MINUTES OF HOUSING STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE (SPC)
Meeting held on Thursday 10th September 2026 – Peace Campus Monaghan @ 11am

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Attendance: Cllr Colm Carthy (Chair), Cllr Paul Gibbons, Cllr PJ O'Hanlon, Cllr Alan Johnston, Cllr Aidan Campbell, Tom Freeman, Teresa Carolan, Packie Kelly, Olga McConnon, Samantha Boyle, Mark Hall, Miriam McMahon, Colum Courtney, Gary McBride and Barry Sweeney

Apologies: Cllr Sinéad Flynn, Michael McBride, April Anna Barker and Daniel Sean McKenna

Meeting Minutes held on Thursday 10th September 2026

The minutes of meeting held on 11th June 2026 were proposed by Tom Freeman and seconded by Teresa Carolan

Matters Arising

None

RAS / HAP Discussion

There has been a significant increase in RAS tenancy in the last month. There has been a move from RAS to HAP. SB made members aware of the current position and if rent is unachievable for any applicant the local authority is not putting people into a vulnerable position.
Every case is considered on a case-by-case basis and MCC cannot see every case as an exceptional case. It was pointed out that other authorities are refusing to handle exceptional cases and pushing back on these.
The approach of the council must be that it is fair to everyone involved and each case is assessed on a case-by-case basis.

A discussion took place on the difference between the HAP and RAS schemes.
RAS relates to long-term contracts. The property is privately owned, but Monaghan County Council pays the rent directly to the landlord. The tenant pays a weekly differential rent contribution to the Council, based on their income, rather than paying rent directly to the landlord. The tenant remains a social housing applicant and may still be eligible for a transfer or another form of social housing in the future.

HAP tenants have a landlord and pay the landlord the difference between the HAP supplement and the total rent charged. The individial must be approved for **social housing support** by the local authority. The tenant finds their own accommodation in the private rental market. The HAP administrating body pays the landlord directly each month. The tenant pays a differential rent contribution to the local authority. A HAP tenant is not a direct tenant of the local authority; their tenancy agreement remains with the private landlord.

It was suggested that the Carrickmacross population increased by 15% last year while Monaghan's increased by 1.2%. Cllr Paul Gibbons asked if it is correct that Monaghan is in the lowest of the three HAP bands and it was confirmed that is the case. It was emphasised that affordability and availability was serious concern and issue for private rents.

Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programme (EERP)

BS presented an in-depth and very professional presentation on Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programme throughout Monaghan on the following items:

- Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programme
- Monaghan Area Based Retrofit Imitative Scheme
- Monaghan Eco Energy Projects
- Further Opportunities

It was acknowledged that the presentation was comprehensive and excellently delivered. It was stated it's great to see initiative and when papers come out MCC will always be in the top 1-3 every year and its due to the people and work being done on the ground. It was acknowledged that it's great to be associated with local employers like Activ8. It was stated that it was important to acknowledge good work done within the department and Barry was thanked for his PowerPoint

The following items were raised following the presentation.

Query: Cllr Colm Carthy (Chair) asked why 127 properties were completed in 2025 but only 101 recouped?

Response: The MCC allocation for 2025 was 101 properties. The Department encourages Local Authorities to deliver more upgrade works were possible and those that deliver more can get an increased allocation. This increase allocation is a redistribution of funding from LA's who fail to meet their allocation. In 2025 there was no increased allocation above the 101 properties given to Monaghan County Council. An additional 26 properties completed in 2025 were funded in claim 1 in 2026. The Department in turn provided an increased allocation for 2026 to cover these properties.

Query: Cllr Colm Carthy (Chair). Is it okay that Monaghan County Council is working so closely with a single energy provider for MEEP?

Response: EnergyCloud, the lead partner from MEEP, is a charity. There is no financial gain for any stakeholders involved. LA tenants benefit from free hot water during times of excess wind energy. GMB highlighted that all energy providers are signed up to provide energy through this charity and tenants do not need to change energy provider to avail of this.

Query: Cllr PJ O'Hanlon commented on the good work being done and welcome the roll out of MEEP to a further 180 properties for 2027.

Response: BS clarified that the number of 180 was an ambitious target for the Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programme (EERP) and not the target for MEEP. The target of 180 for the EERP in 2027 is subject to approval. funding and increased allocation from the Department for Housing. MEEP is initially a pilot project with a target of 73 properties for 2026 but subject to uptake and review has to potential to be rolled out to further properties that do not qualify for the EERP.

Query: It is noted that the work is all being completed by local contractors, are you finding any issues with the contractors or any issues getting contractors to quote for works.

Response: There are no issues with the local contractors. It has been found that as the programme gains momentum, there is greater interest from contractors in becoming involved, which is good.

Query: Have any tenants completely refused the work?

Response: A small number of tenants have refused the upgrade works but these tenants remain on the programme. It has been found that those who initially refuse the works often come back looking for the upgrade works to be completed when they see the work completed at their neighbour's home. Monaghan County Council often finds it is reluctance to change which is the greatest hurdle to the works. Once those that refuse the work gain more knowledge and learn from the experience of their neighbours they embrace the change. Through sharing the knowledge and positive experiences of those who have received upgraded works it is hoped this will create greater uptake among private and LA owned homes.

Query: In Monaghan we have experienced power outages during storms which are not notified, what do tenants do when they are high and dry without power.

Response: homes that receive upgrade works are assessed to ensure they have insulation values which meet the requirements for a heat pump. These homes are better insulated and retain heat for longer. The heat pumps have built in memory that ensures when power is restored, they automatically start working again. Gary McBride highlighted that not only do these homes retain heat better in the winter but during the summer months they remain cooler due to more controlled temperatures.
It was highlighted that there is a miss conception that those who have other heating sources do not experience the same issues when the power is off. It was highlighted that oil cannot be used during power outages and that open fires and stoves should not be lit as these often have back boilers which need circulating pumps to work correctly. It was highlighted that it is unsafe to light an open fire or stove with a back boiler during times of power outage.

Query; There are several estates in Monaghan where poverty is an issue. How are properties being selected? These areas also have poor air quality due to incorrect burning.

Response: Under the Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programme properties are selected in order of priority dictated by the Building Energy Rating with properties with the poorest Building Energy Rating being target first. The programme remains flexible to target upgrading works by estate to avail of economies of scale and to concentrate resources in a localised area.

The programme is continually evolving, and these areas of poverty will be included in the programme.

It is acknowledged that Energy upgrade works result in improved air quality within estates but also have significant benefits for indoor air quality and the overall safety for occupants by removing the risks associated with chimney fires, carbon monoxide poisoning etc.

Query: What money has been spent and what has been recouped under the Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programme.

Response: Barry Sweeney did not have the exact figure to hand but will forward this information.

Olga advised that the process around ICR (Internal Capital Receipts Fund) and selling stock and ICR fund is getting depleted and will need addressed as this cannot continue to long term.

Other Items for Discussion

A brief discussion took place regarding availability of affordable rental home. Cllr Paul Gibbons stated there were 1200 applicants chasing 24 units in Co. Louth recently showing the level of demand.

Chairperson, Cllr Carthy thanked everyone for their attendance and participation. This concluded the business of the meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for 3rd December at 11am – 1pm in Peace Campus.