
Strategic Policy Committee – Housing, Regeneration & Planning

**Minutes of Meeting
held on 5th December 2022
at Laois County Council**

In the Chair: Ms Caroline Dwane Stanley, M.C.C (CDS)

Present: Ms Catherine Fitzgerald, M.C.C., (CF)

Mr Paschal McEvoy M.C.C., (PMCE)

Mr. Barry Walsh M.C.C. (BW)

Ms Sheelagh Coyle (SC)

Mr. Michael Kelly (MK)

In attendance: Ms Angela McEvoy (AMCE), Director of Services, Housing and Planning;
Mr. Trevor Hennessy (TH), A/Senior Engineer Housing; Louise McEvoy,
(LMCE) A.O. Housing, Ms. Georgina Ireland (GI) S.E.O. Housing; MS.
Fionnuala Daly (FD) Senior Social Worker Housing; Mr. David O'Hara (DOH)
Senior Planner; Mr. Donal Kiely (DK) Senior Executive Planner; Ms. Antoinette
Brennan (AB) Executive Technician Planning ;Marie Murray (MM) S.S.O.
Planning,

Apologies: Ms. Thomasina Connell, M.C.C.(TC)

1. Adoption of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the 4th October 2022 were agreed and proposed by Cllr. Pascal McEvoy and seconded by Cllr. Barry Walsh.

2. Matters Arising

Any matters arising will be covered under agenda headings.

3. Presentation by Liam Mannix – Update on the Rathdowney Town Centre First project

Liam Mannix , Head Consultant KPMG gave a comprehensive presentation on the Rathdowney Town Centre First project updating Member of the SPC on progress to date.

4. Quarterly report on Housing Disability Strategy

FD presented detailed Report on the strategic housing plan for people with disabilities 2021-2026.

	Total Allocations	Allocations to disabled persons		Category of Disabled Persons Allocations	
Quarter 1	46	16		Physical	29
Quarter 2	39	18		Sensory	2
Quarter 3	57	15		Intellectual Disability	10
	142	49		Mental Health	8
					49

- Percentage of all allocations to disabled persons year to date 2022 -34.5%
- **Target:-** Laois County Council will endeavour to set aside at least 10% of it's annual allocations to persons with a Disability.

The committee welcomed the report.

There was discussion around the numbers on the housing list with disabilities. AMCE, DOS advised that following discussion at previous SPC's, planning policy in relation to Housing Design was changed to reflect disability need and this is now included in all pre-planning discussions with developers.

CDS queried proposals regarding housing applicants with intellectual disabilities and if there are plans in Portlaoise to develop a scheme of housing for those individuals in supported tenancies e.g. in Stradbally. PMCE commended the development of 16 units in Court Square as a successful development for older persons and those with disabilities. GI stated that the Local Authority will explore any opportunity that may arise.

5. Updates on Circulars/new legislation/new schemes

- GI noted new housing circular on the extension of Croí Conaithe to rural properties.
- AMCE noted new planning circular PL10/2022 to insert a new exemption permitting the change of use of various structures for the purpose of providing the necessary facilities for international protection applicants. The Local Authority must be notified in advance and all fire and building regulations still apply.


6. Any Other Business

- FD advised of the preparation of the Homeless Strategy for the Midland Region which will be prepared in 2023. There was discussion about homeless services provided by Laois County Council. FD advised that there were 227 homeless presentations to date in 2022 with 41 of those repeat presentations.

- The SPC Members extended best wishes to Michael Cobbe in his recovery from illness- a note to sent on their behalf to him.
- It was advised that there will be a special SPC meeting in January to note the Scheme of Priorities for Affordable Housing , with a seminar on same.

7. Date of Next Meeting

The dates and times of the 2023 SPC Meetings will be circulated.

Signed:  
Chairperson Director of Services
Housing, Regeneration and Planning

Date: 27/03/2023

