



**SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of Social Development Strategic Policy Committee Meeting

Location: Council Chamber & Microsoft Teams

Date: Monday, 27 April at 2:30pm

PRESIDING: Councillor Paul Ross

PRESENT: Councillor Kevin Hussey, Councillor Colin Dalton, Councillor Padraig McNamara, Councillor Sean Mimmagh, Maria Keelty, Enda McManus, Diarmuid O'Sullivan

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms. Samanta Healy – Director of Services
Ms. Barbara Heslin, Director of Services
Ms. Mary Gouldsbury, Senior Executive Officer
Ms. Karena Lennon, Administrative Officer
Ms. Louise Connaughton, Clerical Officer
Mr. Ciaran Murphy, Senior Executive Officer

APOLOGIES: None

MEETINGS

ADMINISTRATOR: Mr. Lorraine McKee

1. **INTRODUCTION**

Paul Ross welcomed the Elected Members and representatives to the meeting.

2. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

None

3. **CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT SPC MEETING HELD ON 16 FEBRUARY 2026**

On the proposal of Councillor Kevin Hussey seconded by Councillor Sean Mimmagh, the minutes of the Social Development SPC meeting held on the 16 February 2026

were adopted.

4. **UPDATE ON DERELICT PROPERTY TAX**

Administrative Officer Karena Lennon made a presentation to the Members on Derelict Property Tax and answered questions raised by the Members.

The presentation included the following:

- Derelict Sites Act 1990 as amended/Derelict Sites Levy
- What counts as a Derelict Site?
- How the Levy Works
- Enforcement Tools
- Derelict Sites Register
- Process
- Challenges in Practice
- Levies Applied by Longford County Council
- Derelict Sites actions 2024 to date
- New Derelict Sites Tax

5. **PART V PROCEDURES/SECTION 97 PROCEDURE & APPLICATION FORM**

Senior Executive Officer Mary Gouldsbury made a presentation to the Members on Part V Procedures and Section 97 Procedure and Application Form and answered any questions raised by the Members.

The presentation included the following:

- The focus of Longford County Council will be on mixed tenure developments providing a mix of private, social and affordable housing. This will be reflected in the new Housing Strategy being developed by the Council.
- The new procedures formalise Longford County Council's approach to Part V and was jointly prepared by the Planning and Housing sections.
- Longford County Council's preferred approach is the delivery of social housing on site to promote social integration.
- The new documents provide clarity for developers and other stakeholders and ensure fairness, transparency, consistency and openness in decision making.
- The new procedures require the applicant/developer to consult and engage with the Housing and Planning sections throughout the process.
- An outline of the information required at each stage in the process is outlined in the new procedures.
- A legally binding Part V agreement must be concluded before commencement of the development.
- Where exemptions apply under Section 97, applicants must formally apply for a Section 97 Certificate prior to applying for planning permission and submit a Statutory Declaration as outlined in the Section 97 Explanatory Memorandum.

- While the new documents reflect the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended), they will be updated as soon as the Part 7 Chapter 2 of the Planning and Development Act is enacted.
- The updated documents will be made available on the Council's website.

6. **UPDATE ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

Senior Executive Officer Mary Gouldsbury made a presentation to the Members updating them on the Affordable Housing Scheme Cuirt an Easpaig and responded to questions that were raised.

The presentation included the following:-

- The scheme comprises 25 new A2-rated homes, including:
 - 5 no. 2-bed terraced houses
 - 8 no. 3-bed terraced houses
 - 12 no. 3-bed semi-detached houses
- Details of the approved pricing and affordability parameters were outlined, including market values, equity contributions and income thresholds for each house type.
- A €75,000 equity contribution applies across unit types, with Longford County Council support of up to €20,000 per unit if required.
- An update was provided on application activity as of 21 April 2026, including:
- 35 completed applications along with 52 in draft
- Applications received both within and outside the county
- Provisional and formal offers issued
- Ongoing engagement with applicants.

The Members welcomed the positive update regarding the scheme and are looking forward to its completion.

7. **HOUSING STRATEGY**

Senior Executive Officer Mary Gouldsbury made a presentation to the Members on Longford County Councils Housing Strategy & delivery in the context of:-

- legislative requirements
 - compliance with departmental policy, guidelines and circulars and
 - identified housing need, which informs location, tenure mix and housing quality.
- The update also anticipated the upcoming Housing Needs and Demand Assessment, which will refine future housing delivery.

The key strategic objectives of the Housing Strategy were outlined under three themes:

- Accessibility - Housing Access and Tenant Empowerment
 - Sustainability - Community Wellbeing and Neighbourhood Resilience and
 - Availability - Strategic Housing Development and Infrastructure Delivery
- Members were advised that the strategy seeks to ensure sufficient housing is delivered to meet both existing and future housing need supporting a balanced mix of tenures promoting social integration and avoiding over-reliance on any single tenure,

including:

- private housing,
- social housing, and
- affordable housing

The strategy supports a mix of housing types and sizes and requires housing delivery to take account of:

- the needs of older persons, and
- the housing needs of people with disabilities.

The housing delivery priorities were outlined as follows:

- direct delivery and affordable housing, as core elements of future housing supply
- active engagement with the private sector, including securing Part V outcomes with a focus on social and/or affordable housing and
- supporting choice, including provision for older people, people with disabilities, the Traveller community and households with changing needs.

Members were advised that a new Housing Needs and Demand Assessment is anticipated to commence during 2026 which will provide the opportunity to engage with the Department on national housing targets for Longford.

The Committee noted the update and supported the above approach.

Senior Executive Officer Mary Gouldsbury and Director of Service Samantha Healy responded to questions raised by the Members.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The proposed date for the next meeting of the Social Development Strategic Policy Committee is 20 July 2026 to which the members unanimously agreed.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Confirmed and adopted at Social Development Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held on the 20 July 2026