
Strategic Policy Committee – Housing, Regeneration & Planning

**Minutes of Meeting
held on 2nd March 2023
at Laois County Council**

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

Present: Catherine Fitzgerald, M.C.C. (CF)
Paschal McEvoy, M.C.C. (PMCE)
Sheelagh Coyle (SC)
Michael Kelly (MK)

Online via MS Teams: Barry Walsh, M.C.C. (BW)
Thomasina Connell, M.C.C.(TC)

In attendance: Angela McEvoy (AMcE), Director of Services, Housing and Planning (online via MS Teams);
Georgina Ireland (GI) S.E.O. Housing;
Fionnuala Daly (FD) Senior Social Worker Housing;
David O’Hara (DOH) Senior Planner;
Louise McEvoy, (LMCE) A.O. Housing,
Antoinette Brennan (AB) Executive Technician Planning
Ger Maher (GM) A.O. Housing

Apologies: Trevor Hennessy (TH), A/Senior Engineer Housing

	Agenda Item	Action	By Whom
1	Minutes of Meeting of 5th December 2022 Proposed by CF, seconded by SC.	Agreed	N/A
2	Matters Arising	No matters arose	N/A
3A	2023 Calendar of SPC Meetings	Dates & Times agreed 1 st June 2023 14 th September 2023 7 th December 2023 11:00 to 13:00 Calendar invites to be issued.	GM
3B	2023 SPC Work Programme	Review of LCC Anti-Social Behaviour Policy for SPC meeting in Q4.	FD
		Review of Vacant Homes Action Plan 2018 in line with National Policy.	GI
		Review of Tenant Handbook – draft to SPC meeting in September or December.	GI
		Review of LCC Scheme of Allocation 2011 – draft to go through SPC.	GI

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3B	2023 SPC Work Programme - continued	Review of Regional Homeless Action Plan (Laois element) to be compiled by Westmeath County Council. No date yet for input from Laois.	FD
		Scheme of Priority for Affordable Dwelling Purchase Arrangements – draft Scheme with Minister, may require special SPC meeting.	GI
		Town Centre First Plan – Rathdowney – draft plan to be published in March 2023.	DOH
		Local Area Plans to include area-based transport plans. Graiguecullen – draft in April/May. Portlaoise – draft in May/June. Mountmellick – draft in June/July. Portarlinton – draft in June / July.	DOH
		Renewable Energy Strategy – proceed to draft.	DOH
		Development Contribution Scheme – draft to Management Team in March & public display thereafter. Possibly to Council in April after a Special SPC meeting.	DOH
4	Progress Report by Director of Services	Development Plan – figures to be updated for next SPC meeting. Lifting of Evictions Ban – CDS asked about plans to house affected people. GI set out the proactive work ongoing to direct tenants to vacated properties whilst adhering to current scheme, and there is substantial delivery expected in the first half of 2023. Buy & Renew Scheme – Emmett Terrace, Mountmellick - SC enquired about progress & GI explained perceived delays are down to the requirement to get departmental approval and funding for each stage of the project. Repair & Lease – BW queried if Waterford City & County are doing something different as they appear to be making strides in this area, and would Laois carry out a review of Protected Structures for example. DOH - a matter for each local authority; works might not need planning permission, and people seeking to carry out the works could seek a Section 57 exemption declaration from the Planning Department.	DOH N/A N/A N/A
5	Report on Housing Disability Strategy	Acquire via Part V – design for specific needs. Acquire private houses from downsizers & house them – check national policy & revert for next SPC meeting.	GI GI
6	Planning Bill Update	Update provided by DOH .	N/A

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7	AOB	<p>Social Housing Acquisitions with tenants in situ</p> <p>CF – Message coming from Minister Darragh O’Brien is that LA’s should be buying these properties. CDS – Potentially opening flood gates for notices to quit and housing people with only a short number of years on the list and low points. AMcE – While LCC is not averse to acquiring properties, it must be fair & equitable.</p> <p>To be included in Draft Scheme of Allocations.</p>	GI
Next Meeting: 1 st June 2023 @ 11:00			

Signed: 
Chairperson


Director of Services
Housing, Regeneration and Planning

Date: 3rd August 2023

