

**Housing, Recreation and  
Amenity, Building Control and  
Emergency Services.**

**Carlow County Council**

**8<sup>th</sup> January, 2018.**

**Housing  
&  
Recreation and Amenity  
Progress Report**

**8<sup>th</sup> January, 2018.**

Set out hereunder is the progress report for Housing to 31st December, 2017. This report highlights activities to date in the following areas:-

1. **Social Housing Supply**
2. **Part V**
3. **Housing Grants**
4. **Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)**
5. **Housing Loans**
6. **Tenant Purchase**
7. **Housing, Recreation and Amenity and Community SPC**

### **1. Social Housing Supply.**

The National Housing Strategy 2020 was launched by the Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government in November 2014. Since then the Department has published national targets for direct provision and leasing of social units. Carlow has submitted proposals to meet targets locally and up to December, 2017, approvals were issued to Carlow for the construction of 242 units in the period 2017 - 2018. Further approval has been received for the acquisition of 76 units.

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| House Purchases Commenced in 2017             | 34        |
| House Purchases Buy & Renew commenced in 2017 | 14        |
| Sales Closed 2017                             | 28        |
| <b>Total</b>                                  | <b>76</b> |

Social housing supply includes accommodation provided by:-

- (a) Traditional local authority direct capital funding,
- (b) Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS),
- (c) Long and short term leasing by local authorities
- (d) Special needs voluntary units (to include elderly) through the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS)
- (e) Voluntary leasing schemes

### **Local Authority Schemes**

Funding has been now been approved by the Department in respect of direct provision of 318 units in various locations throughout the county, having specific regard to areas of highest need for the period 2017 - 2018.

The full list of approved schemes and other proposals are detailed in the current project table further on in this report.

### **Energy Efficiency Programme 2017**

To date over 1,800 houses have received energy upgrades in County Carlow. These works have been very well received by householders – whose energy bills have more than halved and with much greater living quality. Carlow County Council will submit a further grant application for up to 100 houses in 2018, thereby reaching almost 100% upgrading of our units.

### **Voluntary Housing**

Approved housing bodies have played a major role in the provision of units in Co. Carlow – mainly by acquisition. Tintean are providing 10 units in Bagenalstown, Co-operation Ireland are completing 58 units beside Eire Og grounds, Cluid have commenced construction of 26 houses at Sleatty Street. In addition, we are ready to go to planning approval stage for a further 58 units at Shillelagh Road, Tullow in conjunction with Respond. Respond are also providing 6 more apartments at Bagenalstown.

| <b>Project</b>                  | <b>No. of dwellings</b> | <b>Position</b>                                 | <b>Expected start date</b> | <b>Expected complete date</b> |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|---|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Royal Oak Road, Bagenalstown    | 24                      | Completed                                       |                            | Complete                      |
| Market Square, Muinebheag       | 15                      | Completed in 2016                               |                            | Complete                      |
| Pound Lane, Borris              | 4                       | Completed 2017                                  |                            | Complete                      |
| Barrett Street Muinebheag       | 10                      | In association with Tintéan Housing Association |                            | Jan 2018                      |
| 5 Apartments at Maryborough St. | 5                       | Complete – snagging stage                       |                            | Jan 2018                      |
| Mount Leinster Park             | 4                       | Work in progress                                |                            | Complete                      |
| The Laurels                     | 5                       | Work to commence 11.09.2017                     | Q3 2017                    | Q4 2017                       |
| Tullow Road, Carlow             | 63                      | Turnkey development                             | Sept 2017                  | Q2 2018                       |

|  |              |   |                |           |
|--|--------------|---|----------------|-----------|
| Graigucullen   | 26           | In association with Clúid – starting very shortly | Q4 2017        | Q3 2018   |
| Myshall  | 4            | Works in Progress                                 |                | Jan 2018  |
| Myshall  | 4            | Awaiting approval From D.O.E.                     |                |           |
| St. Patrick's Park, Tullow                                       | 16           | Awaiting Departmental approval to commence        | Q3 2017        | Q2 2018   |
| Tullow   | 21           | Stage 1 approval received                         |                |           |
| Rathvilly  | 10           | Complete  |                |           |
| Rathvilly  | 8            | Awaiting approval from D.O.E.                     |                |           |
| Bilboa   | 2            | Tender Assessment                                 |                |           |
| Hacketstown  | 4            | Tender Assessment                                 |                |           |
| Kildavin   | 1            | Awaiting approval from D.O.E.                     |                |           |
| Rural – Tullow   | 1            | Complete  |                |           |
| Rural – Drummin  | 1            | Commenced   | September 2017 | June 2018 |
| Purchases  | 76           | Ongoing   |                |           |
| Part 5 Acquisitions<br>Castleoaks/<br>Brownshill<br>Bagenalstown | 15<br><br>42 | <br><br>Stage 1 approval                          |                |           |

## **2. Part V**

There has been little activity in relation to Part V in Carlow over the past number of years. In accordance with the Planning Act 2015 from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015 all Part V obligations for social housing must be satisfied by the provision of units or units in lieu on another development. There is no provision for a financial contribution. Part V is applicable only to developments of more than 9 plus housing units (i.e. 10 or more units) on zoned lands. Carlow County Council has achieved 15 units during 2017.

## **3. Housing Grants**

Carlow County Council provided total funding of €2.18m in respect of Housing Adaptation Grants, Mobility Aid Grants and Housing Aid for Older People Grants in 2016, which were paid to over 300 applicants and which assisted these households to cater for their housing need within their own homes.

## **4. Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)**

The Housing Assistance Payment which came into operation in Carlow on 29<sup>th</sup> June, 2015. This Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) is a new form of social housing support which replaces rent supplement for households with a long-term housing need. All applications for HAP are made locally to the Council. The applicant for HAP sources own accommodation and pays a contribution to the Council based on the applicants income. The rent up to set limits, dependent on household composition is paid directly to the landlord. There are almost 600 HAP tenancies in place at present one of the highest in the Country.

## **5. Housing Loans**

Loan activity in 2017 resulted in 67 applications received for house purchases, of which 14 have been given approval to date.

## **6. Incremental Tenant Purchase Schemes**

16 Tenant Purchase applications have been received in 2017. 7 offer letters were issued. A number of requests for purchase were made by persons who did not qualify under the terms of the scheme. This means that the Council will in future have virtually no resources available to renovate units for re-letting.

## **7. RAS (Rental Accommodation Scheme)**

The total RAS properties is 570 units approximately.

## **8. Vacant Houses Action Plan**

A Vacant Houses Action Plan will be brought to the Council at the March meeting following consideration by the Council's Housing SPC. Early indications are that the number of vacant homes is less than 20% of that suggested by the National Census (2,500).

**8. Housing, Recreation and Amenity and Community SPC**

The Housing, Recreation, Amenity and Community Strategic Policy Committee continued to meet in 2017, and under the Chairmanship of Councillor John Pender discussed the strategic requirements in respect of housing provision and social development. Members were briefed on and considered the following:-

- Housing Assistance Payment
- National Housing Strategy 2020
- Capital Projects 2015-2017
- Homelessness
- Tenant Incremental Purchase Scheme 2016
- Housing Needs Assessment
- Repair To Lease Scheme

**Housing Provision**

| <u>Housing Support</u>    | <u>Number</u> |
|---------------------------|---------------|
| HAP Programme             | 578           |
| RAS Tenancies             | 570           |
| Rent Supplement           | 850           |
| Local Authority Tenancies | 1729          |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>3725</b>   |

Note:

- An additional 209 households – involuntarily sharing with their families.
- There is currently 1 household regarded as homeless in receipt of hotel/B&B accommodation.
- There are 15 persons using the Vincent de Paul Hostel.
- There are 312 dwellings for which disabled and elderly grants have been approved and are currently being processed. Carlow County Council has been allocated €1,526,534, of which €305,307 is to be provided from own resources, for the payment

of Housing Adaptation Grants for Older People and Grants for People with a Disability.

- Additional allocation of €523,055 received in October.

## **9. Schemes**

- Repair to Let Scheme – 34 expressions of interest received. Applications being examined. 4 applications have commenced.
- Buy and Renew Scheme – This is a very important and beneficial scheme. Since the commencement of the scheme in July we have identified 15 houses for immediate purchase and expect to have acquired over 40 such units this year. This scheme facilitates purchase to suit persons needs – renew element is a major boost to the local construction industry sector.
- Energy Efficiency Scheme – 74 houses have received energy upgrades at a cost of €280,000.

## **Oak Park Forest Park**

Oak Park Forest Park, on the outskirts of Carlow Town, remains very popular for quiet walks in a beautiful setting. The attractions – universally accessible playground, cleared/replanted forest and exercise areas are of increasing attraction to everybody.

Extensive works have been completed to the surface of the paths to enhance the walkways and to protect the wooden structure from the elements. Damage to many trees and fencing in the Park required works to ensure safety for all users. The Urban Forest Renewal Programme has completed a further stage – the necessary felling and planting of designated areas of the Forest Park. These self-financing works were completed by Emerald Forestry in conjunction with the programme required by the Forestry Service.



**Building Control  
&  
Emergency Services  
Progress Report**

**8<sup>th</sup> January, 2018.**

## **Introduction**

December was a busy month in the fire service with the official opening of the training & development Centre at Hacketstown by minister D'Arcy, successful re-accreditation of the OSHAS 1800:1 Health & Safety Management System and successful completion of the NDFEM accredited Compartment Fire Behavior Instructor course the aforementioned achievements were all delivered whilst ensuring normal developments in MEM, Health and Safety, Fire Prevention and Building Control (BCMS) were maintained.

## **Capital Investments**

With the official opening of the new 980M<sup>2</sup> 2 – storey training building which was completed at a cost of €450,000, the training centre will be serviced for all present and future needs. The next phase in the project is to complete the drill yard, provide underground static water storage for training needs and provide for re-location of existing training tower to the new drill yard. Work has also commenced on replacing the three number compartment fire behavior training units with capital approval of €40,000 received earlier this year. These units are used at almost every course that runs at the training center and their condition is pivotal in providing safe and efficient training.

The new build on our 9,000L water tanker on order with HPMP Tullow is almost complete and following a meeting 20<sup>th</sup> December the new tanker will be delivered week commencing 15<sup>th</sup> January 2018.

Looking forward towards 2018, the council also hopes to have proposals for the up-Grade of Bagenalstown fire station and apply for funding to replace some of its aging service fleet of four-wheel drive vehicles.

## **Hacketstown Training Centre**

The training center has received bookings from fire authorities in Tipperary, Waterford, Kilkenny and Meath to keep the centre busy for the remainder of the year. In addition to this we have received bookings from Wexford, Meath, Tipperary & the NDFEM for the period February to May 2018. Once all development works have been completed, Hacketstown will have the capacity to deliver many bespoke fire fighter courses on a local, regional and national basis. To end of November 2017, the training center has generated revenue of in excess of €100,000 to Carlow county council.

## **Fire Safety**

The fire prevention section was very proactive with inspections of public places of assembly during November and in particular public houses

incorporating smoking areas for compliance. Inspections will continue up to and over the Christmas period.

### **Building Control**

The building control section actively manages the BCMS and carry out routine inspections of construction projects to ensure compliance with all parts A to M of the Building regulations during construction stage.

Summary for November

|                          |                                |                         |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Commencement Notices     | Notices Valid                  | BC Inspections          |
| 10                       | 5                              | 8                       |
| Fire Safety Certificates | Disability Access Certificates | Fire Safety Inspections |
| 2                        | 2                              | 6                       |

### **Safety, Health & Welfare**

An accreditation surveillance audit is scheduled for 7<sup>th</sup> December and will be conducted by the NSAI who externally accredit the system. Staff are busy preparing all necessary documentation and records required to complete this external audit.

### **Operations**

In total the county's fire brigades attended 38 incidents in November as follows:

|                     |    |
|---------------------|----|
| RTC                 | 6  |
| Domestic Fire       | 5  |
| Car/Vehicle         | 3  |
| Bin/Skip/Small fire | 6  |
| Alarm Activation    | 5  |
| Industrial          | 1  |
| Chimney             | 3  |
| Fire Other          | 8  |
| SS Amb Assist       | 1  |
| Total               | 38 |

### **Major Emergency Management**

Attendance at 2 conferences/seminars during the month, National MEM Plenary meeting at Athlone and national response to storm Ophelia in Tullamore. We have also applied to the department for mass fatality storage solution for the south-east region.

---

**Seamus O'Connor, Director of Services.**