Housing SPC

Minutes of Meeting 3rd September 2025

Chairperson: Cllr Jim Codd

Members present: Cllr. B.A. Murphy, Cllr. J. Dwyer (teams), Cllr. J. O'Rourke, Cllr. V. Barron, Cllr. M. Farrell (Teams), Cllr. J. O'Sullivan, Mr. M. Wall

Executive: Mr. S O'Connor, SEO Housing, Ms. E. Nolan SSO Housing, Ms. M. Browne SO Housing.

Apologies: Cllr. T. Forde, Ms. C. Godkin, DOS, Mr. D. Nichol CIF.

Cllr. J. Codd opened the meeting and welcomed all in attendance. He advised that he wished to express his sympathy and sympathy of the housing SPC to Cllr. A.R. O'Brien on her recent bereavement.

Cllr. B.A. Murphy requested that no more meetings of the Housing SPC be held in the Block A, Ground Floor, Meeting Room.

Minutes and Matters Arising

Cllr. J. Dwyer advised that at the last meeting he expressed concern at the serious disadvantage that AHB tenants are in. The legislation does not allow for sale of the properties and our tenants are being adversely affected.

Cllr. J. Dwyer expressed concerns about the large volume of policy documents that come from the department and other agencies which affect and influence Wexford County Council. He expressed a need for all document issued in last five years to be circulated and made available to the members.

Mr. O'Connor advised that various policy documents are available in the forms of communications and circulars. He will forward documents that are ready for dissemination but advised that some would have limited value to members as they refer to procedural issues and would not be for general circulation. He will compile information and arrange for it to be forwarded.

Cllr. M. Farrell asked for an update on the proposed workshop on the Allocation policy and what the special allocations would be clarified as. Mr. O'Connor confirmed that he was happy to do a workshop, it is in planning, just not confirmed yet.

The minutes were proposed by Cllr. J. Sulivan and seconded by Cllr. BA Murphy

Correspondence

No Correspondence

Disabilities

Representatives from the Disabled persons organisation attended the meeting at the invitation of the chairman.

The presentation was given by Paula Soraghan, VOICE Community Development worker.

Ms. Soraghan presented an overview of the issues that the DPO are working towards addressing. Cllr. M. Farrell asked if the DPO had liaised with the IWA to expand membership and profile. Ms. Soraghan advised that the DPO had engaged widely with other organisations working in this field and would continue to do so. However, they asked that Wexford County Council use their resources to promote the organisation.

The chairman thanked the girls for their presentation, and they withdrew from the meeting.

Cllr. J. Codd noted that the presentation had highlighted that the Part M Building regulations are set to the minimum and he asked what would be involved in getting them set to the max. Mr. O' Connor advised that Part M Regulations are part of the building control regulations and are set nationally and they constantly evolve. He advised that updated guidelines were currently being worked on and there was a movement towards universal design gradings of UD, UD+ and UD++ as a mechanism to identify different levels of disability and need. Universal design is confined not just to disability, but it also incorporates changing needs based on natural ageing. No timeline for publishing this yet.

A Discussion followed with regard the feasibility of designing within housing using the existing housing allocation scheme and prioritising people with disabilities and housing requirements within our housing stock, align disability needs with planned units. Mr. O' Connor advised that the challenges to be faced would include family requirements and the need for OTT and specific professional assessment reports. He advised that the housing department is currently working to identify specific adaptations at building stage, with the aim of minimising the need for retrofitting in the future. This is being looked at during the planning stage and we are in discussion with developers in relation to part V and disability needs. Mr. M. Wall advised that Wexford was at the higher end of Disability payments nationally and we should look to try and identify the base line.

Cllr. J. O'Rourke asked about engaging with AHB and disabilities at planning permission stage, so that they can build houses that are appropriate. Mr. O'Connor advised that

WCC is actively looking at this and are trying to identify disability requirements at base level.

Cllr. J. O'Sullivan asked what % of people are classed as having disabilities on our housing list. Mr. O'Connor advised that to date 16% of our allocations have been to the disability sector and our annual target is 20%.

There followed a discussion about housing need and requirements, and it was proposed that staff from housing capital attend the SPC going forward. Mr. O'Connor agreed that this could be done.

Rural Communities

Discussion was held regarding the role of Uisce Eireann and ESB in the planning system. With several of Cllr's expressing their dissatisfaction with the influence that these utility companies are having on planning. Cllr. J. Codd advised that rural communities are struggling, local shop is closing, the GAA clubs are affected as there are limited services in rural communities. There is a need to promote development and encourage rural living.

Cllr. J. O'Sullivan supported this and advised that development has been seriously affected in rural areas.

Cornmarket project

Cllr. J. Codd advised that the Cornmarket project has been very successful and is evidence of a very good relationship between Cornmarket and Wexford County Council.

Mr. S. O'Connor gave a brief update on the project.

Cllr. J. O'Rourke informed the committee that there were professional people working in the Cornmarket project with great talent and gifts. He advised that he currently has a motion before Enniscorthy Municipal District Council to create a Flagship rehabilitation centre in Wexford to support the work being carried out by Cornmarket as there are no other centres in the county and service users are being forced to other facilities outside of the area. Cllr. J. Codd added his support to the view expressed. Mr. M. Wall advised that he supported the concept in principle, but he had strong reservations about the management structures and use of unpaid volunteer staff. In his experience this has led to issues in other organisations. Cllr. V. Barron advised that Wexford County Council would not be able to change the national governance structure which is evident in Ireland, and she added her support to Cllr. J. O'Rourke as she advised that early intervention, identifying issues and provision of support is the way forward.

A.O. B.

Cllr. V. Barron asked for an update on the current budget, and she asked for information in relation to AHB's dealing with issues of Anti-social behaviour and who to report such instances to.

Mr. S. O'Connor advised that AHB's had the same powers of enforcement as Local Authorities and had a higher ratio of TLO and support officers to tenant than Wexford County Council.

Cllr. V. Barron asked was there a list and map available of the housing estates that were run by AHB's so that when representations are received, the appropriate AHB can be identified easily. Mr. O'Connor advised that there were 20 – 30 different AHB's providing housing solutions in Wexford, but he would investigate providing a list and/or map to the Councillors to aid them.

Cllr. B.A. Murphy looked for an update on upgrade for the halting sites in Bunclody and especially the Tigins. Mr. O'Connor advised that he was keen to see an upgrade happen and the council will be working towards that aim, but for now all that can be offered is routine maintenance. He further advised that he hoped to have a plan submitted to the department for funding and renovations before the end of this year.

This concluded the business of the meeting and Cllr. J. Codd thanked all for attending.

Signed _____

Chairman

Dated: _____