Chairperson’s Report of the Social Housing Strategic Policy Committee
Meeting held on 24th June 2015
Councillor John Bailey, Chairperson

Present:
Cllr. John Bailey     Mr. Kieron Brennan
Cllr. Victor Boyhan     Ms. Anne Colgan
Cllr. Shay Brennan     Mr. Jimmy Jordan
Cllr. Chris Curran     Ms. Catherine Kennedy
Cllr Cormac Devlin
Cllr. Kate Feeney
Cllr. Pat Hand
Cllr. Deirdre Kingston
Cllr. Michael Merrigan
Cllr. Brian Murphy
Cllr. Peter O’Brien
Cllr. Denis O’Callaghan

Apologies:  Ms. Paula Flanagan

Observers:  Cllr. Karl Gill

Chair:  Cllr. John Bailey

Officials Present:
Mr. T. McHugh, Director of Housing, Ms. A. Hegarty, Senior Executive Officer, Ms. M. Ruane, Senior Executive Officer, Ms. P. O’Connor, Senior Architect, Ms. M. Griffin, Senior Staff Officer, Ms. C. Walsh, Assistant Staff Officer.

1. Director’s Business

Overview of Housing Services

A.Hegarty gave an update on the provision of Social Housing Units:-

- Means of acquiring units: Construction of new units, refurbishment of existing units, returning re-lets/Void units and acquiring units through Part V, Leasing and RAS
- Current Housing Stock: 4,420, 4,250 of which are constructed and managed by the Council and 170 of which are Council owned and managed by Approved Housing Bodies (A.H.B)
- Social Housing Units – not owned by Council 1,270: 397 RAS units, 709 CAS units and 164 Long-term Leasing units
- Construction programme: On site with three schemes:- Rochestown house, Sallynoggin, phase 2 (34 x 1 b/r units), Cromlech Close, Kilternan (15 units 6 x 1B/R, 1 2 B/R duplex and 8 x 2B/R houses), Clontibret House, Blackrock (4 x 1B/R units)* tenders have been received and are being evaluated
P.O'Connor updated the Committee on the following areas: -

- **Rochestown House, Sallynoggin** – Phase 1 now complete, Phase 2 on site and Phase 3 Part 8 approved. Phase 2 will provide 34 one bed-units suitable for the elderly, which are accessible/ambulant, ranging in size from 40m² to 48m² sp. With a nurses station, laundry, communal room/dining room kitchen & lift, energy efficient building and communal area/facilities

- **Cromlech Close, Kilternan** – Part 8 approved 7th May for 15 units, 6 no. 1 bed apartments, 1 no. two storey two bed apartments, a terrace of 8 no. two storey two bedroom houses, which will be energy efficient homes.

- **Clontibret House, Blackrock** – 4 no. 1 bed units, tender prices received and being evaluated, contract to be awarded in near future, completion duration of approximately 1 year, units will have a roof garden.

- **Part 8 approved:**
  - **Moreen Avenue, Sandyford** – one off 4 bed wheelchair accessible house, 180sq.m detached two storey, ground floor with fully wheelchair accessible double bedroom and bathroom accommodation with access to front, rear and side garden, the proposed house is located on a corner site near the entrance to Moreen Estate.
  - **Fitzgerald Park** – 50 units, infill development, 16 no. three bedroom two storey terraced units, 2 no. three bedroom semi-detached units, 4 no. two bedroom terraced units, 28 no. one bedroom units, public open space has been provided to the northeast of the site and will be appropriately landscaped.
  - **Rosemount Court, Dundrum** – 44 units, 1 no. four bed unit, 27 no. three bed units, 4 no. two bed units, 12 no. one bed units, central green amenity space and two shared surface “home-zone” areas.
  - **Rochestown House, Sallynoggin, Phase 3** – 14 units for the elderly disabled, 12 x one bed units, 58 sqm, 2 x two bed units, 75sqm, of which 8 units are wheelchair accessible, of which 6 units are ambulant accessible, energy efficient building and communal area/facilities.

St. Michael’s Terrace, Dún Laoghaire – 4 units infill development, comprising of 3 one beds and 1 four bed, design drawings need to be audited for compliance with building regulations.

Broadford Rise – 21 units for elderly, Part 8 approval 2003, design drawings need to be audited for compliance with building regulations.

A. Hegarty continued her update on the provision of Social Housing Units: -

- **Next steps Part 8 approved schemes:** - Procure a design team for each scheme, prepare detail tender documents for each of the schemes, procure contractor for each scheme.

- **Construction Programme Approved Funding:**- Clontibret House - €674,126, Rochestown Phase 2 - €3,965,427, Rochestown House Phase 3 - €3,300,000, Fitzgerald Park - €12,000,000, Broadford Rise, €5,100,000 and St. Michael’s Terrace €1,000,000

- **Voids/Re-let units:** - 3 voids this year have all been re-let, Kilcross Road, Sandyford, Northcote Terrace, Dún Laoghaire and Tivoli Terrace, Dún
Laoghaire. Re-let units have been made available for re-letting since this year in an average time of approximately 6 weeks.

T. McHugh updated the Committee regarding Part V:

- 1216 units delivered 2004-2014
- Financial contributions totalling €19,271,182 between 2004-2014

A wide ranging discussion took place, during which The Director and officials responded to Members’ questions.

M. Ruane advised the Committee of further methods for the provision of social housing:

- Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS):

  RAS is in operation in this authority since February 2006 and is a recognised form of social housing support, available to qualified housing applicants who are in receipt of rent supplement for 18 months or more and therefore RAS eligible.

  Properties must be in compliance with minimum housing standards as set out in the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2008 as amended

  Landlords must be willing to provide Tax Clearance and other relevant documentation.

  Two types of RAS agreements i.e. an Availability Agreement, whereby the Council can nominate a suitable tenant into the property or a Current Tenant Only Agreement, whereby the agreement is just for either the existing tenant or for a particular nominee of the Council.

  Rents are paid directly to the landlord by the Council on the 1st of each month, with the tenant in turn paying a Differential Rent to the Council.

  The Council will endeavour to make agreements in relation to tenants already occupying their accommodation through Rent Supplement once they have been deemed next in line for social housing support with RAS as their preferred option and their property being suitable to their housing need and their landlord is willing to meet the terms of the Scheme.

  The Council is continuing to negotiate with landlords in relation to acquiring vacant suitable properties under RAS to accommodate those existing RAS tenants on Notice to Quit and requiring alternative accommodation.

  As at 12th June 2015, there are currently 392 RAS tenancies in operation. In line with the Housing Strategy 2015 – 2017, this Council has been set a target to deliver 75 RAS units for 2015, with the number of units estimated to be delivered under the Scheme in the period 2016 – 2017 at 77 units, subject to the availability of funding.

  All agreements are governed by the Residential Tenancies Act 2014

- New Housing Assistance Programme HAP:
Introduced in South Dublin and for Dublin Regional Homeless Executive
Tenant sources property, replaces Rent supplement, Local authority provides direct and full payment of rent within caps, The tenant pays a Differential Rent to the Council, Standard rental tenancy agreement applies between landlord and tenant, Allows sharing of properties, Property meets private rental standards, DLRCC will be in future phase of HAP roll-out.

Following a discussion during which The Director responded to Members’ queries, the Chairman thanked the Director and the staff of the Housing Department for the comprehensive and informative presentations.

2. Business referred from Council:

“That this Council will conduct a county-wide feasibility study into the implementation of the Housing Assistance Payment, given that HAP is the central solution proposed to end the crisis in housing until 2020 and beyond”.

T. McHugh advised the committee the completion of a study is not a Strategic Policy; however it is the committee’s decision to decide if a study should be carried out.

Following a discussion during which T. McHugh responded to Member’s queries and it was agreed that a report/presentation on HAP should be made at the September Social Housing SPC meeting.

3. Work Programme:

**Anne Colgan, PPN Community & Volunteer Pillar**

The preparation of the social housing strategy for the coming five years with reference to:
- Key principles to guide the strategy for addressing the waiting list
- Current waiting list and expected growth in the waiting list - targets for each of the five years and overall target
- Priorities for next five years
- The range of models and approaches to be utilised and the associated funding models
- The implementation programme

T. McHugh advised that a comprehensive response on the construction programme had been given to the Committee, highlighting the Council’s plans to reach the targets set out in the Social Housing Targets for 2015 to 2017.

A discussion took place, and Member’s queries were responded to, it was agreed that the headings should be included in the work programme. It was also agreed that Co-op Housing ownership should also be included on the Work Programme.
Cllr. Chris Curran

SOCIAL HOUSING WEBSITE

That a secure housing transfer website be developed to allow Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council tenants advertise their homes with a view to transferring occupancy with other council tenants of the same council. This site should be operated by this council and be reflective of council policy. Upon its successful operation, this council will also liaise with other councils with a view to including interoperability between other councils.

T. McHugh advised the Committee could decide if they wanted to make a decision on this matter, but advised that the establishment of a website is not a strategic policy issue. He further informed the members that this item was also included on the agenda for the July Council Meeting.

Following a discussion of the members it was agreed that this matter should be left for full Council approval.

4. **Items submitted by Members for written reply:**

Cllr. Victor Boyhan

**Social Housing Targets for Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council 2015 to 2017**

The Minister for Environment, Community & Local Government announced housing targets for each Local Authority area up to 2017, on 1st April 2015.

I am advised that a provisional funding allocation for Dún Laoghaire Rathdown is 61,030,770, with a target of 681 units for 2015-2017, with an expected impact of 20% on housing list numbers.

I have also been advised that the funding will be allocated to a combination of building, buying and leasing schemes.

"Can the Director of Services provide details on the breakdown of the schemes, together with approvals to proceed with construction proposals?"

A written report had been prepared for the Committee which was **Noted.**

Anne Colgan, PPN Community & Volunteer Pillar

A profile of those on the waiting list under the following headings:

Length of time on the waiting list x:

- Family Size
- Family status (one parent family, single person etc.)
- Special needs
- Age group
- Area of County where Social Housing is requested/needed

A written report had been prepared for the Committee which was **Noted.**
Cllr. Chris Curran

SOCIAL HOUSING ALLOCATIONS SCHEME

To ask the committee, as a means to deal with over-crowding, if this committee will amend its scheme of lettings to allow council tenants voluntarily transfer to council accommodation of a lesser number of bedrooms. For example; if a 3 bedroom unit is occupied by a widowed parent who may have an adult child living temporarily abroad. The occupant will have the option of a two bedroom unit, rather than the current policy of just one.

A written report had been prepared for the Committee which was Noted.

5. Any Other Business:

Cllr. Boyhan suggested that a site visit be arrange for one of the future meetings.

6. Date of next Meeting:

The Chair advised that the next meeting will take place in September, date to be confirmed. The meeting concluded at 18.45.