

**Minutes of Strategic Policy Committee 4 – Housing
held on 26th January, 2017 at 11am in John’s Green House**

Present: Cllr. Andrew McGuinness, Chairman, Cllr. Michael McCarthy, Cllr. Fidelis Doherty, Cllr. Melissa O’Neill, Mary Egan, Declan Murphy, Yvonne Moriarty, Brian Dunlop.

In Attendance: Mary Mulholland, Martin Mullally, Margaret Newport, Mary Cashin

At the outset of the meeting Chairperson, Cllr. Andrew McGuinness, drew the member’s attention to the fact that Director of Services Mary Mulholland would soon be leaving to take on a new Directorship within Kilkenny County Council. He thanked her on behalf of the Committee for her contribution to date and praised her work ethic.

1. Minutes of 10th November 2016

Proposed: Cllr. Michael McCarthy,

Seconded: Cllr. Fidelis Doherty,

and agreed that the minutes of 10th November, 2016 be adopted without change.

2. Matters Arising

Refugee Resettlement Project

Mary Mulholland advised that she had liaised with other County Councils and the Department of Justice in regard to the Refugee Resettlement Project. She advised that counties had already been selected and contacted by the Department. Kilkenny did not, at present, form part of this process. She advised that Kilkenny County Council is prepared for any future assignment and the Co-Ordination Officer for Kilkenny County Council is Lyndsey Butler. It was noted that agencies had not received any additional funding to deal with new Refugee Re-settlers.

Separately it was noted that the Joint Project for Refugee Integration led by Kilkenny Leader Project and in conjunction with Kilkenny County Council had been allocated a grant of €300,000 for existing refugee groups in the functional area of Kilkenny

Contributions from: Cllr. McGuinness, Yvonne Moriarty

Agreed: Meeting to be convened on receipt of further information/notification from the Department.

3. Review of Traveller Accommodation Programme (TAP) 2014-2018

Margaret Newport, Senior Social Worker, advised members that Kilkenny County Council was statutorily obliged to carry out a review of TAP during the lifetime of the programme in line with Departmental guidelines. Margaret gave an overview on targets and delivery to date.

She advised that TAP was informed by the Annual Count of Travellers and it was noted that there had been a 20% increase in population since the last count in 2015. Margaret accounted for this increase and advised that it was based on the increase in young marriages within the Traveller Community.

Margaret identified the key challenges going forward as:-

- Provision of appropriate accommodation at St. Mary's, Hebron Road, for newly formed families.
- Provision of appropriate accommodation for road side families in Ferrybank area (it was noted that this challenge has changed quickly with the reduction in road side families from 7 to 1).
- Growing demand in Rosbercon and difficulties in accessing housing
- Identification and securing of standard housing throughout County for those who do not want Traveller Specific Housing.
- Identification and securing of land for 5 bay halting site at St. Mary's area

Contributions from: Cllr. Andrew McGuinness, Cllr. Melissa O'Neill, Cllr. Michael McCarthy, Yvonne Moriarty, Cllr. Fidelis Doherty, Brian Dunlop.

Agreed: Traveller Accommodation Programme to be submitted to the Department.

4. Strategic Plan for People with a Disability

Martin Mullally, Senior Executive Officer, advised members that there had been a number of changes since circulation of the draft Strategic Plan. The core goal of the Strategy is to meet the identified housing needs of people with disabilities locally whether they are currently living in the community and or in a congregated setting.

The Housing Agency requested the update of our draft Disability Strategy submitted in 2015 to reflect the changes in the Housing Needs Assessment carried out in October 2016 and to reflect the outstanding data submitted by the HSE on Emerging Need. This updated draft strategy will be submitted to the Housing Agency for inclusion in the overarching National Disability Strategy.

Martin advised that Kilkenny has 4 congregated settings and that St. Patrick's, Kells Road, falls into Category 1 de-congregation.

Contributions from: Cllr. Fidelis Doherty, Mary Egan, Cllr. Melissa O'Neill, Yvonne Moriarty, Brian Dunlop.

Agreed: Strategic Plan for People with a Disability to be submitted to be submitted to the Department.

Martin Mullally to forward membership of local committee to SPC members.

5. Homeless Report 2016

Margaret Newport provided a breakdown of homeless presentations. She advised that there was a reduction in presentations in 2016 in comparison to 2015 and she gave an overview of the current situation with homeless service providers.

Margaret advised that Kilkenny County Council no longer had two designated beds in Amber Women's Refuge and had only access to one bed which had to be shared with Carlow County Council. She advised that Kilkenny County Council is currently identifying suitable accommodation for homeless women.

The matter of rough sleeping was addressed and Margaret advised that there was no history of rough sleeping in Kilkenny and there was no reason why any person should do so given the level of services available. Anyone sleeping rough would do so based on their own choice or previous mis-use of the service.

Contributions from: Cllr. Andrew McGuinness, Yvonne Moriarty, Cllr. Pat O'Neill

6. Annual Report

Martin Mullally provided an overview of the Annual Report 2016 highlighting:-

- SHIP 2016
- RAS
- HAP
- Private Rented Inspections
- Voluntary housing Programme
- Housing Needs Assessment
- Housing Stock
- Housing Loans
- Private Grants
- Community & Estate Management

Contributions from: Cllr. Melissa O'Neill, Cllr. Fidelis Doherty, Cllr. Michael McCarthy, Brian Dunlop.

Conclusion of Meeting

Mary Mulholland advised that she was leaving Housing and that Simon Walton would take her position. She highlighted that Housing was moving away from re-active maintenance to pro-active maintenance and a new Tenant Handbook was being prepared to reflect this change. She advised that the review of the Tenant Handbook would be a complex body of work and the revised draft, on completion, would be brought to SPC 4 for review.

Mary also made reference to the Repair & Lease Scheme. She advised that the scheme had been piloted in Carlow and Waterford, gave a brief overview of the scheme criteria and advised that an update would be brought to the next SPC meeting.

This concluded the business of the meeting.