



Comhairle Cathrach
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City Council

Report to Housing SPC

Date: Wednesday 9th March 2022

Item No. 6iii

Dublin City Council Housing SPC Working Group on Services to Older People

Activity Report

1st March 2022

The Working Group on Services to Older People was established in November 2020 as a result of an original proposal initiated by Councillor Mary Freehill. It reports to the DCC Housing SPC and also links with the programme work of the DCC Local and Community Development Committee particularly in relation to the National Age Friendly Strategy and the Healthy Ireland Programme.

The group aims are:

- a) To recommend democratic structures of governance and participation that would include elected members, staff and representation of older people.
- b) To examine, service delivery and best method of engagement that would reach all older people in the DCC area.
- c) To develop public policy proposals under national Age Friendly strategy and Healthy Ireland programme and within context of COVID19 recovery - with the focus being on which Dublin City Council services can be adapted, enhanced, or proposed, in order to improve quality of life.

The members of the Working Group are as follows:

- Councillor Mary Freehill, Chairperson of Group
- Councillor Alison Gilliland, Lord Mayor of Dublin, Chairperson Housing SPC
- Councillor Mary Callaghan, DCC Elected Member
- Councillor Donna Cooney, DCC Elected Member
- Councillor Anne Feeney, DCC Elected Member
- Councillor Niall Ring, DCC Elected Member
- Councillor Mannix Flynn, DCC Elected Member
- Dáithí Downey, Chief Officer DCC LCDC

Meeting 10: 27th January 2022, 09:30am to 10:30am (Virtual meeting via Zoom)

Elected members present: Lord Mayor Alison Gilliland, Cllr. Mary Freehill, Cllr. Niall Ring, Cllr. Donna Cooney, Cllr. Mary Callaghan, Cllr. Anne Feeney,

Elected members apologies: Cllr. Mannix Flynn

Also present:

**DCC - Dáithí Downey, Síle McNulty Goodwin, Catherina O'Rourke, Sophia Brennan,
Ava Housing: Michelle Moore (Founder), Ciaran Ferrie, (Director)**

Age Action: Dr. Nathan O'Connor (Senior Public Affairs & Policy Specialist)

DCC Staff Apologies: Beatrice Casserly, Eimear McCormack,

Ava Housing and Age Action were invited to present to this Working Group.

1. Presentation 1:

Michelle Moore and Ciaran Ferrie, (Directors of Ava Housing), gave a presentation about Ava Housing, an innovative project that aims to support independent living and provide smart housing options for older people. Visit website here: <https://www.avahousing.ie/>

Michelle Moore is the founder and director of Ava Housing, an award winning and innovative not-for-profit housing scheme that helps older homeowners to reconfigure their family-sized homes, reimagining the layout of their ground floor and creating a new rental unit within the house on the first floor. The design solution allows for the homeowner to share their home with a renter, whilst still having a level of privacy and autonomy

Ciaran Ferrie outlined that Ava Housing focus on people in the 60 to 70 age bracket who want to remain living in their own home. A typical project is a three bedroomed house which is assessed for suitability to create living space to the front and bedroom to the rear. It can take approximately eight to nine weeks to complete the work and the occupant requires alternative accommodation when the work is in progress. All proposed renters are screened before a rental agreement is put in place.

This initiative started in 2016 with a demonstrator house in Clondalkin Dublin 22, closely followed by a second project in Beaumont. This remains at a pilot stage and with a focus on a cluster of co-located homes to realise some efficiencies in construction costs e.g. Beaumont project. Retrofit costs are very high and Ava Housing wants to develop a sustainable funding model. All home owners are required to contribute approx. €20,000 to €25,000 and most have to borrow which may often be a constraint. Repayment of the loan is via the rent obtained. A copy of this presentation has been circulated to all members.

2. Presentation 2:

Dr Nathan O'Connor, Senior Public Affairs & Policy Specialist, gave a presentation regarding two recent Age Action publications relating to digital inclusion and a report on ageism and age equality

Age Action is Ireland's leading charity working to improve the quality of life for all older people and their careers. Age Action's publication on digital inclusion finds that two-thirds (65%) of older persons

are effectively digitally excluded, either because they are not using the Internet or they have “below basic” digital skills. This makes it difficult or impossible for them to access services online – including Dublin City Council’s services and consultations. As well as a need for digital training and financial assistance with devices, the Age Action report underlines the importance of ensuring adequate non-digital channels through which to access services and to participate in consultations. To view this report visit:

https://www.ageaction.ie/sites/default/files/digital_inclusion_and_an_ageing_population.pdf

Age Action’s publication on ageism and age equality is their first step in bringing the findings of the WHO Global Report on Ageism to an Irish audience, and to recommend steps to address age discrimination. This report can be viewed here:

https://www.ageaction.ie/sites/default/files/ageism_and_age_equality_position_paper_1.pdf

A copy of Age Actions presentation was circulated to all members.

3. Discussion and clarification of the Terms and References of the Services to Older People Working Group for the year ahead and actions for 2022

Due to time constraints the members were not in a position to discuss this item.

Action 1: It was agreed that Lord Mayor Alison Gilliland, Cllr. Freehill, Chair of Working Group), Cllr. Dermot Lacey (Chair of Housing SPC) and Dáithí Downey, Chief Officer LCDC, would meet to discuss and report to the March Housing SPC meeting.

Meeting to review the Terms of Reference for this WG

Wednesday 9th February 2022

From 09:20am to 10am (virtually via Zoom)

In attendance:

Lord Mayor Alison Gilliland, Cllr. Mary Freehill, Cllr. Dermot Lacey (Chair of the Housing SPC)

DCC staff present:

Dáithí Downey, Sophia Brennan

The Chief Officer outlined the purpose of this meeting which is to consider the Terms of Reference established for the DCC Housing SPC- Services to Older People Working Group, and to review and re-affirm same for the continuity of the Working Group in 2022.

The current terms of reference are:

- i* To recommend democratic structures of governance and participation that would include elected members, staff and representation of older people.

- ii* To examine, service delivery and best method of engagement that would reach all older people in the DCC area.
- iii* To develop public policy proposals under national Age Friendly strategy and Healthy Ireland programme and within context of COVID19 recovery - with the focus being on which Dublin City Council services can be adapted, enhanced, or proposed, in order to improve quality of life.

Matters discussed:

1. Terms of Reference

The terms of reference were discussed and affirmed as pertinent to continuing the Working Group into 2022. It was noted that the first term of reference had not yet been addressed and should be prioritised by the Working Group going forward.

2. Communication

The extensive workload that has been successfully undertaken by the Working Group (e.g. the submission to the City Development Plan) as well as information gathering and developing links with other organisations (e.g. National Disability Authority, Ava Housing and Age Action) was noted. However, members are concerned with how we communicate the outcomes of this work to other Departments/ Sections within the City Council in particular CRES and Roads & Traffic and with older people. The new on-line consultation hub is welcome but not everyone is on-line. Therefore a multimedia communication approach might be used that aims to be more inclusive when publicising our services.

3. Democratic structures

The issue of how councillors are involved in the whole process of Age Friendly policy and decision-making was noted. The WG's objective to 'recommend democratic structures of governance and participation that would include elected members, staff and representation of older people' relating to the Age Friendly Alliance requires further consideration and engagement with AF programme]manager(s).

4. Public and civic infrastructure

The group considered the issue of 'resting spots' in DCC and noted how it is proposed that DCC will have more traffic free streets and therefore, there will be a need for more resting spots. For example new 'planters' have been installed outside the Ilac Centre on Henry Street. The Lord Mayor has suggested that these planters should include seating on two sides to facilitate anyone requiring a moment's rest.

5. Relationship with LCDC

The Chief Officer for DCC LCDC outlined how the Working Group relates to the work of the LCDC and the overall community programme within Housing and Community Department. The CO noted requirements that the CO lead on the development and adoption of a revised LECF for Dublin City in 2022. Accordingly, another DCC staff would deputise for the CO and work with this WG for 2022.

Members also noted the broader series of responsibilities including engagement around public realm and design of public and civic infrastructure and also engagement around service provision on public transport.

A discussion took place on the merits of communicating with the other DCC Strategic Policy Committees. In order to share evidence based findings and promote internal dialogue to develop public policy and strategies with an emphasis on 'actionable' plans. An example was given of the Implementation Plan for DCC being agreed with the WHO *Partnership for Healthy Cities*, wherein it is proposed to install rest and recuperation and water services at all public bike areas. This proposal is within the remit of DCC, thus an actionable item.

It was noted how Services to Older People Working Group needs to be tied into a more formal structure as it has identified much broader issues other than those within the remit of Housing & Community. The DCC Corporate Policy Group as noted, would be a good vehicle for communicating age friendly issues.

The following actions were proposed:

1. **Action 1: A decision was made to affirm** the terms of reference as pertinent to continuing the work of this Working Group into 2022. It was agreed that the first term of reference should be prioritised by the Working Group going forward as it has not been addressed yet.
2. **Action 2:** A decision was made to request that the Services to Older People Working Group would be considered as an item on the CPG Agenda.
3. **Action 3:** It was proposed to reframe the focus of the Working Group and re-affirm continuity of its work for 2022. The following were identified:
 - ✓ Communicate the WG as an appropriate 'policy proofing' function to address and support relevant actions and services within DCC's remit.
 - ✓ Identify deliverables within Housing & Community structures that can be advanced in 2022.
 - ✓ Re-engage formerly with the DCC Age Friendly Programme Manager to help advance relevant practices and service including Housing with Support or the Age Friendly Healthy Homes Co-ordinator and to address the 'digital divide' that challenges older persons for seeking access and information on our services.
4. **Action 4:** Circulate a draft of this meeting's minutes for agreement and submit same to the March Housing SPC for their consideration.

Date of next meeting: Thursday 10th March 2022 from 11:30 to 12:30 on line via Zoom.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Downey', is enclosed in a light grey rectangular box.

**Dáithí Downey
Chief Officer, DCC Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)
Senior Executive Officer, Housing and Community Services.**