

Housing for All – Summary

Minister Darragh O'Brien this week launched the *Housing for All* report, focused on addressing the housing crisis in Ireland, including a commitment to invest €20bn in building 160,000 homes over the next five years. Housing For All includes the highest ever level of Government investment in building social and affordable housing, underpinned by €4 billion in guaranteed State funding annually for the next five years. Housing For All promises to deliver 300,000 new homes by 2030; including 90,000 social homes, 36,000 affordable and 18,000 cost rental as well as 156,000 from the private market. Developers will have to contribute more to social and affordable housing - from 10% to 20% in the increased value of zoned residential developments.

Pathway 2 specifically addresses eradicating homelessness, increasing social housing delivery and supporting social inclusion. Most notably the government has proposed to address the shortfall in housing options for older adults wishing to rightsize. The mortgage to rent scheme is amended to add flexibility in terms of bedroom numbers for borrowers aged 65 and over or where the borrower or one of the joint borrowers or dependents has a disability and the property has had to be adapted to their needs, or the property is specifically suitable to their need without adaptations.

The Government have committed to ensuring older people are supported to stay in their homes and communities for as long as possible, fulfilling the Programme for Government vision of an age friendly Ireland in which older people can live long and healthy lives, participate in their communities and have a range of housing options and health supports to make this possible. An additional focus specifically on delivery of housing appropriately sized and located, for older people is being proposed, drawing on a GIS mapping tool being designed and working with the existing network of Age Friendly Technical Advisors. The needs of older adults will now be included in Local Authority Housing Strategies; the new HNDA Framework, published in April 2021, specifically requires consideration of the housing needs of older people.

Housing for older people in line with Age Friendly and Universal Design principles is a key action outlined in this report. The Age Friendly Homes website, provides a central hub for resources, guidance and information on the provision of homes for older people – from Local Authorities and AHBs to architects, other construction professionals and the wider public. This website will be further developed to encourage those involved in the provision of homes for older people to think more closely about the needs of our citizens as we grow older. Among the options for older adults proposed, possibilities of adapting homes in versatile ways to suit future needs, while also supporting efficient use of existing stock across the State will be piloted. These innovative forms of housing redesign and re-organisation not only provide financial benefits but can also provide a sense of security and community for older homeowners.

The Housing Options for Our Ageing Population Policy statement is soon to reach its conclusion and the Government have committed to working with all of the stakeholders, particularly the Department of Health and the Age Friendly Ireland Shared Service, to

develop a new co-operation and coordination framework. This will take place at a national and local level, and implement Housing Options for Our Ageing Population actions.

In summary, the government has committed to the following in relation to housing needs of older adults:

- Continue to support the development of the Age Friendly Homes portal and website, which promotes awareness of age friendly housing
- Local Authority Housing Delivery Action Plans will set out how dedicated social housing provision appropriate to the needs of older people will be delivered matching the scale and extent of housing need for older people identified
- Local Authorities will consider the housing needs of older people through the Housing Need and Demand Assessment Framework and feed that into their Housing Strategies as part of their Development Plan process
- Review the range of housing grants for the suitable adaptation of existing housing
- Continue delivery of the Age Friendly housing and public realm training modules to cross sectoral stakeholders to promote greater awareness and foster knowledge transfer across the sector
- Support pilots of innovative forms of housing redesign/reorganisation to deliver additional rental accommodation supply along with support for older homeowners
- Implement the actions under the Housing Options for our Ageing Population Policy Statement, having regard to the Reports of the National Implementation Group
- Amend the Nursing Home Support Scheme Act 2009 to remove disincentives against the rental of vacant properties by participants in the Fair Deal scheme in a way that is targeted, equitable, evidence-based and provides appropriate safeguards for vulnerable older people