

# **MINUTES OF MEETING OF EDENDERRY AREA COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> OF MARCH 2013 IN THE TOWN HALL, EDENDERRY AT 3.30PM**

**Present:** Cathaoirleach Cllr. Noel Bourke, Cllr. John Foley, Cllr. Liam Quinn, Cllr. Eddie Fitzpatrick, Cllr. Ger Plunkett, Cllr. Nichola Hogan, Cllr. Mary Breen.

**In attendance:** Declan Conlon, Area Manager, Damien Grennan, Edenderry Area Engineer, Leonard Geoghegan, Executive Engineer, Caroline Dempsey, Administrative Officer, Jean Ryan, Senior Executive Engineer, Water Services and Environment, Therese O'Meara, Acting Town Clerk

The Cathaoirleach welcomed Therese O'Meara to the meeting

## **1. Confirmation of Minutes of Meeting held in November 2012.**

On the proposal of Cllr. Quinn and seconded by Cllr. Foley the minutes of Edenderry Area Meeting held on the 28<sup>th</sup> of November 2012 were confirmed.

## **2. Meeting Schedule for 2013**

The meeting schedule for the year was agreed, the next meeting will be held on the 5<sup>th</sup> of June followed by meetings on the 4<sup>th</sup> of September and the 4<sup>th</sup> of December.

## **3. Housing**

The Cathaoirleach welcomed Caroline Dempsey who delivered the housing report to the members.

Issues raised from previous meeting.

- Number of applications on the housing list and how that is now compiled.
- Housing Needs Assessment, in particular the change in guidelines and how this will affect people.

### **Number of Applicants on Housing List**

Caroline explained that the computer system has changed since October 2012. Up to this applicants were asked to identify their first preference for housing. The new system is now in line with the Social Housing Assessment Regulations 2011; where no first preference is sought. Therefore it is possible that there is now a crossover of applicants in areas; for example the same family could now appear on the list for Daingean, Edenderry and Rhode, each area having the same priority.

Caroline explained that the overall fall in figures from March 2012 to March 2013 relates to people who are currently housed under the RAS scheme and who no longer appear on the Council list.

### **Leasing**

Caroline advised that there is a demand at present for private rented houses and therefore there has been a reduction in the number of properties submitted for Leasing.

**School Lane scheme** will now be reduced from 8 units to 5 units. Part VIII approval is required. It is hoped that consideration for Part VIII will come before the next meeting. A revised plan was then be circulated.

The Area Engineer advised that this Part VIII approval doesn't include the link road which has separate Part VIII approval.

### **Vacant Houses**

There are currently 8 vacant houses. Some of which will be pre let in the coming months. However, once these pre lets are completed any future units surrendered to the Council will be boarded up. The Internal Capital Reserves finance the pre let refurbishments. There are less houses are being brought outright at present therefore there is now less money available to bring houses up to letting standards. Caroline advised

that any person who leaves Council accommodation will find it difficult to get back onto a housing list in the future especially if they owe money to the Council.

### **Other Housing Areas**

There was no change in land banks. Clonmullen Estate Edenderry remedial works will be completed in the near future. There are no expressions of interest for serviced sites. Caroline advised that Offaly was the only county to receive an increase in grant allocation this year and she announced that €625,000 has recently been allocated for Housing Grants. It is hoped that the new cap on the amount of grants allocated for projects will help to use the total allocation more wisely and assist more people. The Capital Allocation for 2013 is nil this year therefore no houses will be built or purchased. Caroline advised that the Council do have a part to play in the Mortgage to Let Scheme as they assess applicants to see if they are eligible to be accepted onto the housing list. From a total of 24 queries from the Agency to date only 2 applications were accepted onto the housing list. To date there is no information available on a replacement scheme for previous tenant purchase schemes.

### **Housing Needs Assessment.**

Caroline advised that a Housing Needs Assessment has to be carried out this year to ensure that all households included on the housing list now meet the criteria for eligibility and need set out in the Social Housing Assessment Regulations 2011. The housing department has therefore written to 723 (cut off point used 31<sup>st</sup> of October 2012) applicants seeking current information on their housing situation, household composition and income. These applicants have three week in which to return the relevant information. Citizens Information and the Travellers movement have been advised and are providing assistant to the public where relevant. Caroline advised people will be removed from the housing list if they do not meet the new criteria; this is likely to occur in the area of income as income bands were introduced under the new regulations. The information will need to be returned to the Department by the end of April.

## **4. Water Services**

Jean Ryan, Acting Senior Executive Engineer delivered the report to the area members.

Jean advised that Edenderry Sewerage Scheme Preliminary Report has been approved by the Department. The Water Conservation Project which includes the replacement of watermain in Edenderry is expected to tender in mid 2013. The backyard survey is ongoing but not intrusive. Householders have been written to in advance. Final approval will then be sought from the DEHLG and it is hoped that this will be granted quite quickly. A letter drop and open day will be provided for people when final approval is granted. There are no allocations yet for Clonbullogue WSS, Geashill WSS and the Rural Water Programme.

The issue of Fluoridation was raised by Cllr. Fitzpatrick who queried the effect this has on people health. Jean advised that Offaly County Council follow the guidelines as set out for them.

Cllr Plunkett queried if there was a plan to move Geashill and Cloneygown into the Edenderry Area from Tullamore Area. The Area Engineer advised that this proposal is at management level at present however he believes that it is being looked at favourably.

## **5. Roads**

The Area Engineer advised that the Roads Programme was the most difficult he has had to put together based on the areas that need work and the allocations granted. A map was given to each member highlighting the relevant sections of roads. He advised that we have 12 staff covering 630 kms of roads and explained the work that will be carried out this year. It was proposed by Cllr. Plunkett and seconded by Cllr. Foley to adopt the programme of works for the year.

The Area Engineer explained that there is a proposal through the SPC to bring in axel restrictions on some routes which will restrict the weights of lorries on some roads.

In relation to the Pedestrian Crossing at Oaklands Community College, the Area Engineer advised that the contractor has been chosen and we are waiting on him to submit a programme of works which will state the start and completion date. He explained that work in this area will not hold up the commencement of the school. He also advised the location of the crossing has yet to be agreed.

In relation to a query raised by Cllr. Fitzpatrick on why we pay Machinery Yard Offaly County Council for use of our vans/lorries, the Area Manager advised that the Machinery Yard need to generate funds to replace vans/lorries. He advised that there is an internal review process (changed management) current looking at areas like this.

**Smart Travel**, The Area Engineer advised that we can apply for funding for same. He advised that we had already received funding to put together a strategy for Edenderry Town.

**Hedge Cutting**, the Area Engineer advised that the Council do have the power to issue notices outside the period of 1<sup>st</sup> of March if safety is an issue. He also advised that in some cases we will be taking landowners to court soon. Leonard Geoghegan Assistant Engineer advised that the name of the registered owners of the property in question is required in order to issue a notice.

**Flooding**, the Area Engineer advised that 99% of the cases investigated by our staff found that house owners had not adhered to the terms of their planning permission and hence have issues with surface water entering their properties. He therefore advised the members to ask house owners who are having this issue to check the requirements of their planning permission.

**6. Items from Edenderry Town Council members**

None

**7. Any other business**

**Edenderry Swimming Pool**

Cllr Hogan advised that she had had a very productive meeting with Marcella Corcoran Kennedy TD and Minister Ring. She advised that funding has been granted for the swimming pool in the sum of €3.8 million. She hoped that the public would now get behind the fund raising efforts of the committee in order to make up the short fall.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Date of next meeting **5<sup>th</sup> of June 2013**

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**Cathaoirleach**

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**Date**