SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL



MEETING OF SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL

**MEETING OF THE HOUSING AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE**

**HELD ON THURSDAY 10th MAY 2018**

**PRESENT:**

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| **Members**  | **Council Officials**  |
| Cllr C. King (Chair) | B. Coman | Director of Services |
| Cllr M. Ward | M. Staunton | Senior Executive Officer |
| Cllr M. Duff | L. Madden | Administrative Officer |
| Cllr L. Dunne | A. Byrne | Administrative Officer |
| Cllr M. Genockey  | M. Murtagh | Administrative Officer |
| Cllr K. Mahon |  |  |
| Cllr Emma Hendrick |  |  |
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| **Representatives:** |
| Catriona McClean, PPN |
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| **Apologies:** |
| Betty Tyrrell-Collard, ICTU |
| Gillian McWilliams, Outreach |
| Cllr. T. Gilligan |

**H-1(1) – Minutes of Housing SPC Meeting on 8th February 2018.**

The minutes of the Housing and Social Development Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held on 8th February 2018 were proposed by Cllr. C. King, seconded by Cllr. K. Mahon and were confirmed and approved as a true record.

C. McClean enquired what statistics were available on the new loan scheme as discussed at the previous meeting. L. Madden advised that these were not yet published. B. Coman advised that the Housing Agency is to analyse the applications over an appropriate period of time and is expected to report by September. C McClean requested that an age profile of applicants be included in the reporting.

**H-1(2) – Allocations Policy - Homeless/RAS.**

A Byrne provided a verbal report on the Homeless and RAS aspects of South Dublin County Council’s (SDCC) Allocations Policy. The Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Scheme is the primary form of social housing support provided to assist cases of homelessness. Choice-based letting (CBL) is also an option; homeless applicants are prioritised and any time spent as homeless is added to their time on the Housing List.

B. Coman noted that the inherent principle for allocating Social Housing is an applicant’s time spent on the Housing List. Government policy also makes exceptions in cases of homelessness. CBL proves a fair and transparent option for all given it is inclusive of Medical, Transfers, Homeless and General applicants. Cllr. C. King agreed it seems the fairest approach, however noting instances where it appeared that cases of homelessness were prioritised over applicants who had spent a long time on the waiting list.

Cllr. M. Ward raised an issue whereby a reported 102 RAS tenants have been served with notices to quit; he has reported some of these cases to the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB). He would like to see these tenants been given access to CBL.

L. Madden advised that South Dublin County Council strives to prevent these cases and to keep these housing units within the RAS scheme. B. Coman advised that current regulations don’t permit such former RAS tenant direct access to the HAP scheme nor for RAS Landlords to switch to HAP; he has however raised this issue with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG) who are to review the regulations. L. Madden also noted that SDCC attempts to buy RAS units when up for sale in order to keep the tenant housed, she is currently in negotiations on a number of these.

Cllr. K. Mahon asked for confirmation that SDCC continues to allocate evenly across Medical, Transfers, Homeless and General applicants. B. Coman advised that the full scope of the Allocations Scheme is used to get the agreed mix, noting however that this isn’t possible for all cases given the nature of available units. Cllr. K. Mahon noted that homeless people entering into HAP accommodation often find this is not the permanent solution they expected. A. Byrne advised that should former RAS tenants gain access to CBL it could impact more long-term applicants by pushing them back down the waiting list. Cllr. C. King noted that nonetheless we have a duty of care to RAS tenants made homeless, we need a solution to housing these. M. Staunton asked to clarify was the request that only homeless former RAS tenants be given access to CBL. L. Madden noted that not all the 102 tenants served with notices to quit will be made homeless. Cllr. C. King stated that tenants should not have to go directly from RAS units into emergency accommodation. Cllr. M. Genockey clarified that the time in RAS accommodation and when homeless is combined for the purposes of the Housing List.

Cllr. L. Dunne raised the issue of young families coming from homelessness, particularly those with health issues, being allocated unsuitable accommodation, e.g. apartments where they need to carry buggies or with where they can’t open windows but later have issues over dampness. Cystic Fibrosis is a very debilitating illness but is not currently a qualification for Medical needs. Cllr. C. King noted that life expectancy should be factored into time spent on the waiting list. Cllr. M. Ward requested that a refusal of unsuitable accommodation in these cases should be accepted as being on medical grounds and not prove a bar to future accommodation offers.

B. Coman noted that the length and detail of this discussion was a testament to the complexity of the issues faced in Housing and noted that the Subcommittee was due to meet again and report back at the September SPC meeting. Cllr. C. King asked for this subcommittee to meet within a fortnight.

B. Coman responded in full to all issues raised in relation to the Allocations Policy.

**H-1(3) – Disability Strategy Committee - Allocations/Congregated Settings.**

B. Coman gave a presentation in relation to South Dublin County Council’s Disability Allocations.

[Allocations made to People with a Disability as of the 31st of December 2017](http://intranet/cmas/documentsview.aspx?id=59944)

[Disability Strategy Committee - Allocations/Congregated Settings](http://intranet/cmas/documentsview.aspx?id=59941)

He noted that this authority is exemplary in its achievements in this area, effected by properly resourcing, having staff dedicated to this role and the setting of ambitious targets. Cllr. M. Ward noted that the HSE appears to operate a ‘2-tier’ system for assisting disabilities, citing the example of Clondalkin services compared to those in Tallaght. B. Coman advised of meetings with the HSE in relation to the strategy and the possibility of new Occupation Therapists in Clondalkin/Lucan area if Deansrath Family Centre can be accommodated in the proposed development of the old Telecom site with Tusla coming on board to assist.

He responded in full to all issues raised in relation to disability allocations.

**H-1(4) – Housing Supply/Delivery Update - Revised National Targets.**

M. Staunton presented the following reports on Housing Supply and Delivery:

[National Social Housing Targets 2018-2021](http://intranet/cmas/documentsview.aspx?id=59835)

[SDCC Housing Capital Supply 2017-2021](http://intranet/cmas/documentsview.aspx?id=59836)

B. Coman confirmed the SDCC national target as 2,993 units supplied by the end of 2021. This is a significant challenge but he is confident we will achieve the target. SDCC will continue constantly seeking other supply sources such as turnkey developments and advanced Part Vs.

C. McClean enquired about the planning for an underpass at Palmerston to assist congestion issues and thereby reduce grounds to object to further housing development and SDCC acquire the site. B. Coman advised premature to discuss and progress at this time and to await developments on this by the National Transport Authority prior to progressing any Part 8 activity.

Cllr. K. Mahon sought clarification on the timing of the 110 Senior Citizen units targeted for the year 2020. M. Staunton confirmed this was the expected data of completion and handover.

Cllr. K. Mahon noted the short timescale required to produce rapid-build houses, can this approach be used for future projects instead of traditional builds. B. Coman confirmed this was the objective and advised on the entry of a new steel-framed approach to the Irish market; subject to appropriate certification.

B. Coman responded in full to all issues raised in relation to housing supply targets.

**H-1(5) – Homeless Statistics March 2018.**

A Byrne presented a report on homeless statistics:

[Homeless Services – Monthly Management Report March 2018](http://intranet/cmas/documentsview.aspx?id=59943)

Cllr. C. King enquired about the success of the Dublin Place Finder Service in sourcing housing units. A Byrne confirmed their success in sourcing additional units, in many cases they would have advised more than one party of a unit with the consequence of several viewers turning up to view the property.

Cllr. K. Mahon requested clarification on the method of counting numbers of homeless people. A Byrne advised that only those eligible for housing are counted; consequently numbers will vary from month to month as people can drop off the list. B. Coman advised that the Dublin Region Homeless Executive (DRHE) returns regional statistics on behalf of the Dublin Local Authorities. Some homeless people may be declassified on the basis that they are provided with temporary accommodation. Cllr. M. Ward noted that the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government, Eoghan Murphy, TD had mentioned Tallaght Cross so was concerned that homeless figures here were excluded. A Byrne confirmed that she’d counted these in the provided report.

Cllr. M. Ward raised the issue of substandard accommodation in Abberley Court Hotel, Tallaght; this had been raised at the Tallaght Area Committee. B. Coman suggested the SPC members arrange to visit and inspect; this was confirmed by Cllr. C. King.

B. Coman responded in full to all issues raised in relation to homeless statistics.

**H-1(6) – Enhanced Leasing Initiative.**

L. Madden advised that thirty-four applications had been submitted nationally for the new Enhanced Leasing Initiative; two of these related to the South Dublin County Council area. These two are not yet at planning stage and no information is yet available; it could be some years before these become available. M. Staunton advised that the DHPLG may issue a further call for proposals later in 2018.

**H-1(7) – AOB.**

Cllr. C. King announced that this was the final Housing SPC meeting for B. Coman, Director of Services for Housing, Social & Community Development. He thanked him on behalf of all for his help and support over their years working together, recognising the ever-increasing complexity of the housing function and challenges in that time.

### **The meeting concluded at 7:00 pm.**

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 **An Cathaoirleach**