

COMHAIRLE CATHRACH BHAILE ÁTHA CLIATH



Miontuairiscí Chruinniú Speisialta a tionóladh ar **8 Feabhra 2021** ar Fhíschomhdháil Cianda ag 6.15 i.n, i Láthair an tArdmheara Hazel Chu sa chathaoirl

Comhairleoir:

Daryl Barron
Dearbháil Butler
Mary Callaghan
Keith Connolly
Donna Cooney
Hazel de Nortúin
Kevin Donoghue
Anne Feeney
Anthony Flynn
James Geoghegan
Janet Horner
Darcy Lonergan
Tina MacVeigh
Eimer McCormack
Carolyn Moore
Naoise Ó Muirí
Damian O'Farrell
Cieran Perry
Nial Ring

Comhairleoir:

Janice Boylan
Claire Byrne
Hazel Chu
Caroline Conroy
Joe Costello
Daithí de Róiste
Daithí Doolan
Declan Flanagan
Mannix Flynn
Deirdre Heney
Vincent Jackson
John Lyons
Ray McAdam
Séamas McGrattan
Darragh Moriarty
Claire O'Connor
Colm O'Rourke
Michael Pidgeon

Comhairleoir:

Christy Burke
Danny Byrne
Anthony Connaghan
Deirdre Conroy
Daniel Céitinn
Tara Deacy
Pat Dunne
Terence Flanagan
Mary Freehill
Jane Horgan-Jones
Dermot Lacey
Micheál MacDonncha
Paddy McCartan
Declan Meenagh
Sophie Nicoullaud
Cat O'Driscoll
Larry O'Toole
Noeleen Reilly

Oifigigh

Oliver Douglas
Owen P. Keegan
Deirdre Ní Raghallaigh
Pat Teehan

Ruth Dowling
Yvonne Kelly
Sandra Walley

Mary Hayes
Brendan Kenny
Michael Gallagher

- 1 Under Schedule 10 of the local government act 2001 Section 6-1(C), the undersigned members request a Special Meeting of Dublin City Council to discuss the following issue: Traveller Specific Accommodation.

Cllr. Anthony Flynn, Cllr. Hazel de Nortúin, Cllr. Cieran Perry, Cllr. Sophie Nicoullaud, Cllr. Christy Burke, Cllr. Tina McVeigh. Cllr. Noeleen O' Reilly, Cllr. Vincent Jackson, Cllr. John Lyons, Cllr. Pat Dunne, Cllr. Janice Boylan, Cllr. Daniel Céitinn, Cllr. Anthony Connaghan, Cllr. Máire Devine, Cllr. Daithí Doolan, Cllr. Micheál MacDonncha, Cllr. Séamas McGrattan, Cllr. Larry O'Toole.

The Lord Mayor opened the meeting by giving a brief update on her commitments in relation to the Emergency Motions that were agreed at the January and February Council meetings.

She thanked Cllrs. Hazel de Nortúin, Anthony Flynn and all the other signatories to the request for a Special Meeting on Traveller Specific Accommodation for bringing this issue before the Council. The Lord Mayor also extended her appreciation to the Members and officials for giving their time to discuss what everyone acknowledges is a very important matter.

The Lord Mayor invited Cllr. Hazel de Nortúin to open proceedings by giving an overview of main issues facing the City Council in the provision of Traveller Specific Accommodation.

Cllr. De Nortúin informed members that the request for this meeting was due to the widespread view among Councillors, members of the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (LTACC) and other groups working in this area that there has been an under delivery of Traveller Specific accommodation in Dublin and across the country nationally over the past several years. The focus of this meeting is to raise awareness of the issue and generate momentum in terms of resolving many of the outstanding obstacles in the provision of Traveller accommodation.

The Lord Mayor invited Assistant Chief Executive with responsibility for Housing, Brendan Kenny, to address the members in relation to the report circulated with the agenda and the issue of Traveller Specific Accommodation in general.

Mr. Kenny welcomed the opportunity to hear the views of the elected members on this complex issue. He shared their frustration and acknowledged the need for the City Council to do more in this area. He would take on board any recommendations proposed in the course of tonight's meeting and confirmed that the City Council would do everything in its powers to make progress in the delivery of Traveller Accommodation.

Councillors made submissions in relation to the creation of a specific Strategic Policy Committee to progress Traveller accommodation as well interim changes to the status of the LTACC to give it a more formal standing.

The Manager confirmed that the decision to establish a SPC to deal with Traveller Accommodation was one for National Government rather than the Local authority. However, he was not convinced by the argument that such a SPC would address the problems associated with the sector. The LTACC functioned in a similar way to an SPC and was dedicated to progressing the delivery of Traveller accommodation. However, he took on board the Members comments and would take whatever ever actions were necessary to improve the functionality of the LTACC in terms of its

accountability and transparency including the holding of meetings in the Council Chamber, ensuring that agenda and minutes of LTACC's meetings are published as well as attending meetings himself on a more regular basis.

Members requested clarity on the lack of proposals to come before the Council in relation to Traveller accommodation as well as the availability of funding for such projects.

Mr. Kenny acknowledged the failure of the City Council to bring on stream new Traveller accommodation during the period of 2008 to 2014. However, this should be viewed in the context of the wider economic situation which the country experienced following the financial crash of 2008. Housing construction in both the private and public sectors during that period was severely limited. He allayed concerns that spending on issues such as Covid-19, water and electricity provision as well as fire safety were not a drain on the availability of resources to build accommodation. The major obstacles are the identification of suitable sites for Traveller Accommodation and where sites had been identified finding agreement on the development of plans from both the Traveller and settled communities. The Manager was satisfied that where sites and plans could be agreed, access to the necessary funding would not be problematic. Mary Hayes advised Councillors that several projects which had been considered as priority had been delayed due a variety of local issues. However, it should be accepted where those local issues could not be resolved those projects should be set aside and other projects should be advanced and given priority.

During the remainder of the discussion Councillors requested further information on the following issues; the availability of social housing for Travellers; the retrofitting programme, the establishment of an Approved Housing Body for Traveller Accommodation, fire safety on Traveller sites and the Irish Traveller Movement report.

Mary Hayes confirmed that Dublin City Council was one of the few Local Authorities that prioritise Travellers for Social Housing. They have the option of selecting from Traveller Specific or mainstream accommodation. Traveller Priority has been retained in the Scheme of Lettings as well as Homelessness Traveller Priority.

Brendan Kenny informed Members that the retrofitting programme was due to restart once Covid restrictions are lifted and this would include Traveller accommodation.

In relation to fire safety a major audit was carried out on all such accommodation and the Traveller Unit works on a continuous basis with DFB to ensure fire safety standards are maintained. Both DFB and the Travellers Accommodation Unit come under the Managers responsibility and will ensure that safety standards are met and maintained.

In relation to a Traveller AHB he advised Members that an organisation called CENA has been established which seeks to develop new thinking and best practice in the design, development and management of Traveller Accommodation. Central to its ethos is the participation and inclusion of Traveller individuals at all levels. The development of such organisations is a key element in delivering Traveller specific accommodation and the Manager would like to see greater support and engagement from the Traveller community with such bodies.

The Manager informed Members that he received the Irish Traveller Movement report only recently and he would like to take an appropriate amount of time to review its contents before issuing a full response to some of the issues raised within it.

The Lord Mayor invited Cllr. Hazel de Nortúin to make a closing statement. Cllr. De Nortúin thanked all those involved for their positive contributions which had encouraged her to believe real progress could be made on this issue. It was important to focus on what could be achieved going forward rather than looking to the failures of the past and seeking to apportion blame. . She also expressed her gratitude to Brendan Kenny, Mary Hayes and Pat Teehan and all those in the Traveller Accommodation Unit for their hard work.

The Lord Mayor concluded the meeting by thanking the Members for their contributions and Brendan Kenny and Mary Hayes for engaging with the debate in an honest and open manor. She acknowledged the difficulty in addressing the problems in the delivery of Traveller accommodation which would require political leadership from all parties and the full support of the management of Dublin City Council. However, she believed that this was a fundamental issue and accepting discrimination towards the Traveller community was no longer acceptable.. She called on all those involved to use their authority and influence to bring about real change. On a practical note she suggested that the Housing SPC should engage with the LTACC and look to establish a sub-committee to further examine the issues highlighted during the debate.

The meeting concluded at 8.20pm.

LORD MAYOR

MEETINGS ADMINISTRATOR