



Miontuairiscí/Meeting Minutes

Special Housing Meeting 24th October 2011, Council Chamber

An Cathaoirleach, Councillor Eoin Holmes, presided.

Members Present:

Councillors, Joseph Bonner, William Carey, Eugene Cassidy, Shane Cassells, Jimmy Cudden, Francis Deane, Ann Dillon Gallagher, John V Farrelly, Jimmy Fegan, Brian Fitzgerald, Joe Fox, Oliver Fox, Wayne Harding, Jim Holloway, Noel Leonard, Tracy McElhinney, Niamh McGowan, Maria Murphy, Gerry O'Connor, Seamus O'Neill, Bryan Reilly, Joe Reilly, Tommy Reilly, Catherine Yore.

Apologies: Councillors Sirena Campbell, Suzanne Jamal, Nick Killian, Jenny McHugh,

Officials in Attendance:

County Manager Tom Dowling

Directors of Service: Tadhg McDonnell, Kevin Stewart, Brendan McGrath, Fiona Lawless, Des Foley

Meetings Administrator Martin Rogers

Senior Executive Officers: Michael Griffin, Larry Whelan,

Housing Staff: Tom Traynor, Brendan Fulham

Agenda

1. To receive a presentation in respect of progress made on various housing projects as well as briefings on new policies and procedures recently introduced or proposed for introduction in the near future. The presentation will cover inter-alia the following issues:
 - a) Social Housing Investment Programme (SHIP) projects and allocations for 2011
 - b) Housing Needs Assessment 2011
 - c) Rental Accommodation Scheme /Leasing and Voluntary Housing Bodies.
 - d) Housing Stock Maintenance Issues including Void/Vacant Management and Retrofitting.
 - e) Housing Land Banks.
 - f) Update on Part V and Affordable Housing
 - g) Tenant Purchase Scheme for long standing tenants.
 - h) Traveller Accommodation and Homeless
 - i) Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability /Housing Aid For Older People /Mobility Aids Grant
 - j) Housing Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2009 - Incremental Purchase Scheme, Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy, New housing allocation scheme.



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k) Changes in Housing Policy and challenges that lie ahead.

The Cathaoirleach opened the meeting and welcomed the new Director of Services, Des Foley.

Presentations covering the agenda items were made by Larry Whelan, Brendan Fulham and Tom Traynor. Following the presentations the following issues were raised by the Councillors.

- With the glut of housing in urban areas, Local Authorities will not be building units in the near future. How are people in rural areas going to be housed in the future? The effect on schools and communities of de-population.
- Time delay regarding turn-around of vacated houses.
- What can MCC do about NAMA houses; can they be used for social housing?
- RAS scheme is good in short term but council has no gain in the long term.
- Could adult 'children' purchase houses rented by their parents?
- Applications for housing grants are only live for the particular year and should be for a longer period.
- Number of people on housing list; are people left on the list if they don't take what's offered to them?
- Pre-tenancy repairs and the re-building and refurbishing houses destroyed by people is very costly and an ongoing problem. Council needs to have a planned maintenance programme and take a hard line on problem tenants.
- Making use of houses already build is a good idea but they are not always in the best location.
- Approved housing bodies are doing a good job with the support of Local Authority. Who's going to manage the situation if more is handed over to other voluntary bodies?
- People cannot afford to buy-out houses if on social welfare payments – can anything be done?
- Back boiler problems, servicing and issues regarding insurance in Local Authority housing.
- Unattainable timeframe regarding housing adaptation grant scheme.
- If housing unit is void under B.E.R., is there a pay back scheme if the owner invests money to bring the house up to standard.
- 3,500 on housing list. Citizen has a right to a 'home'. Housing philosophy needs to change.
- Local Authority land bank in Navan.

Responses:

- Some houses are left in a bad state and must be refurbished before re-letting.
- NAMA schemes being examined as an option going forward.



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- Housing needs assessments are done as speedily as possible.
- Multi Unit Development Act 2011 provides for the upkeep and management of common areas.
- There is a relaxed view on adult 'children' purchasing houses with parents and Council tries to be as flexible as possible.
- It is the responsibility of Local Authorities to carry out inspections and follow-up in compliance with regulations. The registered landlords still have the right to secure a notice to quit and are exempt from NPPR when in RAS scheme.
- Multiple offers are made to people on housing list but some people want to stay on the list solely for rent supplement and continuously refuse offers.
- Anti Social Behaviour Strategy adopted by the Council and includes strong enforcement provision.
- Voluntary bodies undertaking management and marketing role on behalf of the Council.
- Open fire back boiler system most inefficient and central heating system backed up by open fire is the preferred option.
- Council has a contract for service of gas boilers.
- With regard to the Land Aggregation Scheme and in particular its relevance for the Council owned lands at Fearganstown Navan, the Council was advised that such lands were purchased by the Council in 2007 for housing purposes with the aid of a Housing Finance Agency Loan, and as is normal for all such loans the interest is rolled up for a 7 year period, however as per the terms of the scheme such lands cannot be submitted for inclusion until the 7 year period has expired in April 2014.

2. Any other business

The rodent problem at Kilbreena estate was raised and the meeting was informed that proposals to clean the area are in place.

The meeting then concluded.