

HOUSING STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

FRIDAY 6TH MAY 2016

MINUTES

1. Homeless Update:

Booklets handed out to members at the meeting. Cathal Morgan, Director Dublin Region Homeless Executive and Karl Mitchell, Senior Executive Office advised of introduction of new set of guidelines for providers of private emergency accommodation to ensure consistent standards across all operators. It will address rules and responsibilities of those staying in emergency accommodation and also look at complaints procedure. It was advised that this is a work in progress and feedback was welcomed.

Housing SPC members present welcomed these guidelines and discussion followed. Cllr Christy Burke said that some facilities used to provide private emergency accommodation are unsuitable and called for a move away from using hotels, B&Bs and hostels. Cllr Pat Dunne welcomes engagement with the service providers of emergency accommodation. Tenants of emergency accommodation have rights and need to be aware of the conditions, rules and regulations of their stay. He also stated that the lack of security around a temporary stay can be used as a threat against those making a complaint. Cllr Mannix Flynn welcomed the guidelines but asked how it will be monitored. He advocated one agency to take over complete control of emergency accommodation.

Karl Mitchell advised that DRHE welcome any discussion that will protect the general wellbeing of clients and want to hear about issues in any of the emergency facilities. Feedback to DRHE is encouraged. Cathal Morgan advised that 20% of those in emergency accommodation have never experienced homelessness before. Ideal situation would be a Housing First approach where homes are provided with supports with a small supply of emergency accommodation available for exceptional cases. This needs a supply of available housing.

An tArdmhéara Críona Ní Dhálaigh asked about homeless persons with special needs. What is the protocol here? Is there a priority list within the homeless priority list?

Cathal Morgan advised that DRHE try to match accessible accommodation to an individual's needs in these circumstances, but said that this is difficult. Key workers are assigned to work with an individual to create a care plan around their needs.

The Chair suggested that Housing SPC members visit emergency accommodation. Cllr John Lyons said that he is not in agreement with mass visit to facilities as he feels that if Cllrs wish they should visit them themselves. Cllr Tina MacVeigh said she tried to contact management to arrange visit to Bru Aimsir and has heard nothing back. An tArdmhéara Críona Ní Dhálaigh advised that a visit was previously organised when she was Chair of the Housing SPC that was poorly attended. She would however favour an arranged visit rather than different Councillors going to these facilities on different times. Cllr Pat Dunne said that he would visit emergency accommodation if invited by a resident and asked for protocol if a Cllr is refused entry here.

Cathal Morgan advised that visits can be managed to facilities that will not cause too much of an impact on residents. He drew attention to www.homelessdublin.ie where a list of all emergency facilities and contact details can be found.

Cathal Morgan gave an update on emergency accommodation at John's Lane West which is owned by Focus Oreland and jointly managed by them and Peter McVerry Trust. Focus Ireland have planning permission to develop homes on this site and the facility will close. 44

beds here will be replaced. The Bru Aimsir facility at the Digital Hub is a short term facility as part of the cold weather initiative. The board of the Digital Hub, as part of the Department of Communications, own this building and granted a temporary lease to the end of April, which has been extended to the end of May. DRHE are looking for alternative facilities to replace the loss of beds here.

All Housing SPC members present expressed their support to keep facility at Bru Amisir open and asked about beds at John Lanes West. The Chair said that he was very impressed with the facilities at Bru Amisir and he called for a meeting with Owen Keegan, DCC Chief Executive and the Chief Executive of the Digital Hub to look at ways of preventing closure here. Cllr Christy Burke said he would support the Chairs request for a meeting with relevant personnel to request that Bru Aimsir remain open. An tArdmhéara Críona Ní Dhálaigh asked about tenancies at John's Lane West when new units are constructed. Will the persons there already get priority to move into long term leases. She also stated her support for Bru Amisir and said that there is no alternative if this facility closes as there aren't an additional 100 beds available. Cllr Pat Dunne supported calls for a meeting to discuss the future of Bru Aimsir. Cllr Tina MacVeigh said there needs to a continuous dialogue with the Minister for the Environment regarding these issues. She also said that loss of 44 beds at John Lane West will need to be replaced. Pat Doyle said that the closure of John Lane West is disappointing. The Peter McVerry Trust will provide 20 additional beds as a temporary measure. He welcomes any move to extend the life of Bru Aimsir. He also advised that Peter McVerry Trust have a full-time procurement officer looking for suitable buildings that could be used for accommodation. There was also a meeting with the construction federation to explore options and available buildings that could be used by homeless services, even on a temporary basis. Cllr Cieran Perry said that the number of homeless agencies would appear to in completion with one another and he called for a public housing building programme.

Cathal Morgan advised that clarity will be sought on the tenancies at John's Lane West. He said that the board of the Digital Hub and the Department of Communications are supportive of Bru Aimsir. He said that Bru Aimsir was a short term facility under the cold weather initiative and it is not within the control of DCC to keep it open any longer than lease allows. He advised that DRHE are looking for facilities that would be suitable for accommodation in the short term.

The Chair advised that he and the Lord Mayor will seek a meeting with Owen Keegan, DCC Chief Executive, the Chief Executive of the Digital Hub and Minister to discuss the future of Bru Aimsir.

Agreed: To organise visit to emergency accommodation.

2. Land Initiative:

Report circulated to members prior to meeting. Tony Flynn, Executive Manager advised that number of participants who expressed an interest to be involved are listed by sector. They were then invited to participate in a Technical Dialogue. The Implementation Board dealt with procurement and tender process and complied documents, etc. Masterplans for areas were reviewed and recommendations made. There is a brief ready for portion of lands at Oscar Traynor but unfortunately the report for St. Michael's Estate will not be ready. Brief for O'Devaney Gardens will be presented to the joint Housing/Planning SPC meeting; date to be decided.

Cllr Pat Dunne said he is opposed to Land Initiative. Finance should be made available to DCC to develop lands. Housing Finance Agency (HFA) Report states that money is available for Local Authorities to borrow and develop and he asked why this source of funding is not used. Cllr John Lyons requested names of companies involved in expressions of interest. He asked for minutes of these meetings to be provided to elected members. He asked why masterplans are indicative and not statutory. He said that for brief for O'Devaney Gardens needs to be sent prior to the joint Housing/Planning SPC. Cllr Éilis Ryan requested minutes from meetings. She also asked for agreement on how far in advance brief for O'Devaney Gardens can be circulated to SPC members and Councillors before meetings. She also

asked for date of joint Housing/Planning SPC. Cllr Ray McAdam asked how quickly plans can be advanced after the joint Housing/Planning SPC and he also asked how much community engagement there will be. An tArdmhéara Críona Ní Dhálaigh said that the Local Authority can seek approval from Dept. of Finance to borrow money to build once loan is repaid. She asked why DCC don't do this. Cllr Christy Burke said the decision to dispose of DCC lands lies with the elected members. He asked for an update on issues he raised with the Manager from residents at Montpellier. He also asked for an update on masterplan for O'Deaveny Gardens. Cllr Mannix Flynn said he was disappointed with Report. Cllr Janice Boylan asked for clarity on whether DCC can borrow money to build. She said that community engagement is needed when developing plans in areas.

The Chair advised that he supported the Land Initiative because there were no other options in getting houses build due to lack of funding available to Local Authorities. He would welcome other options to access funding to build and asked if DCC can borrow to build. He also said that there is an assumption that land is being given away to private developers who will make a profit and he asked for clarity here.

The Manager advised that Land Initiative is an option available to facilitate the building of homes. Any monies borrowed by a Local Authority will impact on government balance sheet and have to be paid back. Tony Flynn advised that for DCC to borrow for purposes of building there needs to be a scheme in place from the Dept. of Finance, and there is currently no such scheme in place. He advised that Development Plan is a statutory document, as are Local Area Plans. Masterplans are non-statutory and as such can be adapted. Names of participants involved in the Technical Dialogue cannot be revealed because of procurement process. Report issued in 2015 summarised the Technical Dialogue, which should address the request for minutes. He advised that that meeting is take place with HFA and queries raised here regarding ability of DCC to borrow money can be discussed. The Manager said that the dialogue process was an exercise to test the market and is not a tender or disposal process but rather a request for information to see what can be developed on DCC lands. It was agreed that Report will issue 5 days in advance of Joint Housing and Planning SPC.

Agreed: Joint Housing and Planning & International Relations SPC to be held. Date to be confirmed.

Agreed: Report to be circulated to Housing and Planning SPC members and Councillors 5 days in advance of meeting

3. Financial Contribution:

Report circulated to members prior to meeting. Céline Reilly, Executive Manager advised that the Financial Contribution Scheme is open but has not been used much over the last few years given the existing waiting list for older person' accommodation and the lack of supply of suitable Senior Citizen Accommodation. Both Cllr Perry and Connaghan stated that there was confusion over whether the scheme was closed or not but this was clarified by Céline Reilly.

Cllr Anthony Connaghan said that there is a need for additional Senior Citizen Accommodation and said that DCC need to look for funding to build more units. The Financial Contribution Scheme worked in the past and he asked what Cllr need to do to get this scheme reintroduced. Cllr Pat Dunne suggested working closely with AHBs to allow financial contribution scheme in their Senior Citizen Complexes. Kevin White advised that AHB developments with CALF funding receive 100% allocations from DCC housing List and those with CAS get 70% allocations.

The Manager said that whilst the Financial Contribution scheme has value the City Council needs to consider the senior citizens who are on the housing list and who do not have property to sell. Céline Reilly said that there may have been an impression that the scheme was closed as there was so little stock available for such a scheme, given the waiting list and the absence of any construction in the past number of years. She advised Councillors of the programme of bedsit amalgamation at senior citizen complexes across the city.

Agreed: Forward Report to Housing SPC Members

4. Motion

Motion in the names of Cllrs. Tina MacVeigh and Hazel de Nortuin, People Before Profit Group

That the Members of the Housing SPC conduct a review of the Council Buy Back Scheme. The current requirements agreed by the SPC in 2005 are no longer fit for purpose given the current housing crisis and needs to be reviewed to fit the current situation in respect of our growing demands for social housing and homelessness.

DCC Policy on the Purchase of Second Hand House was circulated to members prior to meeting.

5. AOB

Cllr Mannix Flynn requested a Report on AirB&B.

In Attendance:

Councillors:

Janice Boylan, Christy Burke, Anthony Connaghan, Patrick Costello, Daithí Doolan, Pat Dunne, Tina MacVeigh, Ray McAdam, An tArdmhéara Críona Ní Dhálaigh, Cieran Perry, Norma Sammon, Sonya Stapleton

Sectoral Interests:

Lillian Buchanan, Pat Doyle, Kevin White

Officials:

Dick Brady, Céline Reilly, Anthony Flynn, Cathal Morgan, Dáithí Downey, Karl Mitchell, Nikki O'Hara, Elaine O'Kelly

Other Councillors:

Mannix Flynn, John Lyons, Éilis Ryan

Apologies:

Cllr David Costello, Cllr Alison Gilliland, Aideen Hayden, Catherine Kenny, Kathleen McKillion, Lorraine McMahon

Councillor Daithí Doolan

CHAIRPERSON