

Briefing: Delivering Homes, Building Communities 2025-2030: Putting local government back at the heart of building Ireland's communities?

Published: 13 November, 2025



Author: Seán Ó'Riordáin, LGIU Ireland Commissioner

The much-awaited new national policy on addressing the challenges of delivering homes across Ireland has finally been published. In the following briefing, we provide a broad overview of the action plan and its immediate relevance to the local government sector in Ireland. This briefing will be of interest to readers in Ireland but also, given the general challenges on housing across the OECD, to readers in other jurisdictions.

The briefing indicates a hugely challenging set of actions, not just for local councils but also those in the approved housing sector, including the State Agencies, such as the Housing Finance Agency, the Housing Agency and the Land Development Agency, bodies like Uisce Éireann, among others, and, of course, the national authorities. It contains many proposals from delivering an effective doubling of the current annual output housing units to 2030, and developments in infrastructure, to advancing planning for housing over the long-term, and dealing with the State's changing demographics. In some ways, there is enough that is new relative to the outgoing policy, 'Housing for All', but there is a critical difference in the level of ambition to deliver new homes over the next five years. This is alongside a re-commitment to housing as the priority of the current government. It is hoped that the new policy will begin to turn around the delivery of badly needed accommodation for many individuals, families and communities across the Republic. Whether this will actually be the case is, of course, something that can only be answered over the five years; however, to say that the Government is starting from a very challenging position would be something of an understatement.

[Read Full Briefing Here](#)

Briefing in full

Introduction

The Plan is built around two key pillars: Activation of delivery by removing barriers to housing delivery to homes and enabling access to housing in its various forms.

Pillar 1 Activating Supply

Pillar 1 focuses on activating the supply of 300,000 homes. It reflects an all-of-Government approach to achieve this ambitious goal. Government has developed a suite of actions to activate land, provide housing-related infrastructure, secure investment, address viability, increase skills in the residential construction sector and work towards ending dereliction and vacancy.



Pillar 2 Supporting People

Pillar 2 details how Government will support people. It sets out a series of key actions that work towards ending homelessness, support affordability and address the housing needs of people as they progress through life. In partnership with local authorities, the Land Development Agency and Approved Housing Bodies, the Plan will address the needs of the most vulnerable in our communities, make buying and renting homes more affordable and support the development of villages, towns and cities across the country.



Source: Government of Ireland

The Plan has eight specific priorities:

1. To activate the supply of 300,000 homes, by ensuring a strong pipeline of zoned and serviced land is available.
2. Create the conditions to attract the required investment.
3. Increase skills and support the adoption of Modern Methods of Construction in the residential construction sector.
4. Work towards ending dereliction and vacancy.
5. Focus on ending homelessness, delivering homes for older people and supporting social inclusion.
6. Deliver an average of 12,000 new social homes every year over the lifetime of the Plan.
7. Promote affordable homeownership, protect renters and make buying and renting homes more affordable.
8. Invest in the built environment of towns, villages and cities across the country to enhance community well-being.

Within this context, it sets out a series of overriding principles that include:

	Affirms that housing is the number one priority for all arms of Government, including local government.
	Recognises the need to ensure access for everybody to good quality, affordable and secure housing within vibrant communities, suitable to individual needs as they move through their life.
	Affirms that homelessness is unacceptable and accepts that the solution lies in supplying more homes and supports to tackle its root causes.
	Recognises that promoting homeownership is a key objective and pledges to provide targeted homeownership supports.
	Commits to building unprecedented levels of social homes and prioritising those who need the most help.
	Believes that homes should not be allowed to lie empty and derelict while housing need is so critical.
	Commits to the highest ever investment of the State's resources towards both building more homes and building more infrastructure to support the development of those homes.
	Will work with Local Authorities, the Land Development Agency, Approved Housing Bodies and the private sector to drive delivery.
	Understands that a stable domestic policy environment is crucial to attract the inward investment needed to achieve our supply goals.
	Expects that all people and organisations, whether public or private, will play their part in tackling the housing crisis.

Source: Government of Ireland

It acknowledges the severity of the current housing environment, notwithstanding record levels of public investment in recent years, noting that 24,325 new dwellings were completed in the first nine months of 2025, a 13% increase on the same period in 2024, amid other data that indicates the many efforts made. However, it is also realistic enough to appreciate that such delivery is well behind what is required, setting a target of some 300,000 homes in the five-year period. This, if delivered, would require a ramping up of the construction sector to an unprecedented level, no small ask given the tightness of the current labour market. People would therefore be forgiven for being wary that this level of output could be achieved within the proposed timeframe. Time will tell.

Local government

What is clear from the Plan is the central role of local government, alongside the approved housing bodies (AHBs) and the Land Development Agency (LDA). Each council is to set about preparing a Housing Delivery Action Plan. These plans, aligned to the relevant County and City Development Plans as well as the new Action Plan, are to bridge delivery between local need, which is set out in each Council's Housing Needs and Demand Assessment Framework, and the meeting of such demand through increased new-build social housing, starter home provision and having a mix of homes that responds to local need and priorities, including homelessness. In addition, local councils will work even more closely with the AHBs and LDA, with expanded roles also envisaged for both platforms alongside the local councils. Local councils will also provide the planning context for the private sector, which is seen, unsurprisingly, as a critical piece of the delivery jigsaw.

The local councils will be supported by the establishment of the now in place Housing Activation Office and will work alongside critical infrastructure providers to overcome the barriers to housing delivery, most notably Uisce Éireann, but also including ESB Networks, the National Transport Authority, and Transport Infrastructure Ireland. A new €1bn Infrastructure Investment Fund will help to de-risk the development of sites in towns and cities to maximise their potential opportunities.

In addition, implementation of the Planning and Development Act 2024 will be advanced while the alignment of key planning policies across the local to national arena will continue to be driven with the support of the Office of the Planning Regulator. A commitment to addressing the impact of judicial review, which for many has bedevilled housing delivery and undermined infrastructure in recent years, is also set out in the Plan. Funding from the government will be prioritised for those local councils advancing proposals for urban development zones, with a new Urban Communities Task Force involving local councils being advanced. Reform of the CPO process is also highlighted in the Plan.

The priorities set out in the Plan to support housing delivery include:

Activating Land, Delivering Infrastructure

Priority:		
Ensure that a strong pipeline of zoned and serviced land is available to support the delivery of 300,000 homes.		
No.	Action	Owner
1.1	Invest record levels of funding to support housing, including €35.9 billion in Exchequer funding for the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and €4.5 billion non-Voted capital for UÉ.	DHLGH, UÉ
1.2	Accelerate the delivery of more new homes by: • deploying the Housing Activation Office to address barriers to the delivery of vital public infrastructure projects; • creating a Housing Infrastructure Investment Fund, providing €1 billion over the next five years to remove delivery blockages and delays in housing delivery; and • open a coordinated programme of public infrastructure investment and facilitate regular structured engagement with industry representative bodies.	DHLGH
1.3	The Housing Activation Office will work with local authorities, to establish Housing Activation Steering Groups, which will identify infrastructural barriers and drive solutions.	DHLGH, LAs
1.4	Zone the amount of land required to facilitate the delivery of 300,000 homes by 2030, in line with the <i>National Planning Framework</i> .	DHLGH, LAs
1.5	Create a regularly updated, public audit of zoned, serviced, and unzoned land, informed by a national land audit, to help plan for 300,000 homes by the end of 2030.	DHLGH
1.6	Have a preferred supplier in place to commence work on a new operating system, to drive efficiencies and reduce application processing times for registration.	TÉ
1.7	Implement the Planning and Development Act 2024 to expedite decision making timelines in housing development.	DHLGH
1.8	Introduce a scale of fees for environmental legal costs, as a matter of priority, as provided for under the Planning and Development Act 2024.	DCEE
1.9	Accelerate the delivery of new urban communities, building on the successes in Clonburris and Adamstown.	DHLGH
1.10	Bring forward measures to improve the infrastructure-financing model, supporting the delivery of more homes and benefits to the wider community, including reviewing development contribution arrangements.	DHLGH
1.11	Government will bring forward measures for developers to deliver new standalone wastewater treatment plants to bolster the service provided by UÉ to support increased levels of housing.	UÉ, DHLGH
1.12	Implement the Residential Zoned Land Tax to penalise land hoarding and ensure zoned and serviced land is developed.	DHLGH, DFIN, LAs, Revenue
1.13	Review the role and functions of the Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR).	DHLGH
1.14	Prioritise the work of the Accelerating Infrastructure Taskforce to ensure that barriers to the delivery of infrastructure are addressed and the provision of infrastructure accelerated.	DPER

Source: Government of Ireland

To make this happen, some €40.4bn has been allocated to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage for the period 2026 to 2030 to support housing and critical infrastructure.

Facilitating Investment, Addressing Viability

Priority: Create the conditions to attract the investment required to support the delivery of 300,000 homes		
No.	Action	Owner
2.1	Invest record levels of Exchequer funding to support the delivery of 300,000 homes, including almost €20 billion for new social and affordable housing delivery.	DHLGH
2.2	Further capitalise the Land Development Agency with an additional €2.5 billion to support the delivery of social and affordable homes.	DFIN, DPER, DHLGH
2.3	Provide an exemption from corporation tax for cost rental homes to support viability.	DFIN
2.4	Deliver a new €400 million equity risk capital investment programme for homebuilding over the next three years, seeking to partner with national banks to expand equity funding available, including investment in Small to Medium Enterprise homebuilders.	DFIN, ISIF
2.5	Reduce the VAT rate on apartments, reducing it to 9% from 13.5% to unlock apartment development.	DFIN
2.6	Introduce an enhanced corporation tax deduction to incentivise apartment construction.	DFIN
2.7	Ensure Home Building Finance Ireland has the capacity and flexibility to respond to funding gaps and support increased housing delivery.	DFIN
2.8	Increase the borrowing capacity of the Housing Finance Agency to the levels required, in line with housing delivery projections and overall levels of Government borrowing for it to fulfil its significant role in supporting the delivery of new social, affordable and student homes.	DFIN, DPER, DHLGH
2.9	Attract domestic and international capital for housing development by engagement at international fora, trade engagements and dedicated national events.	DHLGH
2.10	Improve viability across the public and private sectors by tackling baseline costs in housing development and systematically examining wider input costs to enable further reductions and efficiencies.	DHLGH
2.11	Optimise existing Government schemes, including the Croí Cónaithe (Cities) Scheme and the Secure Tenancy Affordable Rental (STAR) Investment Scheme to support apartment delivery.	DHLGH

Source: Government of Ireland

Modern housing construction methods through local government

Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) regularly feature as a critical response across Europe to the challenge of delivering new homes in volume. The construction sector in Ireland has been criticised in the past for being slow to adapt such methods, but in fairness, this slowness, at least in part, can be due at times to a general resistance to being innovative on the part of the National Government when it comes to the social housing programme. This is to change, with the Plan acknowledging efforts by local councils to advance such methods. The Plan clearly states that the government will support the use of MMC to advance quicker and greater delivery of new homes, citing, among other examples, “Limerick City and County Council and the Mayor’s Office, will be supported to advance the initial phase of their SMART (Short-term Modular Affordable Rental Transition) Modular Housing Project.” It also highlights the role of Wexford County Council in using 3D volumetric systems.

Consequently, a considerable enhancement of skills development and a refocusing of funding platforms to allow for greater use of MMC is foreseen.

Increasing Skills, Adopting Modern Methods of Construction

Priority: Increase skills and support the adoption of Modern Methods of Construction in the residential construction sector		
No.	Action	Owner
3.1	Use Modern Methods of Construction in at least 25% of all new social and affordable homes built during the lifetime of the Plan.	DHLGH
3.2	Increase the use of 3D volumetric systems by providing funding and support for pathfinder projects in Limerick (SMART Homes) and Wexford (3D volumetric units) to create demand for these innovative systems.	DHLGH
3.3	Optimise the process towards NSAI Agrément Certification by: • promoting the NSAI Agrément Toolkit with industry; and • undertaking a root cause analysis to identify constraints on the certification process.	DETE, DHLGH
3.4	Scope the potential for the development of an Irish Standard for Light Gauge Steel.	DETE, DHLGH, NSAI
3.5	Promote opportunities for MMC manufacturers to use ISIF backed funds to support new and existing factories.	DFIN, ISIF
3.6	To meet the growing demand for construction and MMC skills: • renew the Action Plan to Promote Careers in Construction; • launch a new 5-year Action Plan for Apprenticeships (2026-2030); and • continue to invest in The National Construction Training Campus.	DFHERIS, DHLGH
3.7	Work with partners to deliver on the National Framework for Meeting Priority Construction Workforce Needs.	DFHERIS
3.8	Continue to expand MMC training for the construction sector	DFHERIS
3.9	To encourage and support the development of the Small and Medium Enterprise homebuilder sector, the Land Development Agency will actively seek to engage the sector in the roll out of its LDA Regional programme of work.	DHLGH
3.10	Double overall investment under Enterprise Ireland's Built to Innovate programme, to drive adoption of efficient construction practices and the use of MMC.	DETE, EI
3.11	Introduce a tailored training and mentorship programme on Strategic Financial Leadership for residential construction enterprise supply-chain clients.	DETE, EI, DFIN

Source: Government of Ireland

Compulsory Purchase Order and Derelict Sites

As acknowledged above, the CPO process has been a barrier to speedy but necessary land acquisition, while targeting dereliction historically was a responsibility where the approach of local councils varied. That has changed in recent years with the advance towards a programme approach for compulsory acquisition, while the introduction of derelict site levies has helped reduce the plague of dereliction across Ireland. Nonetheless, much remains to be done, and the Plan acknowledges this to be the case.

A new Derelict Property Tax (DPT), which will replace the Derelict Sites Levy, with the responsibility falling to local councils to identify, on a more proactive basis, sites that would fall under the new property tax. The Plan envisages that "preliminary registers of derelict properties are to be published in 2027, with the tax to be implemented as soon as possible thereafter. In the intervening period, local authorities will increase efforts to collect unpaid levies due to the State. The Plan also envisages a renewed focus of the Urban Regeneration Fund on dereliction while the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant will be "improved and expanded to

bring more vacant and derelict properties into use as homes. This will include additional grant support towards the refurbishment and conversion of 'above the shop' vacant floors, for use as homes. In recognition of the additional works involved, a package of up to €140,000 will be made available for these properties in the centres of cities, towns and villages. This will include up to €5,000 towards an Expert Advice Grant for those owners who are considering carrying out this work."

The buy and renew, and the repair and lease schemes will be retained, while the Living City Initiative will also be expanded. Vacant Homes Officers will continue their important roles.

Securing Additional Supply, Ending Dereliction & Vacancy

Priority: Increase the supply of additional housing by working towards ending dereliction and vacancy.		
No.	Action	Owner
4.1	A new derelict property tax will be introduced, administered and collected by the Revenue Commissioners.	DFIN, Revenue, LAs, DHLGH
4.2	Local authorities will increase the number of sites on the Derelict Sites Registers and increase the enforcement and collection of unpaid levies.	LAs
4.3	An aggregated digital, national Derelict Sites Register will be published annually including mapping and standardised details for each individual site registered by the local authorities.	DHLGH, LAs
4.4	Where owners of vacant or derelict properties fail to engage with local authorities, local authorities will use compulsory acquisition powers to buy these properties, supported by available funding streams including the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund.	LAs
4.5	20,000 homes will be brought back into use, supported via the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant.	DHLGH, LAs
4.6	Improve, extend and expand the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant by: - introducing an 'Above the Shop' top up Grant in line with the Programme for Government commitment and an Expert Advice Grant to support bringing vacant shop spaces into use as homes; and - exploring an extension of the 'Above the Shop' top up Grant for such properties that are owned by small (micro) companies.	DHLGH
4.7	To support urban regeneration, strengthen the Living City Initiative by including residential properties built before 1975, extending the initiative to 2030, and expanding it to include the NPF Regional Centre towns of Athlone, Drogheda, Dundalk, Letterkenny and Sligo.	DFIN
4.8	Increase the number of development types that are exempt from planning permission to enable homeowners to adapt or extend their homes more easily, including attic conversions, subdivisions of existing homes and detached accommodation within the primary dwelling boundary.	DHLGH
4.9	Develop pathfinder projects for an affordable rental version of the Repair and Lease Scheme.	DHLGH

Source: Government of Ireland

Renewed focus on homelessness and older people

Homelessness and older people are two critical aspects of national policy over the past decade, so it is no surprise that these remain a central theme in Pillar 2 of the Plan, which overall addresses the need to support people to access homes wherever they reside.

The Plan indicates that the National Homeless Action Committee (NHAC) will remain in place and will coordinate the Government's response to homelessness with Government Departments, local councils, the Health Service Executive (HSE), and Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) service delivery partners working together to meet the needs of Ireland's homeless. There is to be a focus on ending family and child homelessness, with funding of €100m allocated in 2026 to support this work.

The Plan notes that "fleeing domestic violence continues to be one of the reasons for family presentations to homeless service." As a result, the Plan will require that local councils "will ensure that the full suite of social housing supports including the Housing Assistance Payment are made available to that victim to enable them to meet their accommodation needs immediately on relocating. Every local authority allocation scheme should take account of the particular circumstances of victims of domestic violence and facilitate the recognition of those circumstances in their prioritisation for housing, including where victims have previously spent a period on another social housing waiting list."

The government has also committed to adopt a "...dedicated cross Departmental and agency led Child and Family Homelessness Action Plan in relation to all aspects of child and family homelessness."

A homelessness prevention framework is also to be put in place. The question of youth homelessness will also be focused upon and the Housing Agency will expand its role in the delivery of some 2000 tenancies under the Housing First Programme. The Housing Act of 1988 will be amended to strengthen the statutory role of local councils in regard to homelessness, while local council reporting on homelessness in its various manifestations will also be enhanced.

Ireland's population is getting older and local councils have been at the heart of making Ireland an age friendly country. A clear recommitment to this role is set out in the Plan, including dedicated older people social housing annual targets in each local authority Housing Delivery Action Plan. Voluntary rightsizing will be supported, and increased delivery of more suitable homes through each council's housing strategy will be delivered, along with increased private sector provision of older people's housing. Implementation of the revised Housing Adaptation Grant for Older and Disabled People Scheme will advance. Progress in the implementation of the recommendations of the Traveller Accommodation Expert Review report is also committed to by the government.

Priority:

Work towards ending homelessness and provide the housing supports needed for our older people, disabled people and Travellers to achieve long-term secure housing that meets their needs.

No.	Action	Owner
5.1	Provide dedicated capital funding of €100 million in 2026 for the acquisition of second-hand properties to support the exit of families longest in homeless emergency accommodation and the <i>Housing First</i> programme, as the first in a series of measures in a cross-departmental and cross-agency <i>Action Plan to address Child and Family Homelessness</i> .	All of Government
5.2	Work with the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness and the National Homeless Action Committee to meet the commitment of the Lisbon declaration to work towards ending homelessness by 2030.	DHLGH
5.3	Hold dedicated meetings of the relevant Cabinet Committees to oversee the implementation of actions to address homelessness across Government.	D/Taoiseach
5.4	Further enhance reporting in relation to the use of local authority homeless emergency accommodation to allow for an expansion of the information gathered and increased analysis of the reasons driving new homeless presentations and the progress being made to support households to exit emergency accommodation to a tenancy.	DHLGH, LAs
5.5	Maximise the number of exits and preventions from emergency accommodation going to tenancies, through increased tenancy supports and use of all delivery streams including social housing allocations, the Rental Accommodation Scheme and HAP-supported tenancies in the private-rental market.	DHLGH, LAs
5.6	Amend the 1988 Housing Act to: - strengthen the statutory framework within which housing authorities may support households experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness; - ensure that consideration of the best interests of children is included in the decision-making process on accommodation for households experiencing homelessness; and - insert the legal definition of a child into the Act.	DHLGH
5.7	Ensure that sufficient allocations of social housing are being made to reduce long-term family homelessness. Local authority allocation schemes will be reviewed with a focus on the number of allocations being made to families in emergency accommodation.	DHLGH, LAs
5.8	Mainstream key actions of the <i>Youth Homelessness Strategy</i> across all Departments and agencies, including Supported Housing for Youth and Shared Accommodation Scheme, with work to monitor and drive action on youth homelessness to be overseen by a sub-group of the National Homeless Action Committee.	DHLGH
5.9	Expand the <i>Housing First</i> programme by over 50% to 2,000 tenancies to support rough sleepers and long-term users of emergency accommodation with secure housing and health supports.	DoH, DHLGH, LAs, HSE Health Regions

No.	Action	Owner
5.10	Provide increased health support to households experiencing homelessness through the implementation of the <i>HSE National Strategic Plan to Improve the Health of People Experiencing Homelessness</i> .	DoH
5.11	The Department of Health and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage will implement an agreed funding approach for supported homeless accommodation which provides support to all those that need it.	DoH, DHLGH, HSE Health Regions, LAs
5.12	Implement a whole-of-Government <i>National Homelessness Prevention Framework</i> .	All of Government
5.13	Increase the capital funding available to local authorities and Approved Housing Bodies to provide and maintain dedicated homeless emergency accommodation.	DHLGH
5.14	Progress an <i>Action Plan</i> on delivering housing for older people through: - increased delivery of social housing for older people; - increased delivery of more suitable homes and choice for older people in private housing; and - increased choice for older people to support voluntary rightsizing.	DHLGH, HA, AHBs, LAs, AFI, DoH
5.15	Implement the <i>National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022-2027</i> in conjunction with housing actions identified in the new <i>National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People 2025 - 2030</i> .	DHLGH, DoH, DCDE, HA, LAs, AHBs, HSE
5.16	Invest significantly increased levels of funding in the enhanced Housing Adaptation Grant for Older and Disabled People Scheme, supported by secured funding of €130 million in 2026.	DHLGH
5.17	Continue investment in high quality Traveller-specific accommodation, with €34 million investment in 2026.	DHLGH

Funding

Unlike other European countries, including the United Kingdom, funding is the least of the problems in Ireland. As the Plan states “ The updated National Development Plan has committed record levels of funding for new social and affordable housing, totalling almost €20 billion. This will help facilitate the delivery of an additional 72,000 social homes by 2030.” That noted, the critical role of the Housing Finance Agency is acknowledged with a commitment to ensure it continues to have access to financing within the usual Government Constraints on borrowing. The government is also committed to strengthening “engagement with the wider financial sector and funding sources to explore additional financing opportunities for social housing where such alternative sources of finance provide value-for-money and can be accommodated within national debt and State balance sheet requirements.”

New build teams are being put in place with the support of government. These are seen as critical to the delivery of social and affordable new builds and are to be ring-fenced to ensure they focus on meeting the commitments in the Plan...A new performance fund will therefore be established in order to incentivise local authorities to not just meet but exceed their annual ‘own build’ social housing targets. Where local authorities exceed annual ‘own build’ social housing targets they will receive additional discretionary funding for the delivery of community and placemaking initiatives and projects, with an important role for elected members in how this funding is spent.”

75% of all social housing new-build projects currently completed by local authorities have 20 homes or less. This is seen as a barrier to advancing greater delivery. In what may well welcome, a new ‘single stage approval’ process for all new build social housing projects up to a value of €200m, has been approved by Government. It will, it is envisaged (but the details of the process are yet to be made available), ease the administrative and often unnecessary burdens on local councils to deliver projects at pace. Land acquisition funding is also to be increased to €500m. The LDA will also have a greater scope to work with local councils in a greater number of towns.

Approved Housing Bodies

The Approved Housing Bodies (AHB) Sector, which has provided some 50% of new social housing delivery in recent years, is naturally seen as a significant complement to local authority delivery. Both sectors work closely together. The Plan refers to a “... comprehensive policy development reform roadmap to enhance the positive impact of AHBs, address sectoral challenges and support the transformation towards a more resilient, effective and efficient sector. The recommendations are based on extensive sectoral engagement, analysis and benchmarking of best practice in peer jurisdictions.”

As a consequence, the Plan envisages a significant restructuring of the Sector through mergers of existing AHBs. Associated with this “...there will be there will be a focus on strengthening the capabilities and capacity of the HFA and the Approved Housing Body Regulatory Authority, to ensure robust oversight and governance procedures are in place, noting the growth in scale and risk profile of the AHB sector.”

A revamped contractor-led renewal programme focused on tackling dereliction and vacancy with the AHBs is also envisaged, while local authority Housing Delivery Action Plans are expected to provide a detailed picture of the quantum, type, size and location of social homes to be delivered by local authorities and AHBs.

Voids and social housing stock maintenance

There is no mention in the Plan to generally increase support for dealing with voids other than to say that additional resources can be made available. This might be seen as a disappointment. Nonetheless, the government clearly states in the Plan that:

- A new 'Voids' funding programme that will incentivise lower vacancy rates and faster turnaround times for vacant local authority stock will be put in place.
- It will continue to support the energy retrofit programme for local authority owned social housing and meet the Government commitment to deliver 36,500 B2 retrofits of local authority stock within the lifetime of the Plan.
- It will continue to support the disabled and older person grants for local authority owned stock.
- It will introduce a new nationwide regeneration/ remedial works programme; and complete stock condition surveys on the local authority owned social housing stock within the lifetime of the Plan.

It may be that further detail on the level of government support will become clearer through this initiative.

Maintaining support for HAP and the need to sustain a second-hand housing acquisition programme is set out along with a comprehensive review of the differential rents scheme.

Priority:		
Deliver an average of 12,000 new social homes per annum over the lifetime of the plan.		
No.	Action	Owner
6.1	Support additional social housing delivery by: - streamlining processes and introducing a new single stage approval for all social housing projects where the project value is less than €200m; - mandating the use of standard house layouts and specifications as part of the new approval process; - supporting and facilitating the use of Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) through a standardised design approach; - embedding the use of a Design and Build contract approach in all local authorities and the AHB sector in order to expedite the delivery of social housing; - introducing a revamped renewal programme tackling dereliction and vacancy in social housing; and - expanding and streamlining the operation of the Land Acquisition Fund.	DHILGH, LAAs, AHBs, LDA
6.2	Support local authorities by: - financially supporting fully resourced and ring fenced housing delivery teams in each authority focused exclusively on new build social and affordable housing projects; - financially incentivising local authorities to exceed their annual 'own build' social housing targets through the awarding of additional discretionary funding for community and placemaking initiatives and projects to those local authorities who exceed such targets; and - publishing quarterly and annual performance tables for new build output versus target per local authority thereby ensuring transparency and accountability.	DHILGH LAAs
6.3	Support Approved Housing Bodies by initiating a programme of priority reforms as detailed in the Approved Housing Body Strategic Forum Report, that will deliver sectoral scale, resilience, efficiencies and long-term sustainability.	DHILGH AHBs
6.4	Ensure the right mix of social homes is delivered by local authorities, AHBs and the LDA to meet the specific needs identified through a strengthened Housing Delivery Action Plan approach for the period 2025 – 2030 and through the use of 'Call for Proposals' as required.	DHILGH, LAAs, AHBs, LDA

No.	Action	Owner
6.5	Reduce vacancy levels and turnaround times on vacant local authority social housing stock and ensure the availability of good quality social homes through the transition to a 'planned maintenance' approach underpinned by: - a revamped 'Voids' programme which incentivises quick turnaround of casual vacancies and reduced vacancy levels; - a revised regeneration/remedial works programme which is available nationwide; - a ramping up of expenditure on the local authority energy efficiency programme to ensure the Government commitment to deliver 36,500 LA retrofits to B2 standard is achieved in the lifetime of the Plan; - increased support for local authority stock condition surveys to inform future work programmes under the planned maintenance approach; and - increased support for the disabled and older persons grants for local authority owned stock.	DHLGH LAs
6.6	Maintain a targeted Social Housing Second Hand Acquisitions Programme to support those households in the most precarious housing situations.	DHLGH, LAs AHBs
6.7	Review rents paid by local authority and AHB social housing tenants with a view to introducing a national scheme that provides a consistent and equitable system of rents and protects vulnerable households.	DHLGH, LAs AHBs
6.8	Update the Code of Practice for local authority nominations to AHBs to: - expedite the nomination process to avoid unnecessary vacancies in social housing; - clarify information sharing responsibilities across agencies necessary to enhance local authority and AHBs tenancy sustainment support and anti-social behaviour management capacity in social housing developments; - require that local authority and AHB tenants are not precluded from living with domestic pets; and - put in place more robust oversight and reporting arrangements to ensure that the Code is implemented consistently across all local authorities and AHBs.	DHLGH
6.9	Publish annual performance data for each local authority.	DHLGH
6.10	Review the existing HAP rent limits to ensure sufficient support under the HAP scheme to assist eligible households in accessing accommodation in the private rental sector	DHLGH LAs
6.11	Extend the HAP Landlord Guarantee to support the retention of tenancies in the scheme and assist tenants to remain in their homes.	DHLGH LAs
6.12	Implement a pathfinder project to inform the policy, legislative and financial reforms needed to allow for due consideration to be given to the Housing Commission recommendation to merge social and cost rental housing over time to form a single affordable rental sector, based on the principle of cost recovery.	DHLGH

Source: Government of Ireland

Increasing affordable homeownership, protecting renters

Affordability has been at the heart of much discussion on housing, not just in Ireland but generally across the OECD. So, it is no surprise that it should feature prominently in the Action Plan. An enhanced Starter Homes Programme is flagged as a significant response under the Plan, with some 15,000 Starter Homes supports to be provided annually to 2030. Wider standardisation, more use of Modern Methods of Construction and revisions to the planning process are seen as providing a platform for enhanced accessibility to affordable and private housing. The Plan also indicates that a Starter Home Purchase Scheme will see increased affordable housing delivered by local authorities and the LDA, and '...will continue to support the wider availability of cost rental homes, as recommended by the Housing Commission and supported by the Programme for Government.'

Stability in the rental sector generally is also seen as a critical aspect of the overall policy response. New legislation is to be enacted (as a priority for the Oireachtas) to further amend rent controls to support affordability, while also attracting new

investment in the rental market. A big ask, which no doubt will be critical in seeking to reduce levels of rent which have spiralled out of control outside of the social housing and HAP sectors. Rent tax credit provision is to be expanded over the life of the Plan.

A new student accommodation strategy to 2035 is to be published shortly. This specific strategy will look to deliver additional housing for students as the tertiary sector further opens access and sees an increase in participation. Given the growth envisaged, it will be critical to grow the supply of student accommodation without further impacting the private rental market across the country.

The role of the Residential Tenancies Board is to be strengthened with the introduction of the Short-term Letting and Tourism Bill. This Bill is expected to underpin new regulatory controls, including the establishment of a register for all Short-term Lettings in Ireland. Local councils will be supported to "...meet their annual target of inspecting 25% of the private rented tenancies in their area, encourage compliance and raise awareness of the rental standards and inspection regime with both landlords and tenants."

Increasing Affordable Homeownership, Protecting Renters

Priority:		
Promote affordable homeownership, protect renters and make buying and renting homes more affordable.		
No.	Action	Owner
7.1	Deliver an average of 15,000 affordable housing supports each year, via the Starter Homes Programme	DHLGH
7.2	Provide the optimum funding support levels to secure the more widespread availability of starter apartment homes for purchase.	DHLGH
7.3	Expand the role and remit of the Land Development Agency to support increased delivery of Starter Homes.	DHLGH, LDA
7.4	Provide greater access to more affordable tenancies by accelerating the growth of the cost rental sector, streamline funding support schemes for cost rental delivery and explore increasing debt ceiling levels for local authority borrowing.	DHLGH, DFIN
7.5	In line with the Programme for Government, work with local authorities to bring forward Affordable Housing Fund supported, affordable purchase schemes, in local authority areas which do not have projects in place.	DHLGH, LAs
7.6	Engage with the pillar banks and the First Home Scheme to develop a support for first-time buyers seeking to purchase and renovate derelict or long-term vacant properties and continue to examine a broader expansion of the scheme to second-hand homes more widely.	DHLGH
7.7	To support homeownership, retain and revise the Help to Buy Scheme and extend the scheme to 2030.	DFIN, Revenue
7.8	To support homeownership engage with the pillar banks to extend the First Home Scheme to 2030.	DHLGH
7.9	Develop standardised designs and specifications for Starter Homes to support cost efficiency by delivery partners, driving lower prices and improved value for money.	DHLGH
7.10	Review the house price and income thresholds of the Local Authority Home Loan to ensure it remains an accessible route to homeownership in the current housing market.	DHLGH
7.11	Publish a new Student Accommodation Strategy 2025-2035.	DFHERIS
7.12	Provide rent controls on a national basis to support all tenants and reform the current system of Rent Pressure Zones to promote new investment in the rental market. Introduce legislation to provide stronger protections for tenants, including increased security of tenure.	DHLGH
7.13	Strengthen the regulation of the private rental sector by the Residential Tenancies Board through continued investment in resources, processes and IT systems and publish a rent price register.	DHLGH, RTB
7.14	Enhance the implementation and enforcement of the Residential Tenancies Acts 2004 to 2025 by the RTB by providing any necessary additional resources to minimise dispute resolution timelines and place established timelines on a statutory footing.	DHLGH, RTB
7.15	Following the extension of the Rent Tax Credit progressively increase it in line with Programme for Government commitments.	DFIN
7.16	Introduce increased regulation of the Short-Term Letting sector by: - Introducing a Short Term Letting and Tourism Bill; and - a National Planning Statement will provide guidance for local authorities when deciding on planning applications for short-term lets.	DETE, DHLGH

Source: Government of Ireland

Building communities in our towns, villages and rural areas

As noted earlier in this comprehensive briefing, the regeneration of Ireland's towns, villages and rural areas is highlighted as a priority in the Plan. This will be underpinned with the continued remediation of brownfield sites, strengthened building standards, and further leveraging of the urban and rural regeneration funds. Implementation of the Dublin City Task Force recommendations will continue while the Town Centre First Initiative is to be expanded, along with the roll-out of the THRIVE Programme, which has received extensive coverage in [earlier briefings issued by the LGIU](#). Supports for Ireland Gaeltacht areas and islands are also acknowledged in the Plan, as is the implementation of the revised rural housing guidelines.

The Plan proposes to examine "... the feasibility of Údarás na Gaeltachta, working with Uisce Éireann and local authorities to support building housing for Irish speaking communities."

Investing in Villages, Towns and Cities

Priority: Support the development of Villages, Towns and Cities across the country through investing in the built environment to enhance community well-being		
No.	Action	Owner
8.1	Support small and medium sized builders to develop new mixed tenure communities on serviced sites in towns and villages.	DHLGH
8.2	Establish a Building Standards Agency pending the establishment of a Building Standards Regulatory Authority which will strengthen the oversight role of the State in respect of the design and construction of buildings.	DHLGH
8.3	Support affected communities through the implementation of Defective Concrete Block and Defective Apartment Remediation Schemes.	DHLGH
8.4	Strengthen the operation of management companies under the Multi-unit Developments Act 2011.	DHLGH
8.5	Publish a National Planning Statement relating to rural housing to provide clarity and consistency within the planning system.	DHLGH
8.6	Examine the feasibility of leveraging Údarás na Gaeltachta, working with Uisce Éireann and local authorities, to build housing for Irish speaking communities.	Údarás na Gaeltachta, DHLGH, IAs, UÉ
8.7	Publish a National Planning Statement for housing in Gaeltacht areas.	DHLGH
8.8	Provide the funding needed to advance the Town Centre First Model to provide the amenities needed to ensure a high quality of life for those who live in rural towns.	DHLGH/ DRCDG
8.9	Invest in the development of vibrant and attractive rural places through the delivery of funding under the Rural Development Investment Programme.	DRCDG
8.10	In line with the Programme for Government, all towns with a population over 10,000 will be designated as 'key towns' and Government will ensure towns which fall slightly below the population thresholds are considered for funding applications.	DHLGH
8.11	Establish a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), operating under the auspices of Dublin City Council, to implement the Dublin City Centre Taskforce recommendations and the Roadmap for Delivery.	D/Taoiseach
8.12	As committed to in the Programme for Government, apply the Dublin City Taskforce model to other cities, towns and regions in need of revitalisation, starting with Cork City.	D/Taoiseach

Source: Government of Ireland

A first comment...

A first read of the Plan suggests that there is much in it which was already in the outgoing Housing for All Policy Statement. Being frank, there are very few people who will mourn its demise. Nonetheless, the new Plan does build on significant advances in policy and does reflect a greater level of ambition supported by extraordinary levels of funding. Ireland stands out from other countries in this regard, and it should be acknowledged. The ask is considerable, but necessarily so. As highlighted in previous public documents, most notably the Future Forty Scenario work of the Department of Finance, which was addressed in a [recent briefing from LGIU](#), ambition and funding will be required to meet the legacy of under-provision of the past couple of decades, and the expected increase in population as envisaged in the revised National Planning Framework and National Development Plan.

The reality is that even if the full 300,000 new homes are delivered within the 5-year time frame, there will remain a housing challenge in Ireland simply because of the pace of growth and demographic shifts in the population. Resourcing as a challenge is no longer about cash. That is the least of the problems confronting the government. There is the very real issue of skills gaps and actual construction work, given that when this is rolled out, it will be competing for such skills as the Country retrofits itself, as other construction of scale is required and as other countries compete for those skills as they retrofit and renew their infrastructure.

Another point worth noting is that in the Plan itself, there is limited reference at all to the role of local elected members, with the exception of the Limerick Mayor; this will not go unnoticed, given the work currently underway with the Local Democracy Task Force and recent statements by the Taoiseach.

All that noted, the Plan is now published and needs urgent implementation, and to sum up, it is a Plan wholly dependent upon the local government system, so expect considerable oversight and league tables to be a feature of the next five years for local government.