



PPN Community & Voluntary elected representative's: **Tess Murphy, Stephanie Igoe**

PPN Social Inclusion elected representative: **Eileen Finan**

Date: **07.11.2016**

Meeting Agenda

11. Confirmation of Minutes of Housing Services Strategic Policy Committee
Meeting held on the 25th July 2016 - copy attached.
2. Matters Arising from Minutes.
3. Shortage of social housing.
4. (i) Responsibility for Homelessness.
(ii) Assessment for Local Authority Housing.
(iii) Assessment of Housing Needs.
5. Provision of Ramps in Housing Estates .
6. "Self Help Scheme" for Local Authority Tenants.
7. Tenant Purchase Scheme - criteria regarding purchasing houses from the Council"
8. Review of Tenancy Handbook
9. Choice Based Letting Scheme.10. A.O.B.
11. Date of next meeting.

In Attendance:

Apologies:

Absent:

Presentations: Yes / No (details if Yes)

Agenda item	Member	Discussion	Actions / Who
<u>Item 1</u> Matters Arising from Minutes.	Tess Murphy	Had asked what were the implications of new housing plan “Rebuilding Ireland” for County Longford housing and was told it would be discussed at next meeting (i.e.Today). Director of Housing John Brannigan said that he and CEO were discussing the implications but hadn’t reached a conclusion	
<u>Item 2</u> Shortage of social housing.	Director	Based on the housing needs assessment 650 social housing units are required in the county	
<u>Item 3</u> (i) Responsibility for Homelessness. 2 Assessment for Local Authority Housing. (iii) Assessment of Housing Needs.	Stephanie Igoe	The responsibility for Homelessness rest with the Regional Homeless Forum, comprising the four counties of Longford, Westmeath, Laois and Offaly. The lead agency is Westmeath County Council. One of the reasons for homelessness in the county is failure of the tenant to hand over their rent supplement payment to the landlord which results in eviction, according to the director. He said that homelessness was not an issue in Longford. Eileen Finan disagreed and said her experience based on the people she in working with in Granard Family Resource Centre is that many people in the county are living in very unsuitable accommodation. Tess Murphy stated that both homeless shelters are constantly full. Councillor Warnock stated that the income of many people is too high to qualify for social housing but too low to be able to afford the market rent. The assessment of housing needs showed a big drop in the number on the council waiting list as verified by the response. People who were on the list last time but did not respond	

		this time will have their names sent to the CWO so that their rent supplement payment will be stopped. There are currently 461 people in receipt of rent supplement in Longford, 200 on RAS and 70 on leases. The director stated that the council will continue to refurbish voids this year and it is hoped to start new builds next year	
Item 4 Provision of Ramps in Housing Estates .	Director	The issue of ramps and speed limits in estates is an ongoing concern. However, there are legal and cost implications around standards, lighting, drainage, public liability. Initially there will be a speed limit review and then prioritise individual estates for feasibility of installing ramps	
“Item 5 Self Help Scheme” for Local Authority Tenants.	Councillor Warnock	Councillor Warnock circulated a leaflet outlining how this scheme is being rolled out by Kildare County Council. It’s a project to assist council tenants to carry out small repairs to their properties -90% of the work may be grant aided to a maximum amount of €2500. There was a lot of discussion among the council members of SPC around where the funding for this would come from. There is the issue that the only discretionary funding the housing department could use would be either tents paid by the tenants. However this goes into council general spending and is not ring fenced for housing. The director said that there are no more additional monies allocated to housing in the 2017 budget plus there is an additional administrative burden in inspecting properties at different stages of building plus maintaining the existing 2000 social housing units.	It was proposed to review the piloting of the Kildare Scheme and recommend it for piloting in Longford
Item 5 Tenant Purchase Scheme - criteria regarding purchasing houses from the Council”	Director	A lot of discussion on this as it was felt that the criteria are far too restrictive. The biggest obstacle according to councillors is that prospective purchasers have to be working and earning over €15000. Of the 83 applicants in Longford, 40% are eligible. A review of the scheme is being carried out nationally	
Review of Tenancy Handbook	Anne Glancy	Review of Tenancy Handbook will be circulated to all members of SPC when completed. The importance of providing multi agency support to estates to combat anti-social behaviour was emphasised. Councillor Warnock paid tribute to the residents of Spring Lawn for the way in which they had addressed the anti-social behaviour in their estate	

Choice Based Letting Scheme.	Anne Glancy	This is a scheme whereby once a local authority property becomes vacant it is advertised to everyone on the housing list. Based on the responses the property is then allocated to the applicant with greatest need according to the letting priorities. Tess Murphy said she was disappointed that domestic violence was not mentioned as a specific priority for social housing. The director responded that it was covered under point 6 in order of priority "Applicants in need of housing on disability, medical, compassionate or other similar grounds"	
AOB	Traveller Accommodation Plan. Chairperson	Tess Murphy stated that she had been asked to make submission to the traveller accommodation review. However there were no guidelines on what were the achievements challenges etc making it difficult to respond. She also mentioned a report in the paper stating that many counties had not drawn down their allocation for traveller accommodation. The director stated the report was not accurate. However there was no response to the specific questions The chairperson, P.J. Reilly announced that this was his last meeting as chair . The new chairperson will be Councillor Gerry Warnock . All present thanked Mr Reilly for his excellent chairing of the meetings. Next meeting will take place on 6 th February 2017	