO Housing, Cllr Joe Sullivan, Ms Caroline Creane SSO Housing, Ms Michele Bridges-Carley AO Housing, Mr Ronan Griffin A/ASO Housing.

Present via Microsoft Teams: Cllr Fionntán O'Suilleabháin, Cllr David Hynes, Cllr Jim Codd, Cllr John O'Rourke, Mr Michael Wall, Mr William Considine, Cllr Lisa McDonald, Ms Martina Donoghue AO Housing and Mr Paul L'Estrange A/SEO Community.

Apologies: Ms Alice Doyle and Ms Breda O'Sullivan

The Chairperson opened the meeting. As this was the first meeting for Mr Michael Wall as the Union rep the Chairperson welcome him to the meeting. The Chairperson also expressed sympathy to Cllr Barbara Ann Murphy on the passing of her sister.

Minutes

The minutes of the SPC meeting dated 5th February 2020 were approved on the proposal of Cllr John O'Rourke and seconded by Mr Michael Wall.

The minutes of the SPC meeting dated 22nd June 2020 were approved on the proposal of Cllr David Hynes and seconded by Cllr John O'Rourke.

Matters Arising

A brief discussion took place about the Homeless Unit.

Choice Based Letting

The Housing A/ASO gave a powerpoint presentation to the meeting on Choice Based Letting (CBL). He outlined the benefits of Wexford County Council to moving to CBL. It would cut down on the number of refusals. So far in 2020 we have 33% of allocations refused. The advantage of CBL is that applicants will be offered houses that they have selected. The system is very successful in other Local Authorities.

The meeting was informed that once the system is in place that it is proposed that all WCC properties, excluding those designed for specific categories of Housing need (ie Traveller specific, older persons and persons with restricted mobility) will be offered through CBL. The SPC members welcome CBL and it was noted that this is a very transparent system. It was approved on the proposal of Cllr John O'Rourke and seconded by Cllr Fionntán O'Suilleabháin.

Approval for Social Housing

A brief discussion took place about the legislative basis regarding the allocation of a house. WCC's Allocation Scheme for Social Housing 2011 together with extracts of the Social Housing Assessment Regulations 2011 and extracts of the Housing acts 2009 and 2014 were circulated to the SPC members for information.

Members Motions

Four motions were submitted to the SPC for consideration:-

1. Received from Cllr George Lawlor

"Wexford Co. Council formalises it's policy regarding homeowners applying for social housing supports who are in possession of either a safety order, a protection order or a barring order against their spouse/partner or co-owner. This Housing SPC proposes that applicants in this situation be allowed access to social housing supports all else being in order."

The above motion was approved on the proposal of Cllr David Hynes and seconded by Cllr Fionntán Ó Súilleabháin.

2. Received from Cllr Joe Sullivan

"I wish to call on Wexford County Council to amend their tenancy policy so that when a parent who is a tenant of a council property dies, should he/she have dependents in full time school going/third level education, that these dependents have an automatic right of residency on the property until the completion of their education.
This shall automatically apply if the dependents are not named on the tenancy agreement."

This above motion was amended to state that a dependant must be "*still in education and a resident in the property or have made an application for a social house and it will be looked at on a case-by-case basis*" rather than amend the allocation scheme. The above motion with amendments was approved on the proposal of Cllr Fionntán Ó Súilleabháin and seconded by Cllr Jim Codd.

The meeting was informed that residents have a right of residence once WCC knows that they are in the property, all details are contained in The Allocation Scheme for Social Housing 2011 which has been circulated to the SPC members.

3. Received from Cllr George Lawlor

"Noting the reduction in the housing maintenance budget and the resulting impact on pre letting repairs carried out prior to allocating a dwelling to a new tenant. It is proposed that at rent waiver be applied where a new tenant has to now complete certain works at their own cost that heretofore would have been undertaken by the Council to bring a housing unit up to an acceptable standard"

This above motion was discussed at length and members voiced their concern about the condition of the houses recently allocated. The Acting Director informed the meeting that Council Members agreed at WCC's March 2020 meeting that in order to reduce the re-letting time of houses that floor coverings and painting would not be carried out prior to the allocation. It was also noted that new tenants can avail of a grant for same from the Community Welfare Officers. The motion was not approved by the members however, it was hoped that Housing Dept would have a solution in the New Year.

4. Received from Rosslare MD members

"That the Rosslare Municipal District call on Wexford County Council to enact an out of hours service for people who find themselves homeless"

The above motion was approved on the proposal of Cllr Lisa McDonald and seconded by Cllr Jim Codd. Cllr David Hynes further supported the motion to include Rough Sleepers.

A lengthy discussion took place about homelessness and cold weather spells. In recent years, extra accommodation would be opened for example, in The Presentation Centre, Enniscorthy but due to Covid 19 restrictions, this could not happen this year. The Wexford Homeless Action Team includes other service providers, and all presentations are assigned a Key Worker who has responsibility for finding a solution. The Acting Director informed the meeting that senior housing staff will take calls over the weekend.

The Homeless Service and Support Unit (HSSU) was briefly discussed, it was noted that unit is part of a regional structure and is open daily for homeless presentations.

Intoxicating Liquor Bye-Laws

The acting Community SEO gave a powerpoint presentation to the meeting outlining the Intoxicating Liquor Bye-Laws. The meeting was informed that the bye-laws would apply to all outdoor places except a private house or garden, any licensed premises or on table and chairs outside a hotel, restaurant or public house. The members welcomed these bye-laws but noted it may be difficult to enforce in public parks.

The Bye-Laws were approved on the proposal of Cllr Lisa McDonald and seconded by Cllr David Hynes.

Community Preparedness Plan 2020-2024

The acting Community SEO gave a powerpoint presentation to the meeting outlining the Community Preparedness Plan 2020-2024. The aim of the plan is to develop Community Preparedness across the county with a focus on individuals, businesses, community groups and voluntary organisations. Also, to integrate the voluntary capabilities of the public into emergency planning and response at community level.

The Community Preparedness Plan 2020-2024 was approved on the proposal of Cllr David Hynes and seconded by Cllr Fionntán O'Suilleabháin. The members praised the work of the Community Dept and the Acting Director asked SPC members to encourage community groups to participate.

Community Funding Scheme

The acting Community SEO gave a powerpoint presentation to the meeting outlining the Community Funding Scheme. The meeting was informed that the funding scheme covers small scale financial grant and support community groups with infrastructural projects. The maximum grant available is €20,000, the grant will not exceed 80% of the total cost of the project.

The Community Funding Scheme was approved on the proposal of Cllr David Hynes and seconded by Cllr Fionntán O'Suilleabháin.

Any other business

- **Traveller Funding** – the members queried why WCC have not drawn down funds for Traveller accommodation. The acting SEO informed the meeting that there is specific guidelines for this funding it can only be used for Traveller Group schemes or halting sites. It does not include funding for new mobiles or work in the halting sites.

  It was noted that under the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024 the yearly target is 20 allocations. So far this year we have allocated 19 units to Travellers.

- **Private Rented Properties** – A short discussion took place about the condition of private rented properties and the powers of WCC to enforce landlords to address issues.

- **Housing Maintenance / Grants** – The meeting was informed that due to Covid 19 there is a backlog of inspections. We are currently only dealing with urgent queries. There is no budget to carryout full bathroom refits.

- **Grants** - A short discussion took place about adaption grants. There is a reduction of 16% in funding but no reduction in applications. Currently there are 16 priority 1 applications and 50 priority 2 applications submitted.

- **Schedule of Meetings 2020** – The following dates were agreed for meetings of the Housing & Community SPC in 2021:-

3th February	7th April	2nd June
1st Sept	3rd Nov	

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: _____
Chairman

Dated: 09/02/21