

SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL



MEETING OF SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE HOUSING AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

HELD ON THURSDAY 15th SEPTEMBER 2016

PRESENT:

Members	Council Officials	
Cllr C. King (Chair)	B. Coman	Director of Services
Cllr N. Coules	H. Hogan	Senior Executive Officer
Cllr M. Duff	Y. Dervan	Senior Executive Officer
Cllr L. Dunne	M. Kavanagh	Administrative Officer
Cllr M. Genockey	L. Madden	Administrative Officer
Cllr T. Gilligan	M. Murtagh	Senior Staff Officer
Cllr K. Mahon		
Cllr M. Ward		
Representatives:		
Brendan MacPhiarais, Nabco		
Betty Tyrrell-Collard, ICTU		
Apologies:		
Tricia Nolan, Volunteer Centre		
External Presentation		
Caren Gallagher, Irish Council for Social Housing		

H-1(1) – Minutes of Housing SPC Meeting on 12th May 2016.

The minutes of the Housing and Social Development Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held on 12th May 2016 were proposed by Cllr. C. King, seconded by Cllr. M. Duff and were confirmed and approved as a true record.

H-I (2) - Matters Arising from Minutes of 12th May 2016

B. Tyrrell-Collard asked was the matter of CCTV monitoring brought to the Joint Policing Committee; Cllr. C. King confirmed and that this was available online through CMAS.

H-I (3) – Presentation

A presentation was given on “Housing Associations – Role, Delivery and Outcome”. This presentation was given by Caren Gallagher, Director of Policy, Irish Council for Social Housing. C. Gallagher responded to questions following general discussion and the Chair thanked Aisling for her presentation.

Cllr. C. King noted that Housing Association properties in the CLSS scheme had higher rents that in many cases proved not to be affordable. B. Coman advised that they must have regard to Local Authority rent schemes but were not bound to these rent amounts. Cllr. C. King noted this should not be an issue going forward as this scheme was now discontinued. Cllr. C. King requested that ICSH raise high rents as an issue with Respond as this is contrary to the ethos of ICSH members. C. Gallagher agreed to raise this issue of high rents at the upcoming Rents Working Group meeting.

Cllr. Cathal King sought clarification regarding local authority housing stock refurbishments funded by ICSH loan. C. Gallagher confirmed the options in such arrangements are either transferring stock to the voluntary sector or for an Approved Housing Body (AHB) to take over management of the property on behalf of the Local Authority.

Cllr. L. Dunne raised the issue on anti-social behaviour in properties managed by certain AHBs; has the ICSH any ability to assist in this regard. C. Gallagher confirmed that ICSH can raise these issues with the AHB. Tenants directly concerns to the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB), however ideally issues should be resolved without reaching that point.

Cllr. M. Ward noted the perception that tenant rights are weakened when falling within the aegis of the RTB, e.g. probationary periods. C. Gallagher confirmed the amended tenancy rights which arise due to the legislative structure.

Cllr. K. Mahon noted that social house building falls very much below targeted levels and that this may be a financing issue. C. Gallagher advised that this related more to the requirement of AHBs to upskill in financial management and that the sector has now managed this.

B. Tyrrell-Collard noted that the RTB is hampered somewhat due to backlogs and is difficult to contact.

Cllr. N. Coules noted the higher loan rates charged by the lending institutions to AHBs.

Cllr. C. King raised a concern that Councillors’ roles are not properly recognised at the bi-annual conferences and this was causing a reduction in Councillors’ attending. C. Gallagher expressed great appreciation of the contribution of Councillors and agreed to raise the matter at the October Finance Conference.

C. Gallagher then left the meeting

H-I (4) – Rents Policy and Debt Management:

L. Madden gave a presentation on the proposed updated rents policy and debt management and a general discussion took place on matters arising.

L. Madden advised that a text messaging service and online statements were being developed, and confirmed that these were scheduled to go into live testing this November.

B. Tyrrell-Collard asked whether any data protection considerations would arise; L. Madden explained that this system was similar to that of online banking with firewall protection and user account secure log-on.

B. Coman outlined the reasons for this new policy; tenants being aware of how their rent is calculated; dealing with the issue of clearing legacy arrears on old City Council stock. He noted the improved customer service in early communication of issues and underlined that this would in no way reduce the current human interaction when dealing with tenants in difficulties. He also stressed that such tenants should communicate with SDCC at the earliest possible time to reach out for help, not to take short term loans or other temporary solutions.

Cllr. C. King asked for clarification on the weekly reminder system as this would be inappropriate for all tenants; L. Madden confirmed this would only apply on those tenants in arrears and even then some days into the arrears period.

Cllr. M. Duff welcome this and received clarification that only the main tenant and no other occupants' data would be available from Revenue.

Cllr. M. Genockey asked would the new policy be presented at full Council. B. Coman confirmed that all Councillors will be advised of the policy and will come to Council through report from this SPC. This is an executive function but here for communication to Housing SPC members.

Cllr. L. Dunne enquired regarding cases where the housing needs assessment was causing some applicants to lose their place on the housing list. H. Hogan explained this was a separate issue and that the assessment is based on criteria set in law.

Cllr. C. King suggested that there should be some flexibility in this matter in recognition of the upwards movement in rents.

B. Tyrrell-Collard asked what assistance is available to Parents building an extension to a private house to assist their children. H. Hogan advised to direct the question to him and he would assist in responding. Y. Dervan outlined an older scheme of extension works in lieu.

Cllr. C. King enquired of an increase of €5.00 in pensioners' rent, was this an executive decision. B. Coman confirmed this is an executive function. After a general discussion B. Coman agreed to provide some worked examples of comparative costs for the next SPC, taking place in November.

H-I (5) - Housing SPC Work Plan Programme 2016

B. Coman gave a verbal report in relation to Housing matters and advised members that this will be a headed item on the September Council meeting.

He noted the issuing circulars from the Minister, the focus on Rapid Delivery projects in 2017 and that a further presentation on the St. Aidan's project would take place next week. SDCC will have an overall requirement of 205 units and council working on Part 8 proposals for Oldbawn/Firshouse Road Junction site, Oldcastle Clondalkin and St Cuthberts Park in addition to St Aidan's and St Marks. Funding for units in 2017 will only be for Rapid Delivery units.

He confirmed Stage 3 approval had been just received on the Mayfield, St Mark's and MacUilliam projects.

He outlined plans for a major integrated housing development at The Grange, Clondalkin with 800-1000 units and provision for schools and retail. Expect to go to the market in October. Confirmed that a meeting is arranged to brief the Clondalkin members next week.

He also noted that Whitestown Road, Maplewood and Fernwood as likely to be Older Persons units to facilitate options for older tenants wishing to move to smaller units with facilities such as shops and hospitals nearby.

Cllr. L. Dunne suggested that those older people's tenants could move into St Aidan's and put RAPID Units in Maplewood and Fernwood instead.

B Coman responded to all issues raised.

H-I (6) – Any other business:

B. Coman confirmed there would be a follow-up meeting regarding the Part 8 at St. Aidan's.

The meeting concluded at 7:10pm.

Siniú



Cathal King

An Cathaoirleach

Dáta
