

**Housing Strategic Policy Committee
Meeting 13th September 2018**

Present: Chair Cllr P Kennedy, Cllr J Pender, Cllr A Breslin, Cllr T Durkan, Cllr B Weld, Cllr T Redmond, Mr. P Doyle,

In Attendance: M McIvor, A/ Director of Services, A Aspell, Senior Executive Officer, David Creighton, A/Senior Architect, Fiona Byrne, Administrative Officer, S Scully, Administrative Officer.

Apologies: Cllr. D. Callaghan Mr. G Dunne

1. **Minutes of last meeting:** Proposed by Cllr Durkan, seconded by Cllr. Pender
2. **Motions Referred**

Cllr. Suzanne Doyle: The significance of requesting medical reports for housing applicants and housing grant applicants:

Cllr Doyle discussed the requirement for housing applicants to submit medical details with their application form and stated that medical need could be clarified at allocation stage. The councillor expressed concern that the requirement to submit medical certification was increasing the work-load of general practitioners.

There was a general discussion of the motion and consensus that in order to plan future housing provision and make appropriate allocation decisions it is necessary that housing applicants supply relevant medical information at the application stage. There was a further discussion regarding an appeals process for grant applications and whether the Council should accept Occupational Therapist (OT) reports from hospitals/rehab centres. The requirement to submit medical certificates for age related grants was also queried.

A Aspell advised the members that an increasing number of applicants are submitting medical details which may not warrant a special allocation. She advised that consideration can be given to reviewing the wording of the form. She further advised that a new tender for OT services will be issued in the coming months and it will include an appeals process. There will be a further review of the use of 3rd party OT reports and the requirement to submit a medical report with a housing aid grant.

Cllr Joanne Pender: That the council implement a housing price register or database of all HAP approved properties and make this information available to the RTB.

S Scully advised that the HAP Section maintains a database of all HAP properties which details the location of the property, the rent being charged and the number of bedrooms. It is the responsibility of the RTB to maintain the rental index which is based on the rent being charged at the outset of the tenancy. She advised that due

to data protection concerns it is not possible to share this information with the RTB. She confirmed that the HAP section ensures that RPZ rules are enforced.

3. Updated list of circulars provided to the Committee.

4. Matters Arising:

A Aspell advised the committee that Fiona Byrne has been appointed to the position of Vacant Homes Officer and that the work to be undertaken is complex and time consuming. She requested that the Members advise Fiona of any vacant properties of which they are aware.

5. Housing Update

- a) Tenant Deposit Scheme (TDS) - There was a general discussion of the TDS, while there was a welcome for the scheme the following issues were raised: the scale of charges, the speed of allocations may impose financial constraints on prospective tenants, availability of assistance from the Community Welfare Officer. A Aspell advised the committee that the Agresso financial management system does not allow for phased payment. She committed to investigating earlier notification of allocations and advertising the scheme in order that people would have an opportunity to save. The Members agreed that the scheme be recommended to the Corporate Policy Group subject to a 6 month review of the scheme and based on the following rates:

€150 - Older person dwelling/1 bedroom property

€300- 2/3 bedroom property

€400-4 or more bedroom property

- b) HAP Inter-authority Movement- A Aspell advised the Committee that Kildare housing applicants may apply for HAP in other local authorities provided that they qualify on income grounds and subject to the receiving local authority providing consent. She advised that she had written to 3 neighbouring authorities and that only one response was received and this stated that consent would be granted on a case by case basis. A Aspell further advised that the Margaret O'Dwyer has been appointed to the position of HAP Homeless Placefinder.
- c) Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan - A Aspell provided an update. Kildare Co. Co. has secured a €15 million loan facility. The total value of loans approved up to August 2018 was €6 million. Kildare Co. Co. will enforce the 6 month drawdown period from the date of approval. The Members raised concerns regarding the speed of decision making and the resources available to deliver the scheme.

- d) Serviced Site Fund - D Creighton provided the Members with the following update: An application has been made to include a site in Celbridge in the scheme. Sites must be adequately serviced. In order for sites to qualify they must pass an economic test based on the affordability of properties in the area.

6. Work Programme 2018

- a) Rapid Build - D Creighton advised the Members that a design team tender for the site in Maynooth is being prepared.
- b) Rebuilding Ireland -The Members were provided with a statistical update.
- c) Choice Based Lettings - A Aspell advised that the Choice Based Lettings system is being progressed and it is intended to roll out the scheme in Q4, 2018.
- d) Homelessness- A Aspell advised the Members that sourcing emergency accommodation is becoming increasingly difficult and that the Council is losing properties due to the behavioural issues of some guests. It was noted that there is an increase in the number of single females presenting.

The meeting concluded.