



**An Roinn Tithíochta,  
Pleanála agus Rialtais Áitiúil**  
Department of Housing,  
Planning and Local Government

# **Annual Report of the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government 2017**

Prepared by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government  
[housing.gov.ie](http://housing.gov.ie)

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An Irish version and an English version of the Annual Report (2017) are available on [www.tithiocht.gov.ie](http://www.tithiocht.gov.ie) and on [www.housing.gov.ie](http://www.housing.gov.ie)

## Secretary General's Statement

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A new Minister, Eoghan Murphy T.D., was appointed to our Department in June 2017 and we became the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, with certain functions in relation to the Community area transferring to the new Department of Rural and Community Development. Following on from these changes and in accordance with the Public Service Management legislation, we published a new Statement of Strategy, setting out a new mission statement and clear high-level goals for each of our six Divisions.



The reconfiguration of the Department was driven primarily by the Government's continuing identification of housing as a top priority and over the course of the year, very significant progress was made in implementing the Government's *Rebuilding Ireland Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness*. Longer-term strategic planning was also high on our agenda, with work continuing on the development of a new National Planning Framework, *Ireland 2040 – Our Plan*.

Reforms in the water sector, including acting on the report of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Future Funding of Domestic Water Services, were also a significant part of our work in 2017. Planning for the future was also a key theme in the local government/electoral areas, with continued work on the reform of local government arrangements in Cork and Galway and new constituencies agreed for the next general election following on from the Constituency Commission's report prepared on foot of the results of Census 2016.

There were also many unanticipated demands placed on our resources during the year, not least in relation to dealing with Ex-Hurricane Ophelia which hit the country in October. The Department's National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management led, with great professionalism, the 'whole of Government' planning for, and response to, this very serious weather event, ably supported by the excellent weather forecasting expertise of our Met Éireann team, with colleagues in the water, homelessness and communications areas all also playing key roles.

I wish to thank our Ministers for their leadership of our work over the course of 2017, all of my colleagues across the organisation for their commitment to the highest possible levels of public service, and all of our agencies, local authorities and other bodies with whom we engage effectively on a daily basis in order to get our important work done on behalf of the people of Ireland.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John McCarthy', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**John McCarthy**  
**Secretary General**

## Who We Are

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### Our Mission

The Department's mission is to support sustainable development, with a particular focus on strategic planning, the efficient delivery of well-planned homes in vibrant communities and the sustainable management of our water resources, and to ensure effective local government.



### Our Strategic Goals

- A. To ensure that planning and building in our regions and communities contributes to sustainable and balanced development;
- B. To provide for a stable, sustainable supply of good quality housing;
- C. To provide a framework for the sustainable management of water resources from source to sea;
- D. To support and enable democratic, responsive and effective local government, effective electoral management and high quality fire services and emergency management;
- E. To serve society through the production and communication of reliable weather and climate information to protect life and property and to further enhance Met Éireann's role as the authoritative voice on meteorology in Ireland.

### Our Values

Our values sit within the wider values and standards frameworks set out in the Civil Service Code of Standards and Behaviour, the Code of Ethics, the Dignity at Work Policy and the Civil Service Renewal Plan. They inform everything that we do in the Department in delivering for the public:

- Integrity and professionalism;
- Consistent high quality performance;
- Openness and transparency;
- Flexibility, responsiveness, innovation and learning;
- Consultation and partnership;
- Commitment to society and citizens; and
- Pursuit of effectiveness, efficiency and value for money.

The work of the Department is carried out through six Divisions – Planning, Land and Housing Market; Social Housing; Water; Local Government; Corporate and Business Support; and Met Éireann. The Local Government Audit Service is also based in the Department.

## Locations

The Department is based in 4 main locations:

- Custom House, Dublin D01 W6X0
- Newtown Road, Wexford Y35 AP90
- Government Offices, Ballina Co. Mayo F26 E8N6
- Met Éireann Headquarters, Glasnevin Hill, Dublin 9 D09 Y921



## Us and our agencies

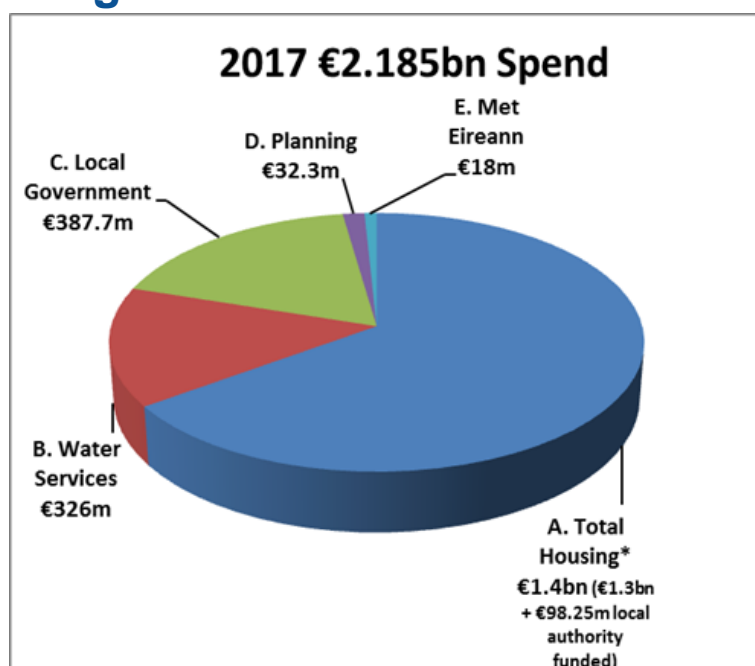
Much of our work is carried out in close co-operation with the 31 local authorities and a number of specific agencies that are charged with regulatory, policy support and implementation functions relating to our areas of activity. Details in relation to our main agencies are summarised in the table overleaf.

Body	Accountable Person (Head of Office)	Governing Legislation <sup>1</sup>
An Bord Pleanála	Dr Mary Kelly	Planning and Development Act 2000
Housing Finance Agency	Mr Barry O'Leary	Housing Finance Agency Act 1981
Housing Sustainable Communities Agency	Mr John O'Connor	Housing and Sustainable Communities Agency (Establishment) Order 2012
Ervia	Mr Mike Quinn	Gas Act 1976
Irish Water	Mr Jerry Grant	Water Services Act 2013
Gas Networks Ireland	Mr Liam O'Sullivan	Gas Regulation Act 2013
Local Government Management Agency	Mr Paul C. Dunne	Local Government Management Agency (Establishment) Orders 2012 & 2013
Ordnance Survey Ireland	Mr Colin Bray	Ordnance Survey Ireland Act 2001
Property Registration Authority	Ms Liz Pope	Registration of Deeds and Title Act 2006
Residential Tenancies Board	Ms Rosalind Carroll	Residential Tenancies Act 2004
Valuation Office	Mr John O'Sullivan	Valuation Acts 2001 and 2015

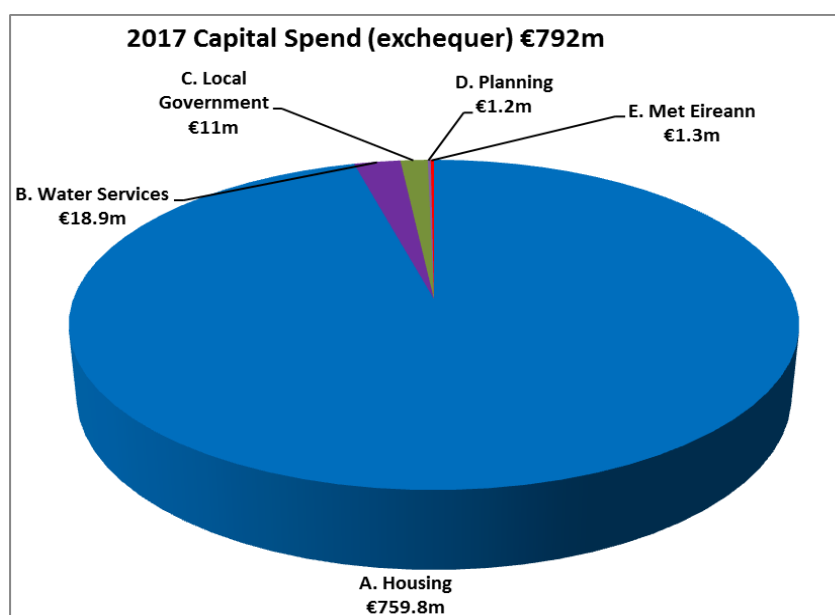
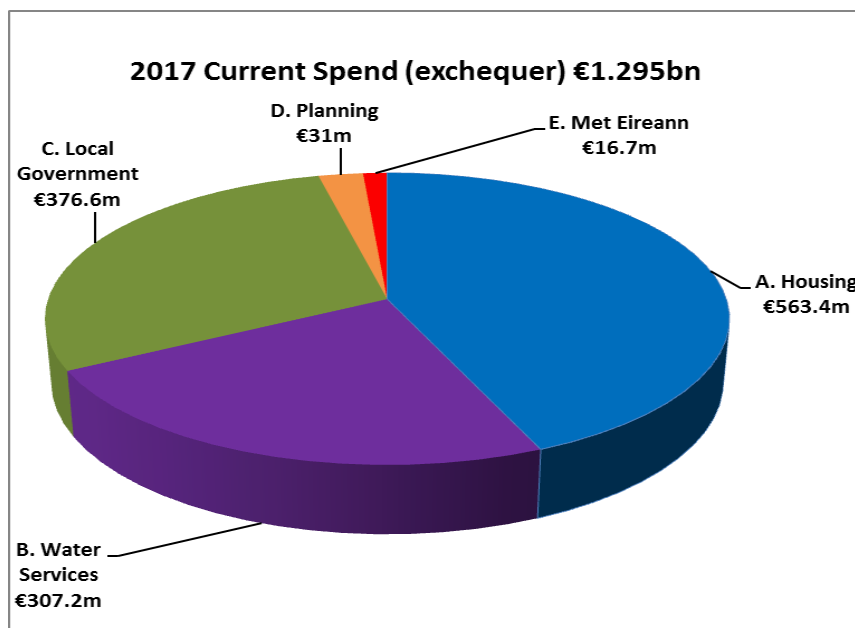
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<sup>1</sup> As amended.

## 2017 Spending

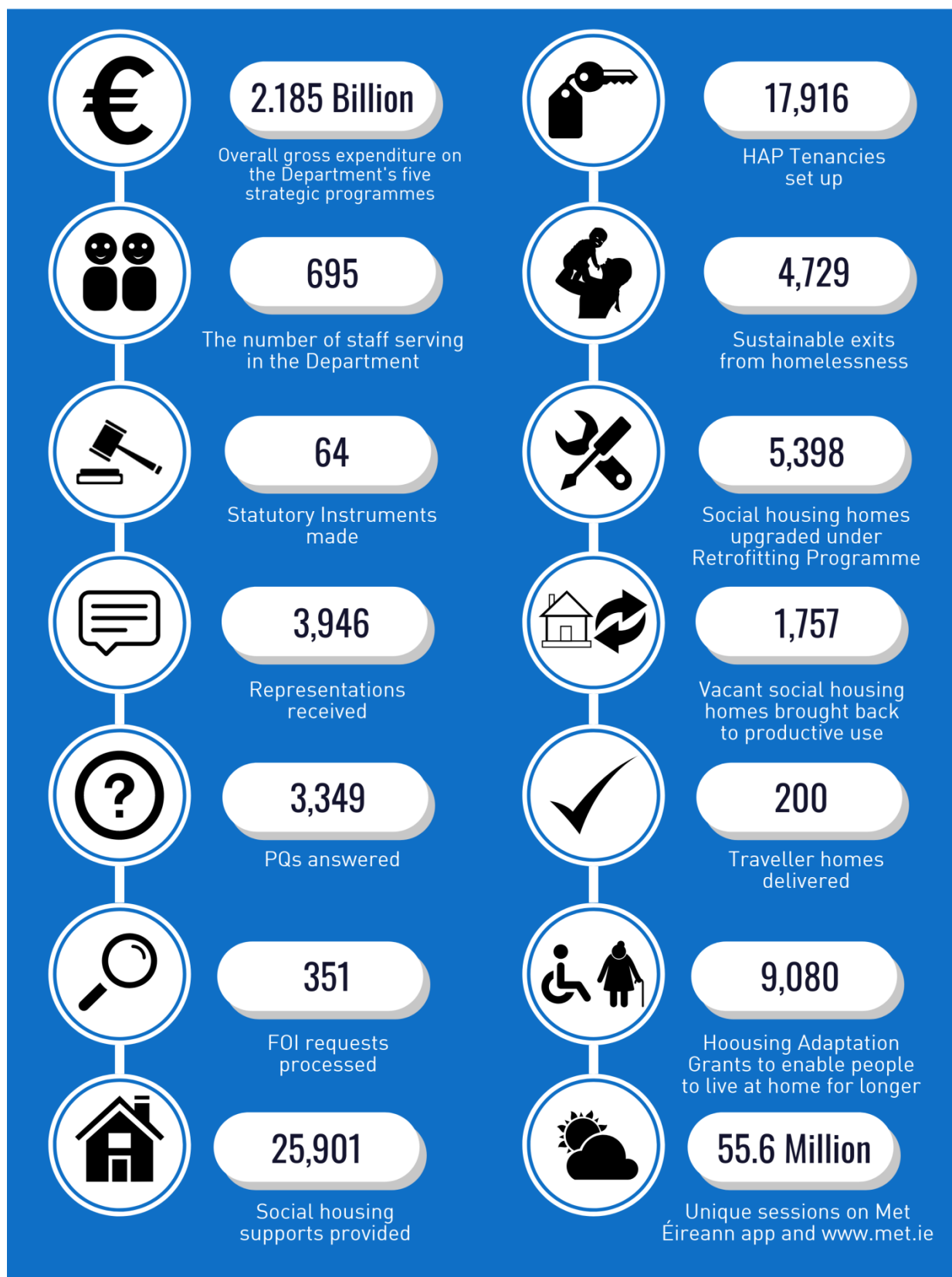


Overall gross expenditure on the Department's five strategic programmes totalled some €2.185 billion in 2017. Departmental (exchequer) funding of €2.087 billion was supplemented by €98.25 million expenditure by local authorities on a range of housing programmes, financed by surplus local property tax receipts. In addition, expenditure of €1.83 billion was managed through the Local Government Fund in 2017, primarily for the purposes of channelling Local Property Tax receipts to local authorities, funding the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport for roads investment and providing financial support for the operations of Irish Water.



The exchequer funding element (€2.087 billion) comprised €1.295 billion in current expenditure and €792.276 million in capital expenditure

## THE DEPARTMENT BY NUMBERS IN 2017



## Summary of Key Areas of Progress in 2017

### Statement of Strategy

The Department published its [Statement of Strategy 2016 – 2019](#) in January 2017 which sets out the mission and the strategies we will pursue in order to support the sustainable and efficient delivery of well-planned homes and effective local government. Following on from the reconfiguration of the Department in mid-2017 and the transfer of community affairs functions to the new Department of Rural and Community Development, a new [Statement of Strategy 2017-2020](#) was drawn up as required under the Public Services Management Act 1997.

### Rebuilding Ireland

During 2017, significant progress was made to deliver on the commitments in the Government's **Rebuilding Ireland Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness** which was published in July 2016. Some of the key achievements in 2017 were:



- 4,729 sustainable exits from homelessness;
- The establishment of over 1,700 new Homeless Housing Assistance Payment tenancies;
- The provision of 200 additional permanent beds for rough sleepers;
- Almost 26,000 households were supported through the range of social housing supports in place, including 17,916 new Housing Assistance Payment tenancies established and over 7,000 new homes brought into active social housing stock through build, acquisitions, refurbishment and leasing;
- The introduction of new 'Build to Rent' and 'co-living' guidelines to encourage development and investment in more rental accommodation at more affordable rents;
- The launch of a new National Student Accommodation Strategy.

An extra €100 million was allocated for homelessness and housing late in the year, bringing the total housing budget for 2017 to €1.4 billion. A number of measures were rolled out to increase housing supply, including:

- a new fast-track planning process for large housing developments to speed up decisions and provide greater certainty for developers; and

- a dedicated infrastructure fund (LIHAF) to open up land for development more quickly and accelerate the delivery of new housing at scale.

### Social Housing Delivery in 2017

Delivery Method	2017 Output
Build <sup>2</sup>	2,297
Voids	1,757
Acquisitions	2,214
Leasing	827
RAS	890
HAP	17,916
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,901</b>

25,901 new households had their housing need met under Rebuilding Ireland in 2017, the equivalent of 100 households each working day, and some 23% ahead of the target for the year. The 2,297 social housing homes built in 2017 was more than three times the level in 2016.

In addition to the social housing supports set out above, a range of other housing supports were also provided in 2017, as set out in the table below;

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<sup>2</sup> Build refers to Local Authority and Approved Housing Body construction, including traditional construction, turnkeys, rapid build delivery, regeneration and homes delivered through the Part V mechanism.

Additional Housing Supports delivered in 2017	
<b>200</b>	Traveller Homes Delivered
<b>5,398</b>	Homes Upgraded under Retrofitting Programme
<b>4,729</b>	Sustainable Exits from Homelessness
<b>9,080</b>	Grants Awarded to Assist People to Live at Home for Longer

The significant expansion of the social housing build programme was evident in the Q4 2017 Construction Status report. At end-2017, 2,512 homes were completed, 3,650 were under construction and 1,912 further homes were about to go on site, with the remainder progressing through the various stages of planning, design and procurement. The programme includes 850 schemes (or phases) at the end of 2017, which would amount to a delivery of over 13,400 homes – a very substantial increase on the 8,430 homes in the programme a year earlier.

Overall, taking account of additional funding announced in Budget 2018, the Government has now committed €6 billion to support the accelerated delivery of 50,000 additional social housing homes by end 2021, through build (33,500), acquisition (6,500) and leasing (10,000) programmes.

## Housing Assistance Payment

HAP became a national scheme on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2017 when the nationwide rollout was completed with the introduction of HAP to the administrative areas of Dublin City Council, Fingal County Council and Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council. At the end of 2017, some 31,200 tenancies were being supported by the HAP scheme.



Guidelines on inter-authority movement were introduced in 2017 to allow for local authorities to facilitate movement of HAP households from one local authority area to another, subject to conditions.

## Homelessness

In 2017, over 4,729 adults and their associated dependants exited homelessness into sustainable tenancies, a 54% increase over the 2016 figure.

In pursuit of the goal to provide more suitable emergency accommodation for families experiencing homelessness, there were 17 family hubs in operation by end 2017 providing almost 400 units of family accommodation.

## Acquisitions Fund

The Housing Agency is actively engaged with banks and investment companies in relation to its acquisitions programme. €70m was provided to the Agency in 2017 to establish a revolving fund to acquire some 1,600 units for social housing over the period to 2020. The fund will be replenished by the Agency through the sale of units primarily to the Approved Housing Body sector.

## Public Private Partnership

Planning and procurement under the Social Housing PPP Programme continued to progress strongly in 2017. The first bundle of six sites, with a capital value of €100m, are located in Dublin City, South Dublin, Kildare, Wicklow and Louth, and will deliver over 500 social housing units. The procurement process for this bundle should be completed later in 2017 allowing construction to get underway.



The eight sites under the second PPP bundle, located in Cork, Galway, Waterford, Clare, Kildare and Roscommon, and with a combined capital value of €100m, were also progressed in 2017.

## Lending by the Housing Finance Agency

The Housing Finance Agency (HFA) continues to provide long-term fixed-rate finance to Local Authorities and AHBs for the provision of social housing. HFA loan approvals rose by 29% in 2017 to €336 million, while actual loan advances increased by 36% to €171 million.

## National Planning Framework

Work on the development of a new National Planning Framework to succeed the National Spatial Strategy continued in 2017. The Department published an 'Issues and Choices' Paper in February, followed by an 8-week public consultation period.



A decision was made by Government in July 2017 to align the National Planning Framework with the 10-year National Development Plan 2018-2027, linking strategic national planning and investment with regional-scale physical planning and the local economic and community development functions of local authorities. The Draft NPF was published in September 2017 for a 6-week period of public consultation.

## Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF)

The Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF) is a key element of Pillar 3 of Rebuilding Ireland. €150 million has been provided from Exchequer funding with matching funding of €50 million from Local Authorities. The objective of the Fund is to provide public off-site infrastructure to relieve critical infrastructure blockages. This will enable the accelerated delivery of some 20,000 homes on key development sites in Dublin and in other urban areas of high demand for housing.



## Student Accommodation Strategy

The National Student Accommodation Strategy was published by the Department of Education and Skills with support from our Department in July 2017. It includes 8 key targets and 27 actions to support the delivery of an increased level of supply of Purpose Built Student Accommodation and an increase in take-up of digs accommodation.

## Electoral Management

The *Constituency Commission Report 2017 – Dáil and European Parliament Constituencies* was published in late June 2017. The *Electoral (Amendment) (Dáil Constituencies) Act 2017*, which gives effect to the recommendations of the Constituency Commission, was signed by the President in late December 2017 and will come into effect following the next dissolution of the Dáil.



## Future Funding of Domestic Water Services

In 2017, provision for the future funding of domestic water services was agreed by the Oireachtas and given effect through legislation. Arrangements to refund domestic water charges were put in place and the vast majority of customers of Irish Water were refunded by the end of the year.

The Government agreed on a new funding arrangement for Irish Water in September 2017, based on the Report of the Working Group on the Future Funding Model for Irish Water. Under the new funding model, Irish Water's domestic water services programme will be funded by the Exchequer for both capital and current purposes from 2018, with investment in relation to the non-domestic sector continuing to be funded through charges and borrowings.

Subsidies provided to group water schemes were also revised in 2017.

## Draft River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021

The Department published the draft River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018 - 2021 in February 2017. The draft Plan sets out our priority objectives for water quality improvement up to 2021 and outlines a programme of measures to achieve these objectives over the intervening period.



## Marine Environment and Foreshore

An inter-Departmental and inter-agency Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) monitoring committee was set up to oversee Ireland's monitoring programme and address gaps arising from a new EU Commission Decision defining Good Environmental Status.

Work commenced with the EU and other member states on cycle 2 of the MSFD and additional measures under the MSFD Programmes of Measures and Monitoring Programme were also implemented.

A Public Consultation was undertaken in 2017 on the proposal to legislate for the prohibition of microbeads in certain products.

## Reform of the Local Government Fund

The changes to the funding model for Irish Water outlined above meant that all State funding to Irish Water in respect of domestic water services would be channelled through the Vote of the Department and therefore funded from general taxation. As the subvention to Irish Water was no longer to be paid from the Local Government Fund (LGF) a number of consequential changes were made:



- Local Property Tax is now paid directly to the LGF by the Revenue Commissioners, rather than passing through the Exchequer.
- Motor Tax is now paid into the Exchequer (with the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (DTTAS) taking on the lead role in relation to motor tax).
- The allocation to the DTTAS to fund regional and local roads and other public transport infrastructure is now funded directly through the DTTAS Vote instead of being transferred as an Appropriation-in-Aid from the LGF.
- There is no requirement for a payment to the Exchequer from the LGF.

These changes were given effect by the Water Services Act 2017 and come into effect from 1 January 2018.

## Expenses for elected Members of Local Authorities

In November, 2017, new regulations were published governing a new allowance and a reformed system of expenses for elected members of local authorities. These were to reflect the additional workload on councillors arising from the 2014 local government reforms. Detailed guidelines for local authorities and elected members in relation to the administration of the allowances and expenses regime were introduced to accompany the legislation.



## Local Government Boundary Alterations

A report in April 2017 by the expert Advisory Group established by Government to re-examine local government arrangements in Cork advised that an expanded City Council area offered the best solution in terms of the structure of local government and a strong focus on the needs and demand of the metropolitan area.

The Cork boundary alteration will be one of the most significant in the history of the State and will better position the City to realise the ambitious growth envisaged for it under the National Planning Framework.

## Emergency Management

On the emergency management front, the Department's National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management (NDFEM) co-ordinated and led the "Whole-of-Government" response to ex-Hurricane Ophelia which struck Ireland on 16 October 2017. A total of €7.3m was subsequently secured and distributed to local authorities to fund their response and clean-up operations. The NDFEM will prepare a review report on the event, and other more recent severe weather emergencies, which is intended to be published in 2018. The report will identify learning points to further enhance the response to major emergencies.

## Met Éireann

In 2017, Met Éireann put in place a new 10 year Strategy "Making Ireland Weather and Climate Prepared", which focuses on scientific, technical and service developments to help Irish society to be ready for and responsive to weather and climate risks.

Met Éireann retained its designation as the national meteorological aviation services provider. Work also commenced during the year on the airport modernisation and automation project (AMAP) to install state-of-the-art observing systems which will enable Ireland to meet its obligations under global and EU Regulations.

## Civil Service Excellence and Innovation Awards

The Department was successful at the Civil Service Excellence and Innovation Awards in November 2017, where 'MERA, the Met Eireann Re-Analysis project' won the award in the category of Research, Analytics and Insight category. MERA combines weather observations



with a weather forecast model to produce a rich dataset that describes, in great detail, the behaviour of the Irish weather over the last three decades and more, providing invaluable “raw material” for climate scientists to further study the changes that are underway in our climate. This award meant that the Department has been among the winners in each of the three years since the current Awards programme was introduced in 2015.

## Custom House Visitor Centre

The Custom House Visitor Centre is open to the public during the summer months as part of a longer term project to provide public access to one of the finest buildings in Dublin. The current exhibition outlines the history of the Custom House with a focus on the “Decade of Centenaries”<sup>3</sup>. It describes events in the building during Easter Week 1916 and considers the history of the Custom House and its occupants from then until 1921, when the building was destroyed by fire during the War of Independence. Over 22,000 visitors came to the Custom House Visitor Centre in 2017.



## ICT Developments

### Build to Share

The Department commenced roll-out of the Build-to-Share initiative in 2016. Build-to-Share is a set of applications developed by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform for roll out to other Departments. The applications are designed specifically to meet the common business needs of Government Departments, such as managing and processing internal submissions (eSubmissions), Parliamentary Questions (ePQs) and document management (eDocs). The eSubmissions system went live in the Department on 8th December 2016, followed by ePQs on 8th March 2017.

### Open Data

Open Data is an initiative to make Public Sector data available in open, free and reusable formats. The Department has 234 datasets published on the Open Data Portal (<http://data.gov.ie>). This includes the National Planning Application Database and zoning data from Myplan.ie, both of which are used by bodies such as Ordnance Survey



<sup>3</sup> <http://www.decadeofcentenaries.com/>

Ireland and An Bord Pleanála. In the 4 months that the National Planning Application Database map service was live in 2017, it provided data to over 1 million service requests.

## Goal A - To ensure that planning and building in our regions and communities contributes to sustainable and balanced development

### National Planning Framework (NPF)

The Department continued its work in 2017 on the development of a new National Planning Framework to succeed the National Spatial Strategy. The NPF will form a high-level, national Framework and further opportunities to elaborate on the NPF at regional and local levels through forthcoming Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSEs) and ultimately, in City and County Development Plans.

An 'Issues and Choices' Paper was published in February 2017, followed by an 8-week public consultation period. In July 2017, a decision was made by Government to align the National Planning Framework with the 10-year National Development Plan 2018-2027, linking strategic national planning and investment with regional-scale physical planning and the local economic and community development functions of local authorities. The Draft NPF was published in September 2017 for a 6-week period of public consultation.

Public awareness and engagement were key throughout both public consultation periods in 2017, which also involved regional launches and consultation roadshows at seven third level institutions throughout the country. The preparation of the NPF was also shaped by formal engagements with the Oireachtas as well as interaction with key stakeholders and several engagements with an Expert Advisory Group. All of this work ensured that, by year-end, we were well positioned to launch the finalised NPF in tandem with the National Development Plan in early 2018. The National Planning Framework and associated documents, which were subsequently published in February 2018, can be viewed [here](#).

### Planning Process

The planning process continued to play a proactive and facilitative role in 2017 in supporting and guiding economic recovery and sustainable national and regional development. Following the enactment of the Planning and Development (Housing) and Residential Tenancies Act 2016, a number of the legislative commitments contained in *Rebuilding Ireland* aimed at enhancing housing supply were



commenced in 2017, including:

- the introduction of temporary streamlined planning procedures to allow direct application to An Bord Pleanála in respect of large scale residential developments, known as “Strategic Housing Developments” (100+ housing units and student accommodation developments with 200+ bed spaces); and
- the introduction of maximum time-limits for the determination of local authority own-development proposals, including social housing and infrastructure servicing both public and private development.

The Strategic Housing Development (SHD) provisions came into effect on 3 July 2017.

Applicants for SHD must enter into a pre-application consultation with An Bord Pleanála and the relevant local authority prior to submitting a development proposal. Between 3 July 2017 and 31 December 2017, 36 valid requests for pre-application consultation were received by An Bord Pleanála relating to proposed developments across the country, including provision for up to 8,650 units (5,632 houses and 3,018 apartments) and 4,978 student bed spaces, and opinions issued in relation to 25 of these. In the same period, 13 actual applications for SHD permission were received by the Board, with the first decisions to be made in early January 2018.

## Planning Policy

Planning permissions were granted for a total of 20,776 new homes in 2017, an increase of 27% on the number of homes for which permission was granted in 2016.



The Department continues to develop and support initiatives to promote urban renewal and regeneration, including in relation to re-use of existing vacant buildings, derelict sites and operation of the vacant site levy by local authorities. In particular:

- The Planning and Development (Strategic Housing Development) Regulations 2017 brought into operation the streamlined planning arrangements for SHDs as contained in the Planning and Development (Housing) and Residential Tenancies Act 2016.
- The enactment of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2017 provided for limited extensions of planning permission for specified housing developments.

- A Working Group was established to review and, where necessary, recommend changes to the statutory *2005 Planning Guidelines on Sustainable Rural Housing*, with a view to ensuring compliance with the relevant provisions of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. The review was completed in 2017 and the Department is now engaging with the European Commission on the matter.

## Vacant Site Levy

In January 2017, vacant site registers were established by all planning authorities and the necessary preparatory work was undertaken (i.e. identifying vacant sites, notifying registered owners) prior to the application of the Vacant Site Levy from January 2019, as required by the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 with a view to incentivising the development of vacant under-utilised sites in urban areas for residential or regeneration purposes. By the end of 2017, 11 planning authorities had registered a total of 226 sites.

## Vacant Homes

A key objective under Rebuilding Ireland is to ensure that existing housing stock is used to the maximum degree possible. To this end a number of key initiatives were announced in August 2017 and a dedicated Vacant Homes Unit was established within the Department to drive and co-ordinate actions at central and local government levels and to support local authorities in their actions.



In order to establish a methodology to allow the identification, measurement and reactivation of recoverable vacant homes into the liveable housing stock by way of a field based survey, a Vacancy Sub-Group (representative of the Department, CSO, local government sector and Housing Agency) was established under the Housing Data Analytics Group. It is intended that a pilot survey will be undertaken in 2018 with a focus on identifying vacancy hotspots, particularly in areas where there is a high demand for homes, which have empty or under-utilised houses that are capable of being brought back into use.

## Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF)

Following a call for proposals in 2016, 34 projects across 15 local authorities received preliminary approval for funding under LIHAF in March 2017. The types of infrastructure being provided include roads, bridges, diversion of power lines and drainage works as well as public amenities (parks). At the end of 2017, 29 projects had full approval at a total cost of €175.71

million, of which €131.69 million (75%) is to be funded by the Department while local authorities will fund the remaining €44.02 million (25%).

## Unfinished Housing Developments

The [Annual Progress Report on Unfinished Housing Developments 2017](#) was published, indicating that the number of unfinished housing developments had reduced by 91% from around 3,000 developments in 2010 to 256 developments in 2017. The year 2017 alone saw the resolution of 165 developments.

In addition, 74% of Local Authority areas now contain less than 10 unfinished developments, with four local authority areas having no occupied unfinished developments.

The progress made in this can be attributed, at least partly, to the work of Unfinished Housing Development teams which were established in local authorities and have gained enormous experience and knowledge in matters of successful resolution from enforcement through to bonds and effective collaboration with receivers and financial institutions.

## Mapping of State Lands for Housing Supply

The active management of the publicly-owned housing land bank is part of a range of complementary actions being progressed under Rebuilding Ireland, designed to accelerate and increase housing output. To this end, details of some 1,700 hectares of land in local authority and Housing Agency ownership were published on the Rebuilding Ireland Housing Land Map, with the potential to deliver some 42,500 homes nationally. A detailed database and GIS map of these sites showing their location, size, boundaries and other information can be accessed on the [Rebuilding Ireland website](#). An initial tranche of lands owned by other State bodies which could be made available for housing have also been identified and further work in this area will continue in 2018.



In addition to this mapping exercise, all local authorities and the Housing Agency commenced work on Strategic Development and Management Plans for housing lands in their ownership, with particular emphasis on prioritising those sites with the greatest potential to deliver housing at scale, in the short to medium term. When finalised, these plans will be published on the websites of the respective local authorities and the Housing Agency.

## National Planning Application Database (NPAD)

The NPAD project is a joint initiative between the Department and the 31 Local Authorities to provide a centralised national web service of planning application data.

Planning application data from each Planning Authority is extracted, transformed and loaded to a feature service hosted on the Department's GIS infrastructure. This data is then merged with the spatial element of planning application data on a weekly basis. The merged dataset is published as a web service and is also available in a map viewer via [Myplan.ie](http://Myplan.ie)

The web service is open and serves three primary purposes:

1. To support work on numerous housing and planning projects within the Department;
2. To provide An Bord Pleanála with a subset of the data via weekly data feed;
3. To make the data available to the wider public and interested groups as Open Data

The initial phase of the project was completed in 2017 and the service was made available through the [www.myplan.ie](http://www.myplan.ie) website.

## Student Accommodation Strategy

In July 2017, the National Student Accommodation Strategy was published by the Department of Education and Skills, with support from our Department. The Strategy includes 8 key targets and 27 actions to support the delivery of an increased level of supply of Purpose Built Student Accommodation and an increase in take-up of digs accommodation.



Provisions of the Planning and Development (Housing) and Residential Tenancies Act 2016 were commenced which permitted (i) the fast tracking of planning applications to An Bord Pleanála for student accommodation projects with greater than 200 bed spaces to An Bord Pleanála and (ii) the availability of financing from the Housing Finance Agency to the Higher Education institutes for new student accommodation projects.

A total of 2,606 new student bed spaces were completed between the publication of *Rebuilding Ireland* in July 2016 to the end of Q4 2017, with a further 4,553 bed spaces under construction and planning permissions granted for an additional 6,927 bed spaces. These figures indicate that the objective of delivering an additional 7,000 new bed spaces nationally by end of 2019

will be achieved, with significant potential to provide further Purpose Built Student Accommodation if planned projects proceed through construction.

## Statutory Plans

The Department continued its role in the review of statutory plans taking account of national planning policy and legislation. In 2017, 80 plans were reviewed and the Minister had occasion to use his powers under Section 31 of the Planning and Development Act (as Amended) in 4 cases.

## Planning and Development (Amendment) Bill 2016

The Planning and Development (Amendment) Bill 2016 continued its progress through the Oireachtas in 2017, with Dail Committee Stage ongoing at the end of 2017. The Bill will:



- give legislative effect to planning-related recommendations of the Final Report of the Tribunal of Inquiry into Certain Planning Matters ( the Mahon Tribunal), including the establishment of a new independent Office of the Planning Regulator,
- provide statutory underpinning to the National Planning Framework, and
- provide for introduction of e-planning (online submission of planning applications and appeals) across the local government sector and An Bord Pleanála.

The Department has commenced preparatory work with regard to setting up the Office of the Planning Regulator in anticipation of the enactment of the Bill.

## Wind Energy Development Guidelines

In June 2017, the Minister, in conjunction with the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment, announced an emerging "preferred draft approach" to the review of the 2006 Wind Energy Development Guidelines, in order to provide greater clarity to local authorities, the energy sector and stakeholders generally as to the broad direction that the review was taking.

A strategic environmental assessment (SEA) is being carried out on the revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines before they come into effect, in accordance with the requirements of EU Directive 2001/24/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment.

## Goal B - To provide for a stable, sustainable supply of good quality housing.

### Social Housing Delivery

The Government has now committed €6 billion to support the accelerated delivery of 50,000 additional social housing homes by end 2021, through build (33,500), acquisition (6,500) and leasing (10,000) programmes. In 2017, 25,901 households had their housing need met through the range of social housing programmes.



Delivery Method	2017 Output
Build <sup>4</sup>	2,297
Voids	1,757
Acquisitions	2,214
Leasing	827
RAS	890
HAP	17,916
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,901</b>

<sup>4</sup> Build refers to Local Authority and Approved Housing Body construction, including traditional construction, turnkeys, rapid build delivery, regeneration and homes delivered through the Part V mechanism.

## Social housing approval and delivery- Process and Procedures

### Review

Action 2.11 of Rebuilding Ireland sets out the commitment to review the processes and procedures for approving and advancing social housing construction projects. This review was carried out by the Housing Delivery Office and was published in February 2017. A working group has been set up between the City and County Management Association and the Department to implement the key recommendations.

### Supporting Rapid Delivery Housing

To assist in accelerating social housing delivery, the Department:

- Supported the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) in establishing a Framework Agreement with 12 Design and Build contractors for the provision of rapid delivery housing. The Framework Agreement, available since January 2017, saves time on design, procurement and on the construction of social housing and supports the achievement of the targets set out in Rebuilding Ireland.
- Encouraged local authorities and Approved Housing Bodies, through two workshops in February and December 2017, to use design-build contracts and to utilise the framework.

### Mortgage to Rent Scheme

In 2017, 91 households benefited from the Mortgage to Rent (MTR) scheme remaining in their homes and communities as social housing tenants of AHBs. A review of the scheme published in February 2017 introduced a range of amendments to the eligibility criteria and administration of the MTR scheme to enable more properties to qualify and to make the scheme more flexible and accessible to borrowers. The review also concluded that the current financial model of the MTR scheme may not, in its current configuration, be capable of delivering the scale of successful cases that could benefit from the scheme over time. In order to test the operability of alternative funding models for the scheme, a call for Expressions of Interest from bodies interested in participating in a new MTR pilot scheme issued in 2017. The impact of the improvements to the scheme following the review, coupled with the outcome from the proposed new MTR pilot scheme should ensure that more borrowers in mortgage distress benefit from the scheme and remain in their own homes.

## Repair and Leasing Scheme

The Repair and Leasing Scheme was established on a pilot basis in October 2016 and expanded nationwide from February 2017. By end 2017, 347 properties had been deemed suitable under the Scheme, 31 Agreements to Lease had been signed and 9 dwellings tenanted. A review of the Scheme took place in 2017 that recommended a number of key changes, including a reduction in the minimum lease term required from 10 to 5 years; an increase in the proportion of market rent available to property owners for taking on additional responsibilities, and increased funding for the remediation of former bedsits. These changes should improve the operation of the scheme, increasing its attractiveness to owners and resulting in increased take-up and delivery.



## National Voids Programme

The Voids Programme provides additional support to local authorities in refurbishing vacant social housing homes for re-letting. The purpose of the Programme is to ensure that vacant homes are actively targeted, with a view to minimising turnaround and re-letting times and returning homes to use in an energy efficient condition. During 2017, funding of almost €24.7m has been provided to local authorities to bring some 1,757 vacant homes back to productive use. Without substantial refurbishment under construction contracts, these social homes would have been left vacant and not part of the active social housing stock.

## Regeneration

The Department continued in 2017 to support local authorities in delivering an ambitious programme of regeneration projects, including large scale projects in Dublin, Cork and Limerick. Good progress was made during the year, with 234 new social homes delivered under the programme - 98 in Dublin, 107 in Limerick and 29 in Cork. Work also continues in other regeneration projects in Dundalk, Sligo and Tralee. Over €65 million was expended under the National Regeneration Programme in 2017.

## Energy Efficiency Retrofitting Programme

In 2017 local authorities continued with Phase 1 of the Programme (targeted at attic and cavity wall insulation) and completed work on 5,090 homes, while under Phase 2 (which involves more extensive and costly external insulation), work on 331 homes was completed. Total funding provided for the scheme in 2017 amounted to almost €8.7m.

## Acquisitions Fund

Under Actions 1.1, 2.5 and 5.6 of Rebuilding Ireland, the Housing Agency is actively engaged with banks and investment companies in relation to the acquisition of vacant home from the portfolios of the financial institutions. €70m was provided to the Agency in 2017 to establish a revolving fund to acquire some 1,600 homes for social housing over the period to 2020. The fund will be replenished by the Agency through the onward sale of homes primarily to the Approved Housing Body sector.



As of 31 December 2017, the Agency had bids accepted on 445 properties. Contracts were signed for 401 homes and 382 of these purchases closed in 2017. The process of selling properties on to AHBs is well underway. As of 31 December 2017, the Agency had signed purchase option agreements for 321 properties with AHBs and these units are now under Caretaker Leases. The onward sale of 36 homes to AHBs was completed in full in 2017.

## Public Private Partnership

The Social Housing PPP Programme continued to progress strongly in 2017. The first bundle of six sites, with a capital value of €100m, are located in Dublin City, South Dublin, Kildare, Wicklow and Louth, and will deliver over 500 social housing units. Dublin City Council is acting as the lead authority for all of the first bundle sites. Part 8 Planning Permission was granted by the relevant local authorities for all six sites during 2017, while the Contract Notice commencing the PPP tender competition was issued in May. Following prequalification assessments, three consortia were shortlisted to proceed to tender in October and, following Departmental approval of the Public Sector Benchmark value-for-money tests, the tender documents were issued in December. Tendering is expected to be completed and construction to get underway in 2018.

Under the second PPP bundle, for which Cork County Council is acting as the lead authority, the eight sites located in Cork, Galway, Waterford, Clare, Kildare and Roscommon, with a combined capital value of €100m, were also progressed in 2017. The design team developed a 'preferred design' for each of the eight sites and these were approved by the Department. The procurement process for this bundle is expected to progress significantly in 2018.

A third bundle of sites on an equivalent scale is to be announced in 2018.

## Housing Assistance Payment Scheme

An additional 17,916 households were supported by HAP in 2017; exceeding the Rebuilding Ireland target of 15,000 for the year.

This includes 3,185 Rent Supplement (RS) transfers. Once transferred from RS to HAP, households are in receipt of a much more secure form of support and crucially the linkage between their employment status and their housing need is broken as they can now work fulltime. The aim is to complete the transfers from long term RS to HAP by 2020 as outlined in *Rebuilding Ireland*.



Provision was made in 2017 to provide for inter-authority movement for HAP applicants. Where a tenant currently on a local authority waiting list wishes to access rented accommodation with HAP support in another local authority area, and to avail of the transfer list in the local authority where they are currently on the waiting list, this can now be facilitated subject to a number of key principles and conditions. In order to maintain the equitable treatment of all housing applicants, inter-authority movement for HAP applicants is based on the current Social Housing Eligibility income bands, i.e. movement will only be facilitated across local authorities with Income Bands that are equal or higher; or where shared areas of choice are already operated.

The Homeless HAP Place Finder Service operating in the Dublin local authorities since 2015 was further extended to Cork City Council in 2017, providing the local authority with options to pay deposits and advance rental payments for any households in emergency homeless accommodation, in order to secure accommodation via the HAP scheme.

## Homelessness

4,729 adults and their associated dependants exited homelessness into sustainable tenancies in 2017, a 54% increase over the 2016 figure. In line with our objective to provide more suitable emergency accommodation for families experiencing homelessness, 17 family hubs had been brought into operation by end 2017 (14 in Dublin, 2 in Limerick and 1 in Kildare), providing almost 400 units of family accommodation.



The Homelessness Inter-Agency Group was set up in October 2017 and has been meeting regularly in order to prepare a report in 2018 on measures to support a more coordinated whole-of-Government response to tackling homelessness.

The Housing First program was extended in 2017 with an additional 91 tenancies created in the Dublin region. Pilot programmes were initiated in Cork, Limerick and Galway which will see 100 tenancies created in these areas.

## Traveller Accommodation

An expert, independent review of capital and current funding for traveller-specific accommodation, in the context of the local authority Traveller Accommodation Programmes, was completed and submitted to the Department in July 2017. The National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (NTACC) agreed an expert group should be established to examine and analyse the findings of the review, with a view to preparing a report for the Minister.

A review of the Scheme of Loans and Grants for the Purchase of Caravans by Travellers was completed in August 2017.

200 Traveller-specific housing supports were delivered in 2017, comprising of the following:

Group housing	4
Emergency mobiles	20
Caravan grants	28
Special Grant <sup>5</sup>	1
Refurbishment/Extensions	146
Halting Site Bay	1

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<sup>5</sup> First time buyers grant

## Housing Inclusion Supports

Supports are available to a number of vulnerable groups to enable them to access mainstream social housing. These include measures under the National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability (NHSPWD) and older people.

### (a) National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability

The *National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability* (2011-2016) has been extended to 2020 to continue to deliver on its aims and to guide and progress policy in the coming years. The Third Progress Report on the implementation of the Strategy was published in June 2017 and the Fourth Progress Report, which details progress made in the year 2017, is due for publication in mid-2018.



### (b) Housing for Older People

Under *Rebuilding Ireland*, the Department, in conjunction with the Department of Health, is exploring the development of a greater choice of housing options for older people, including supported housing/housing with care. A cross Department/Agency steering group chaired by our Department was established in 2017 to provide support on drafting a joint policy statement on housing for older people with the Department of Health. The draft statement is being finalised and is expected to be published in 2018.

### (c) Homes for Smart Ageing Universal Design Challenge

The Homes for Smart Ageing Universal Design Challenge is an initiative under Rebuilding Ireland (Action 2.19) and the Programme of Actions for Smart Ageing, which aims to stimulate and encourage the design and construction industries to be innovative in designing and delivering housing solutions for older people. The Design Challenge prize fund of €100,000 was funded by the Department and project managed by the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design.

Over 60 high-quality entries were received from around the country, with five commended entries reaching the final round where they received funding of €10,000 and support to develop their ideas further. The winner of the €50,000 top prize, announced in June 2017, was the Abhaile Project, which is an innovative new model to support older homeowners to reconfigure their family-sized homes by creating an independent living area suitable for the older

homeowner, eliminating the need to use the stairs; and creating an affordable one-bedroomed rental accommodation upstairs.

## Choice Based Letting

Choice Based Letting (CBL) is a method that can be used by local authorities to allocate social housing, whereby available social housing is let by being openly advertised, allowing qualified applicants to 'register an interest' in available homes. Applicants have to act on their own initiative to respond to adverts for dwellings that they would like to live in, rather than waiting for an authority to offer a dwelling. This approach offers more choice and involvement for applicant households in selecting a new home, thereby reducing the likelihood of a refusal, and helping to build sustainable tenancies and stable communities. It is generally regarded as having been successful in improving transparency and fairness in the allocation of social housing, faster re-letting and contributing to a better and more sustainable community mix. The Department is committed to encouraging and monitoring the roll-out of CBL across all Local Authorities, and undertook a survey in the last quarter of 2017 to determine the uptake and impact of CBL. The survey found that a majority of local authorities now implement CBL as part of their allocation schemes. The vast majority indicated that CBL has had a very positive impact on how they allocate dwellings. The Department will continue to liaise with local authorities during 2018 with a view to trying to ensure that CBL is implemented, as widely as possible, across the country.

## Tenant Incremental Purchase Scheme

In line with the commitment given in Rebuilding Ireland, a comprehensive review of the first 12 months of the Tenant Incremental Purchase Scheme's operation was undertaken. The review incorporated analysis of comprehensive data received from local authorities regarding the operation of the scheme during 2016 and a wide-ranging public consultation process which took place in 2017 and saw submissions received from individuals, elected representatives and organisations. The review is expected to be published in 2018.

## Regulation of the AHB Sector

The transition to statutory regulation of the AHB sector continued, in the form of the Voluntary Regulation Code, administered by the interim Regulation Office. A total of 244 AHBs had signed up to the Code by December 2017, meaning more than 90% of the 30,000 total estimated housing stock in the sector is now protected. The Department continued to work with the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel to finalise the text of the Housing (Regulation of

Registered Housing Providers) Bill which will establish a statutory Regulator. It is expected the Bill will be published in 2018.

## **Innovation Fund for the AHB Sector**

Rebuilding Ireland commits to a range of structural, funding and policy supports to increase delivery by AHBs. In 2016, the Department established an Innovation Fund to support Tier 3 AHBs in their development of innovative financial models that would assist in improving the capacity of the sector. Six AHBs applied to this Fund and four proposals were deemed eligible. In May 2017, the approval of over €100,000 in funding for four AHBs was announced under the Innovation Fund.

## **Lending by the Housing Finance Agency**

Housing Finance Agency (HFA) loan approvals rose by 29% in 2017 to €336 million, while actual loan advances increased by 36% to €171 million. In addition, in June 2017, provisions of the Planning and Development (Housing) and Residential Tenancies Act 2016 to allow the HFA to lend to Higher Education Institutions for the provision of student accommodation came into operation. The legislation also provides that the HFA may lend to the Housing Agency for the purchase of vacant properties for onward sale to local authorities and AHBs for social housing purposes.



## **Construction Industry Register Ireland**

The General Scheme of a Bill to place the Construction Industry Register Ireland or CIRI on a statutory footing and thereby provide in law for the registration of builders, contractors and specialist sub-contractors, was published in May 2017.

## **Consolidation of Building Control Regulations**

An administrative consolidated version of the Building Control Regulations was published in March 2017. This was prepared by the Law Reform Commission in conjunction with the Department, bringing together 20 years of building control regulations in a single text which is available on the Irish Statute Book website [here](#).

## Report of the Expert Panel on Concrete Blocks published in June 2017

The Expert Panel on concrete blocks was established by the Department in 2016, to investigate problems that have emerged in the concrete blockwork of certain dwellings in Counties Donegal and Mayo. On 13 June 2017, the report of the [Expert Panel](#) was published and included eight recommendations which the Department is actively progressing with the relevant stakeholders.



The Department is prioritising the implementation of Recommendations 1 and 2. Recommendation 1 concerns the development of a standardised protocol which will be used to assess and categorise the damage in properties where the concrete blocks are suspected to contain the minerals mica or pyrite. Recommendation 2 aims to establish a register of competent engineers for homeowners of such damaged properties to refer to.

## Framework for Enhancing Fire Safety in Dwellings published August 2017

In August 2017, the Department published a Framework for Enhancing Fire Safety in Dwellings, which is intended to be used as a guide by the owners and occupants of dwellings where fire safety deficiencies have been identified, or are a cause for concern. The Framework is also of assistance to professional advisors both in developing strategies to improve fire safety and in developing strategies to enable continued occupation in advance of undertaking the necessary works to ensure compliance with the relevant Building Regulations. The framework is available on the Department's website [here](#).



## Rental Sector

The Strategy for the Rental Sector was published in December 2016, setting out a range of measures under the headings of Security, Supply, Standards and Services, which will address both immediate and long term issues affecting the supply, cost and accessibility of rental accommodation.

In January 2017, provisions under the Planning and Development (Housing) and Residential Tenancies Act 2016 commenced including a provision to protect tenancies where a landlord or investor wishes to sell 10 or more properties in a single development at the same time by requiring that any sale would be made on the basis that tenants remain in situ, other than in exceptional circumstances. In December 2017, the Courts were explicitly empowered to enforce RTB determination orders.

The Department and the RTB participated in a Department of Finance chaired Working Group on Tax and Fiscal treatment of rental accommodation providers. The Report of the Working Group was published in September 2017 and can be accessed [here](#). The Group recommended a number of policy options for consideration by Government.

## Rent Pressure Zone (RPZ) designations

The Minister designated the following 21 local electoral areas as Rent Pressure Zones; capping rent increases in these areas at 4% per annum for up to 3 years.

Date of RPZ designation by Minister	Local Electoral Area
24 December 2016	Dublin local authority areas and Cork City
27 January 2017	Ballincollig – Carrigaline, Co. Cork; Galway City Central; Galway City East; Galway City West; Celbridge – Leixlip, Co. Kildare; Naas, Co. Kildare; Kildare – Newbridge, Co. Kildare; Ashbourne, Co. Meath; Laytown – Bettystown, Co. Meath; Ratoath, Co. Meath; Bray, Co. Wicklow; and Wicklow, Co. Wicklow
30 March 2017	Cobh, Co. Cork; and Maynooth, Co. Kildare
20 September 2017	Greystones, Co. Wicklow; and Drogheda, Co. Louth

## Other Rental Sector Reforms

The Department updated the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations to bring them into line with modern requirements. Revised regulations came into effect on 1 July 2017. The Department also published in September 2017 a guidance document to assist Local Authorities in implementing the Regulations.

On 23 November 2017, the RTB published a comprehensive set of [guidelines](#) for landlords and tenants and those working in the rental sector for reference if a landlord intends to:

- (1) rely on an exemption from a RPZ by reason of a substantial change to the nature of a rental property; or
- (2) terminate a tenancy for the purposes of a substantial refurbishment or renovation of a rental property.

The RTB established a new Communications and Research Unit to increase the level of awareness of the RTB and its services and provide high quality, clear and accessible information to landlords, tenants and others across all communication channels. This has involved establishing a One Stop Shop, development of resources for landlords and tenants, and a research programme. The new one-stop-shop facility is available online via [www.rtb.ie](http://www.rtb.ie).

## Goal C - To provide a framework for the sustainable management of water resources from source to sea

### Irish Water

Over €930m in funding was provided to Irish Water from the Department in 2017, comprised of a provision of €639m provided from the Local Government Fund (LGF) and over €291m from the Vote. Equity investment of €270m was provided by the Minister for Finance from Central Funds to support increased investment in public water services infrastructure by Irish Water.



The Local Government Fund has been used as a source of subvention funding for Irish Water since its establishment in 2014, given that the former water-related elements of General Purpose Grants contributed to the water services costs that were previously met by local authorities. The funding to local authorities for the provision of water services since 2014 has been provided in the context of Service Level Agreements between Irish Water and individual authorities; therefore, local authorities were no longer provided with funding for this purpose directly from the Local Government Fund.

The Government decided on 6 September 2017 that in line with the recommendations of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Future Funding of Domestic Water Services, all State funding for domestic water services should be provided through the Department's Vote. Based on the estimated annual cost of replacing the previously envisaged domestic water charges revenue with public funding, an additional €239m was provided to Irish Water in 2017, bringing the total subvention in respect of domestic water services, between the Local Government Fund and the Department's Vote, to €753m in 2017.

### New Funding Model for Irish Water within the Economic Regulatory Process

Following on from the Confidence and Supply Arrangement between the Government and Fianna Fáil, an Expert Commission was established to examine the future funding of domestic water services. The Report of the Expert Commission was published in November 2016 and was considered by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Future Funding of Domestic Water Services (JOC) which published its report in April 2017, the recommendations of which were accepted by the Oireachtas.

The Department established an inter-Departmental working group which also included the Department of Finance, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, NewERA, the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU) and Irish Water, to examine the implications of the JOC recommendations for the funding and regulatory model. In September 2017, the Government agreed to the recommendations of the working group with regard to the provision of “funding certainty” to Irish Water, and for all Irish Water funding in respect of domestic water to be channelled through the Department’s Vote. These changes will improve the transparency and accountability arrangements for this expenditure.

Funding of Irish Water in respect of domestic water services is now determined as part of the normal budgetary and estimates process taking account of the allowed revenue set for Irish Water by the CRU. In setting the allowed revenue, the CRU distinguishes revenue to be recovered from the non-domestic and domestic sectors. The element relating to the domestic sector will fall to be funded from the Department’s Vote, save for any revenue arising from the excessive usage charge introduced by Part 3 of the Water Services Act 2017.

## Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Future Funding of Domestic Water Services

The Report of the Joint Oireachtas Committee<sup>6</sup> was adopted by both Houses of the Oireachtas in April 2017, thus significantly clarifying policy on the future direction of water services policy. This report recommended the removal of direct charges for water services provision in respect of domestic households and confirmed that delivery of water services should be by a national authority. Legislative provision for recommendations of the Report was made under the [Water Services Act 2017](#)<sup>7</sup>.



## Irish Water Transformation

The current delivery model for public water services, put in place in 2013, is based on Irish Water working with local authorities through Service Level Agreement (SLA) arrangements.

<sup>6</sup> Oireachtas Committee report on the future funding of domestic public water services in Ireland (April 2017) <http://www.oireachtas.ie/parliament/mediazone/pressreleases/2017/name-41671-en.html>

<sup>7</sup> Water Services Act 2017, Number 29 of 2017, enacted on 17 November 2017 <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2017/act/29/enacted/en/html>

Working with local authorities through these SLAs, Irish Water has made significant progress in establishing its capability, which has included investing over €2 billion in the public water system to date.

## Asset Transfer

The Water Services (No. 2) Act 2013 provides for the transfer, by Ministerial Order, of the property of a water services authority (a City, County or City and County Council) to Irish Water. The process requires that any land transferred to Irish Water must be clearly and unambiguously identified by reference to the Property Registration Authority (PRA) folio number.

During 2017, two Orders were signed by the Minister transferring 775 water services asset properties from local authorities to Irish Water. In total, 12 Ministerial Orders have been made, from the establishment of Irish Water in 2014 up to the end of 2017, with some 2,015 asset properties transferred to Irish Water (or 2,702 water services assets out of a total of the currently known overall asset base of 6,696). The focus has been on the transfer of larger assets, resulting in 64% of water supply capacity and 67% of waste water treatment capacity being transferred to Irish Water by end 2017.

## Domestic Water Charges Refunds

Irish Water was also directed by the Minister to refund domestic water charges paid by customers. The Department provided Exchequer funding of €177.5m to Irish Water in 2017 to cover the costs of refunding water charges to some 995,000 customers who had paid charges for the period 1 January 2015 to 30 June 2016. This included a provision of almost €5.9m in respect of administration costs. Exceeding the target that was agreed, some 93.5% of refunds were made by year end. Irish Water has continued to actively encourage remaining customers to provide details necessary to enable payments to be made.

## Water use allowance and excessive usage

The Joint Oireachtas Committee also recommended that charges in respect of excessive or wasteful use of water should be applied in the interests of conservation. The threshold amount beyond which a charge would be applied is determined by the Minister based on data provided by the CRU. The CRU reported to the Minister in December 2017 that, based on water consumption throughout 2016, it was estimated that:

- the average rate of demand per dwelling is 125,000 litres, or 125m<sup>3</sup>, per year;

- the average annual rate of demand by an individual is 47,000 litres, or 47m<sup>3</sup>, per person; and,
- the average incremental increase in demand in a household with more than 4 occupants is 25,000 litres, or 25m<sup>3</sup>, per person per year.

The Water Services Act 2017 prescribes that the 'threshold amount' be set at 1.7 times the average annual rate of demand. On this basis, 213,000 litres per year has been specified as the 'threshold amount' for each household. Dwellings having more than 4 residents are given an additional 'allowance amount' of 25,000 litres per year for every additional resident.

Charges will not apply where an occupant has a medical need which impacts on their demand for water. It is expected that 93% of households will not pay any charge for excessive use.

## Revision of Subsidies for Group Water Schemes

In line with the principle of equity of treatment and equivalent financial support being applied between households using public water services and those supplied from group water schemes, the pre-1 January 2015 maximum subsidies available to householders on group water schemes were retrospectively restored for the period 1 January 2015 to 30 June 2016.

The maximum subsidy per house in private group water schemes increased from €140 per household to €231. An increased maximum subsidy of €281 per household is now available for small schemes of less than 100 houses that are willing, in the interests of providing in the long-term a more sustainable water supply to their members, to progress towards rationalisation or amalgamation with other schemes. The maximum subsidy per house for public group water schemes has increased from €70 per household to €115. These are schemes that supply their members with water that is provided by Irish Water.

The scheme of subsidies to support the costs of group water schemes that have long-term Operation and Maintenance Contracts for the delivery of water was also revised. In December 2017 further changes to subsidy payments to group water schemes were announced. These will take effect from 1 January 2018.

## Reform of the Rural Water Sector

2017 is the second year of operating under the new multi-annual capital funding framework for the Rural Water Programme. The new structure provides greater funding certainty for priority

investment needs and supports proper planning and sustainable development in rural areas. It also supports a more professional approach to the management of assets as well as rationalisation and amalgamation of schemes. Ultimately, it will help Ireland fulfil its commitments under the Water Framework Directive and lead to improvements in drinking water quality in group water schemes.

In 2017, the Department recouped just over €15.3 million to local authorities for capital expenditure across the six measures of the Rural Water Programme. In addition, just under €19.8 million was recouped to local authorities for subsidy payments made to group water schemes as a contribution to the domestic element of the schemes' operational costs and towards local authority costs in administering the programme and the subsidy scheme.

### **Draft River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021**

River basin management planning is the means through which Ireland communicates the measures being taken to meet the objectives of the Water Framework Directive, which requires all water bodies to be of at least 'good' ecological status by 2027. The draft Plan for the period 2018 – 2021 was published in February 2017. It sets out our priority objectives for water quality improvement up to 2021 and outlines a programme of measures to achieve these objectives over the intervening period.

The draft Plan was subject to a six-month public consultation process in 2017. The views of the public and representative organisations were elicited through extensive consultation at both national policy and local levels (the latter managed by the Local Authority Waters and Communities Office (LAWCO)). Over 120 town hall meetings were held and over 2,000 written submissions were received. The views expressed directly inform the formulation of the measures contained in the Plan.

### **Marine Spatial Planning**

A dedicated Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) Unit was established in the Department in 2017. The Unit will be supported by technical advisory colleagues in the Department and by the Marine Institute which has a key support role in terms of technical and scientific input to the development of the Marine Spatial Plan.

A high-level Inter-Departmental Group was established to lead and oversee the MSP process. This group is made up of high-level representatives of Government departments whose

policies and functions are relevant to the Plan. The group also contains a representative from the local government sector and from the Marine Institute.

In December, Ministers published [\*Towards a Marine Spatial Plan for Ireland\*](#) – a roadmap for the development of Ireland's first marine spatial plan. The roadmap marked the start-up or activation phase in which the Government's proposed approach to developing MSP was announced and initial contact made with stakeholders.

## Marine Environment and Foreshore

Consenting under the Foreshore Acts in respect of developments and activities on the foreshore continued during 2017. Thirty-five new consent applications were received during the year for a range of projects and activities on the foreshore including applications for waste water outfalls, various one day events and a small scale marine energy test site. Work also continued on the drafting of the Maritime Area and Foreshore (Amendment) Bill.

Implementation of the Monitoring Programme and Programme of Measures as required by the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), including citizen activation and awareness raising measures and research, continued with the objective of achieving good environmental status by 2020.

Following a successful pilot programme in 2016, the Global Citizen Marine Environment Module of the Green Schools programme was rolled out nationwide in September 2017 and a second 2 day Marine Environment Conference was held to showcase further best practise in schools. The theme was also presented to the International National Operators Meeting of 72 countries in November 2017 in Paris as an example of international best practice. This programme is supported by the Department under the MSFD formal Programme of Measures.

In addition, a Public Consultation was undertaken in 2017 on the proposal to legislate for the prohibition of microbeads in certain products.

## Nitrates

By December 2017, the Department, in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, completed Ireland's review of its third Nitrates Action Programme 2014-2017, leading to the introduction of a fourth Nitrates Action Programme 2018-2021, which was given effect through the European Union (Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Waters)

Regulations 2017 (S.I. 605 of 2017). The Programme is designed to prevent pollution of surface waters and groundwater from agricultural sources.

## **An Fóram Uisce**

An Fóram Uisce was established on a non-statutory basis in 2017 with members from a variety of stakeholder groups representing sectors with various interests in water issues. An Fóram Uisce will debate and analyse issues related to water as a resource, including, but not limited to:

- Issues of water quality;
- Rural water issues;
- Water issues relating to climate change;
- Issues affecting customers of Irish Water; and
- Implementation of the Water Framework Directive

An Fóram Uisce is to be established on a statutory basis in 2018 pursuant to the Water Services Act 2017.

## **Sustainability Support and Advisory Programme**

The Minister, together with the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine and Dairy Industry Ireland, launched a new Agricultural Sustainability Support and Advisory Programme in November 2017. The Programme is a new approach to achieving improvement in water quality, strengthening the delivery of Ireland's obligations under the Water Framework Directive. It includes the establishment and joint funding of a resource of 30 Agricultural Sustainability Advisors who will work under a shared training and management structure, to be put in place by Teagasc. They will proactively advise and work with farmers to protect and improve water quality. The initiative places a strong emphasis on encouraging behavioural change and facilitating knowledge transfer.

## Goal D - To support and enable democratic, responsive and effective local government, effective electoral management and high quality fire services and emergency management.

### Supporting and Developing Local Government

Work continued in 2017 on the preparation of a report on local government reform, as outlined in the Programme for Partnership Government. Two papers on local government reform have been submitted to Government and the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Housing, Planning and Local Government, dealing with the issues of: Municipal Governance, including the questions of local electoral areas and town status; and Local Authority Boundaries where urban development crosses local authority boundaries. Further proposals on other local government issues identified in the PPG such as local authority functions, leadership, and governance and devolution will also be submitted. 2017 also saw the transfer of Drogheda Port Company from the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport to Louth County Council.



### Local Government Finance

The Department has given full effect to the Government commitment in their statement of priorities by confirming the implementation of local retention of Local Property Tax (LPT) for 2017. 80% of LPT is retained locally to fund services. The remaining 20% is re-distributed to provide equalisation funding to local authority areas with lower property tax bases due to the variance in property values across the State. Local authorities received LPT allocations of €500.8m for 2017.

The Department continued its monitoring and oversight of the financial performance of local authorities throughout 2017. This included reviewing the key financial indicators in their financial reports (Budgets and Annuals Financial Statements) and working with local authorities to address issues impacting on their finances.

### Reform of the Local Government Fund

Arising from the recommendations of the Report of the Working Group on the Future Funding Model for Irish Water and consistent with the recommendations of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Future Funding of Domestic Water Services, it was agreed that all State

funding to Irish Water in respect of domestic water services would be channelled through the Vote of the Department and therefore funded from general taxation. As the subvention to Irish Water was no longer to be paid from the Local Government Fund (LGF) a number of consequential changes were made:

- Local Property Tax is now paid directly to the LGF by the Revenue Commissioners, rather than passing through the Exchequer;
- Motor Tax is now paid into the Exchequer (with the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (DTTAS) taking over DHPLG's functions in relation to motor tax).
- The allocation to the DTTAS to fund regional and local roads and other public transport infrastructure is now funded directly through the DTTAS Vote instead of being transferred as an Appropriation-in-Aid from the LGF.
- There is no requirement for a payment to the Exchequer from the LGF.

These changes were given effect by the Water Services Act 2017 and as a result, the LGF has reverted to being much closer to its original purpose of funding local government.

## Commercial Rates

During 2017, the Department worked closely with the local authorities to improve collection levels of commercial rates. The Department and the sector participated on the Debt Management Project Board, established by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in 2016. The Department worked with the sector on the preparation of a business case for stronger enforcement powers to be made available to the local authorities to facilitate higher levels of collections of rates. The business case was endorsed by the Project Board and the introduction of new legislation in this area was recommended in the Board's final report.

Following on from a Government decision, requesting the Minister to bring forward legislative proposals to address the recommendations of the Debt Management Project Board, the Department prepared the General Scheme of a Rates Bill, which the Government approved for drafting in April 2017. The General Scheme includes the measures outlined in the business case referred to above, in addition to more wide-ranging proposals to modernise the body of legislation rating to commercial rates, which is currently spread over more than 20 separate enactments dating back to 1838. The text of the Bill is being drafted by the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel and it is hoped that the Bill will be published in 2018.

## Local Government Boundary Alterations

In April 2017, a report by the expert Advisory Group established by Government to re-examine local government arrangements in Cork advised that an expanded City Council area offered the best solution in terms of the structure of local government and a strong focus on the needs and demand of the metropolitan area. This approach was accepted by Government and an Implementation Oversight Group was established to provide a definite boundary configuration and to oversee arrangements for the boundary alteration. The Oversight Group submitted a report in December 2017 outlining the proposed delineation of an extended boundary for Cork City. The Government agreed the boundary proposals and also gave approval to bring forward legislation to implement them. The Cork boundary alteration will be one of the most significant in the history of the State and its implementation will have considerable organisational and other implications.

In 2015 the Minister announced a review of local government arrangements in Galway and established a committee to undertake the review. The Galway Local Government Review Committee's report recommended the establishment of an amalgamated Authority of both Galway City and County Councils and also recommended the establishment of an Expert Advisory Group.

In May 2017 the 1st interim report of the Expert Advisory Group on Local Government arrangements in Galway determined that the overall objective of an amalgamated Authority is to deliver on existing potential, to provide an enhanced opportunity to respond in creative ways to the unique challenges and opportunities that exist, to be a driver of regional development, to avail of opportunities for enhanced economic development and enhanced delivery in priority areas such as housing, as well as the opportunity for a more strategic approach to service development across a range of activities.

## Local Authority Staffing

There were some 27,450 full-time equivalent posts in Local Authorities as of 31 December 2017, up from 26,800 posts at the end of 2016.

The Department undertook a review of the essential qualification requirements for local authority posts in 2017. The objective of the review was to modernise and clarify qualifications and bring consistency across the sector ahead of a period of intense recruitment in the local authority sector, particularly with regard to the professional and technical posts needed to support the goals of *Rebuilding Ireland*.

The review involved extensive consultation with a broad array of stakeholders including, other civil and public sector organisations sectors, public sector unions, relevant professional representative bodies, educational bodies and the Public Appointments Service. Following the review, new and updated qualifications and essential requirements in Engineering, Architectural Services, Building and Quantity Surveying among others, were declared by the Minister.

### Shared Services Payroll - MyPay

Local Authorities continued to be brought on board the MyPay shared services for payroll and pensions during 2017. By the end of the year MyPay was providing payroll services for 28 Local Authorities and pension services for 15.



The Department provided support in the area of pension policy to the Local Government Sector and State Agencies, including Irish Water and Ervia in 2017. The Department also continued to oversee the administration of the Single Public Service Pension Scheme in the Local Government Sector.

### National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management (NDFEM)

The key role of the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management is development and oversight of local authority provided fire services. The Directorate is acknowledged also to have played a key role in devising and developing all aspects of emergency management arrangements in Ireland since it was established in 2009.



The NDFEM has supported local authorities in achieving fire safety and consistent quality fire services for their communities in 2017. Specifically, following the fire in Grenfell Tower in London, the NDFEM worked with local authorities to review fire safety in multi-storey, multi-unit social housing and also to review fire safety in medium to high rise buildings.

Capital funding amounting to €10.9 million was recouped to Local Authorities in the course of 2017 for Fire Stations, Fire Service Equipment and Fire Service Vehicles. Extensive Fire Safety training programmes were managed and co-ordinated by the NDFEM and delivered to the Fire

Services throughout 2017. Fire Safety Promotions activities were also managed and co-ordinated by the NDFEM in 2017, in line with the National Policy “Keeping Communities Safe”.

In June 2017, the NDFEM was tasked by the Minister with convening and co-ordinating a high-level Fire Safety Task Force to lead a re-appraisal of fire safety in Ireland in the wake of the devastating Grenfell Tower fire in London. The work of the Task Force was advanced significantly with a view to presenting a report detailing its findings to the Minister in 2018.

On the emergency management front, the NDFEM co-ordinated and led the “Whole-of-Government” response to ex-Hurricane Ophelia which struck Ireland on 16 October 2017. A total of €7.3m was subsequently secured and distributed to local authorities to fund their response and clean-up operations. The NDFEM will prepare a review report on the event, and other more recent severe weather emergencies, which is intended to be published in 2018. The report will identify learning points to further enhance the response to major emergencies.

The NDFEM commenced a comprehensive review of the Framework for Major Emergency Management in 2017. The Framework enables the Principal Response Agencies to prepare for and make co-ordinated responses to major emergencies, such as ex-Hurricane Ophelia. The NDFEM also made significant contributions to the Office of Emergency Planning’s work on “Strategic Emergency Management”, which addressed national arrangements for the delivery of effective emergency management.

## **Electoral Management**

Following publication of the final results for Census 2016 in early April 2017, the Constituency Commission finalised and presented its report to the Ceann Comhairle in late June 2017. The Constituency Commission recommended that the number of members of Dáil Éireann should be increased from 158 to 160 having regard to changes in the population and that there should be 39 constituencies of which 18 were recommended to remain unchanged from the previous review completed in 2011.

The Electoral (Amendment) (Dáil Constituencies) Act 2017, which gives effect to the recommendations of the Constituency Commission, passed both Houses of the Oireachtas in mid-December 2017 and was signed by the President on 23 December 2017. The Act, which will come into effect following the next dissolution of Dáil Éireann, also amends section 6(2)(a) of the Electoral Act 1997 to provide for the total number of members of the Dáil to be no less

than 166 and no more than 172 following the next review of Dáil constituencies (i.e. due after Census 2021).

## Goal E - To serve society through the production and communication of reliable weather and climate information to protect life and property and to further enhance Met Éireann's role as the authoritative voice on Meteorology in Ireland.

In 2017, Met Éireann put in place a new 10 year Strategy "Making Ireland Weather and Climate Prepared" which focuses on scientific, technical and service developments to help Irish society to be ready for and responsive to weather and climate risks.



Communication and reach of high quality forecast and climate information was broadened and strengthened with the successful signing of a new contract with RTE and the commencement of development of the new website and Met Éireann app. Met Éireann was also centrally involved in our preparations for Ex-Hurricane Ophelia which struck the country on 16 October 2017.

### Weather and Climate Services

Key developments in 2017 included:

- Commenced project to modernise the Climate Observations Network.
- Contributed to climate-change research through the successful completion of a 35-year (1981-2015), high resolution 're-analysis' of Ireland's climate (MERA).
- Continued to maintain and develop the capability and performance of Met Éireann forecasts by enhancing and upgrading the *HARMONIE* computer based weather prediction models.
- Advanced aerosol and greenhouse gas monitoring equipment (ACSM and ICOS instruments) were installed and monitoring started at Valentia Observatory.



- Successfully migrated Met Éireann's NWP<sup>8</sup> suite to ECMWF<sup>9</sup>.
- The development of ensemble weather forecast system commenced in 2017 and it is expected to be implemented by the end of 2018.
- Commenced engagement on research projects in collaboration with partners to support development of climate services and aviation services through successful awards of (1) ERA4CS<sup>10</sup> (2) successful awarded CEF calls.
- Operational geolocation forecasting services commenced in April 2017. The system provides 10 day forecasts for any location in Ireland with the extraction of post-processed high-quality forecast information using state-of-delivery systems.
- Commenced engagement on research projects in collaboration with partners to support development of climate services and aviation services through successful awards of (1) ERA4CS (2) successful awarded CEF calls.

## Aviation Services

Met Eireann's Aviation Services Division retained designation as the Meteorological Service Provider for regulated services for 2017. Service provision was maintained on a 24/7 basis without interruption for the entire year ensuring a strong contribution was made to ensuring safety and efficiency of commercial flights within Ireland's Flight Information Region.

Work commenced on the Airport Modernisation and Automation Project (AMAP) to install state-of-the-art observing systems at Irish airports. This will enable Ireland to meet its obligations under global and EU Regulations.

Bespoke weather services were also provided to individual airport authorities to facilitate significant airport infrastructural works. This service limits both the economic cost to airports and the potential for disruption to the commuter.

## National Flood Forecasting

A Memorandum of Understanding and Financial Agreements were finalised with the OPW to support the establishment of the Flood Forecast Centre. A contract was awarded for the

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<sup>8</sup> NWP: Numerical Weather Prediction models are complex mathematical simulations of the atmosphere used to predict the weather based on current weather conditions. They are run on specialised, state of the art High Performance Computing (HPC) platforms on an operational 24/7 365 basis.

<sup>9</sup> ECMWF: The *European Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasts* (a European inter-Governmental organisation).

<sup>10</sup> ERA4CS: ERA-NET Consortium "European Research Area for Climate Services

provision of two Hydrologist specialists to support the project to establish a Flood Forecasting Centre in Met Éireann. In addition, a Request for Tender for the Provision of Services to review, develop and trial of a range of Hydrological Models was issued.

## Corporate Information

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### Corporate Governance

The Department's first Corporate Governance Framework was published in April 2016, in accordance with the Civil Service Renewal Programme. Following on from the reconfiguration of the Department in mid-2017 and the transfer of community affairs functions to the new Department of Rural and Community Development, this framework was updated in October 2017.

### Internal Audit

The Department's Internal Audit Unit completed six internal audits and eight audit reviews/follow-ups during 2017. The Department's Audit Committee held four meetings during the year.

### Public Sector Duty

Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 places a responsibility on all public bodies to promote equality, prevent discrimination and protect the human rights of its staff and customers alike. This responsibility is known as the Public Sector Duty and is a legal obligation. In 2017, a cross-Divisional internal working group, representative of all Divisions of the Department, was established to address the implementation of our Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty.

### Irish Language Commitments

The Department remained committed in 2017 to providing quality services in Irish and/or bilingually to its customers as set out in our *Irish Language Scheme 2017 - 2020*, and to the statutory obligations arising on foot of the Official Languages Act. The Department published its new Irish Language scheme in March 2017 to cover the period up to 2020.

### Freedom of Information (FOI) and Access to Information on the Environment (AIE)

In 2017, the Department received 351 Freedom of Information requests. In addition, we received 26 requests under the Access to Information on the Environment (AIE) regulations.

## Quality Customer Service

As outlined in our Customer Charter, 2016-2018, the Department is committed to providing high quality, courteous and timely services to all its customers in accordance with the 12 Guiding Principles for Quality Customer Service. In 2017, some 1,051 queries were received in our Customer Service Office and 1,044 of these were responded to within the 15 day timeframe set out in the Charter. These queries covered a broad range of topics, as diverse as motor tax, housing queries and seaweed harvesting rights, reflecting the broad range of responsibilities held by the Department in 2017.

Month	No. Received	No. resolved in 15 days	No. not resolved in 15 days
January	86	82	4
February	80	79	1
March	93	93	
April	71	71	
May	93	92	1
June	93	93	
July	105	104	1
August	111	111	
September	101	101	
October	81	81	
November	97	97	
December	40	40	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1051</b>	<b>1044</b>	<b>7</b>

## Supporting the Parliamentary Process

Parliamentary Questions	2016	2017
Questions Received	2,966	3,575
Questions Answered <sup>11</sup>	2,674	3,349
Question type:		
Oral	243	432
Written	2,431	2,917
Topical Issues Debates		
	174 <sup>12</sup>	185
Commencement Matters		
	48	75
Representations and Invitations		
Representations <sup>13</sup>	3,170	3,946
Invitations <sup>14</sup>	440	633

## Human Resources

A new Departmental structure took effect on 1<sup>st</sup> August when our Community functions moved to the newly formed Department of Rural and Community Development and our Department was renamed the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.

The number of staff serving in the Department through various working patterns at the end of December 2017 was 695, equating to 633 full-time equivalent posts. A number of staff were recruited and promoted through a variety of different routes in 2017, including 23 external appointments and 49 promotions through 21 internal and open competitions.

Staff also continued to avail of a range of work/life balance schemes including work-sharing, parental leave, career breaks, study leave and shorter working year arrangements. The Department introduced a number of employee engagement initiatives including a new mobility

<sup>11</sup> The remainder of questions were disallowed, withdrawn or transferred.

<sup>12</sup> 'Topical Issues' debates include Adjournment Debates from 2016.

<sup>13</sup> Represents totals from Minister's and Ministers of State's Offices.

<sup>14</sup> Represents totals from Minister's and Ministers of State's Offices.

protocol, an induction procedure and an exit interview procedure. Sick leave in the Department was 3.4%, below the Civil Service average.

## Training and Development

The Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) continued to be used as a key tool in support of improved organisational performance, with an 83% compliance rate achieved.



Building capability/capacity through the provision of relevant and appropriate training across all grades and Departmental locations is a priority. Support is provided to staff undertaking formal education in subjects relevant to their work through dedicated learning supports and the Refund of Fees Scheme. 2017 saw the launch of OneLearning across the Civil Service with the phased introduction of the new suite of 37 customised, responsive, high-quality and engaging training modules, addressing training needs at both individual and organisational levels. In 2017, staff members undertook studies in areas such as housing, law, statistics and economics, areas which have been identified as priorities for capacity-building.

## Civil Service Financial Management Shared Services (FMSS)

Preparatory work as part of the Department's planned transition to the Civil Service Financial Management Shared Services (FMSS) in early 2019 continued throughout the year. This included participation in a number of expert working groups established by the FMSS project to identify the optimal system and process design. The Department's formal implementation engagement with the FMSS project commenced in December 2017.



## Prompt Payment

In 2017, the Department paid 85.16% of all invoices within 15 calendar days, and 98.35% of all invoices within 30 calendar days.

In respect of the year overall, the Department incurred late payment interest charges of €713.91. The value of all late payments as a percentage of all invoiced payments in 2017 was 0.005%. In addition to the late payment interest, compensation costs amounting to €3,460 were paid in 2017.

## Energy Efficiency

An energy performance indicator (EnPI) is a way of measuring an organisation's energy performance. The indicator adopted here is energy, expressed in kilowatt hours, per square metre of office space. Over the period 2009 to 2017, the Department's energy consumption fell by 67.17 kWh per square metre, a reduction of 24.5%.

Energy Performance Indicator (EnPI)	
	kWh/Floor Area (m2)
2009 EnPI (Baseline Year)	274.47
2017 EnPI	207.3
Energy Efficiency Gain	67.17
Percentage Energy Efficiency Gain	24.5%

The Building Energy Rating for the Custom House is C2, Wexford C3 and Ballina C3. Typical buildings of each type would be rated at E1.

In terms of energy efficiency, the C2 rating puts the Custom House in the top third of office buildings, **of any age**, in Ireland. Given its age and the fact that it is a protected building, the Custom House's C2 rating would be considered to be exceptional.

## APPENDICES

### **APPENDIX 1:     Legislative Activity in 2017**

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#### **Relevant Acts of the Oireachtas in 2017**

- [PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT \(AMENDMENT\) ACT 2017 – No. 20 OF 2017](#)
- [WATER SERVICES ACT 2017 - NO. 29 OF 2017](#)
- [ELECTORAL \(AMENDMENT\) \(DÁIL CONSTITUENCIES\) ACT 2017 – No. 39 OF 2017](#)

## Statutory Instruments published by the Department in 2017

- [S.I. No. 4/2017 - BUILDING REGULATIONS \(AMENDMENT\) REGULATIONS 2017.](#)
- [S.I. No. 7/2017 - PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT \(HOUSING\) AND RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES ACT 2016 \(COMMENCEMENT OF CERTAIN PROVISIONS\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. No. 17/2017 - HOUSING \(STANDARDS FOR RENTED HOUSES\) REGULATIONS 2017.](#)
- [S.I. No. 18/2017 - RENT PRESSURE ZONE \(LOCAL ELECTORAL AREA OF BALLINCOLLIG-CARRIGALINE\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. No. 19/2017 - RENT PRESSURE ZONE \(LOCAL ELECTORAL AREA OF GALWAY CITY WEST\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. No. 20/2017 - RENT PRESSURE ZONE \(LOCAL ELECTORAL AREA OF NAAS\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. No. 21/2017 - RENT PRESSURE ZONE \(LOCAL ELECTORAL AREA OF GALWAY CITY CENTRAL\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. No. 22/2017 - RENT PRESSURE ZONE \(LOCAL ELECTORAL AREA OF CELBRIDGE-LEIXLIP\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. No. 23/2017 - RENT PRESSURE ZONE \(LOCAL ELECTORAL AREA OF GALWAY CITY EAST\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. No. 24/2017 - RENT PRESSURE ZONE \(LOCAL ELECTORAL AREA OF WICKLOW\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. No. 25/2017 - RENT PRESSURE ZONE \(LOCAL ELECTORAL AREA OF BRAY\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. No. 26/2017 - RENT PRESSURE ZONE \(LOCAL ELECTORAL AREA OF RATOATH\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. No. 27/2017 - RENT PRESSURE ZONE \(LOCAL ELECTORAL AREA OF ASHBOURNE\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. No. 28/2017 - RENT PRESSURE ZONE \(LOCAL ELECTORAL AREA OF LAYTOWN-BETTYSTOWN\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. No. 29/2017 - RENT PRESSURE ZONE \(LOCAL ELECTORAL AREA OF KILDARE-NEWBRIDGE\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. No. 31/2017 - PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT \(HOUSING\) AND RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES ACT 2016 \(COMMENCEMENT OF CERTAIN PROVISIONS\) \(No. 2\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. No. 55/2017 - HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENT \(SECTION 50\) REGULATIONS 2017.](#)
- [S.I. No. 56/2017 - HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENT \(AMENDMENT\) REGULATIONS 2017.](#)
- [S.I. No. 57/2017 - BUILDING REGULATIONS \(PART B AMENDMENT\) REGULATIONS 2017.](#)
- [S.I. No. 109/2017 - RENT PRESSURE ZONE \(LOCAL ELECTORAL AREA OF MAYNOOTH\) ORDER 2017.](#)

- [S.I. NO. 113/2017 - RENT PRESSURE ZONE \(LOCAL ELECTORAL AREA OF COBH\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. NO. 118/2017 - WATER SERVICES ACT 2014 \(EXTENSION OF SUSPENSION OF DOMESTIC WATER CHARGES\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. NO. 131/2017 - HOUSING, PLANNING, COMMUNITY AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT \(DELEGATION OF MINISTERIAL FUNCTIONS\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. NO. 159/2017 - RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES \(AMENDMENT\) ACT 2015 \(SECTION 17\(C\)\) \(COMMENCEMENT\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. NO. 161/2017 - SOCIAL HOUSING ASSESSMENTS \(SUMMARY\) REGULATIONS 2013 \(REVOCATION\) REGULATIONS 2017.](#)
- [S.I. NO. 265/2017 - EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES \(MARINE STRATEGY FRAMEWORK\) \(AMENDMENT\) REGULATIONS 2017.](#)
- [S.I. NO. 266/2017 – PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000 \(DESIGNATION OF STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT ZONE: IRELAND WEST AIRPORT KNOCK\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. NO. 270/2017 - PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT \(HOUSING\) AND RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES ACT 2016 \(COMMENCEMENT OF CERTAIN PROVISIONS\) \(NO. 3\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. NO. 271/2017 - PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT \(STRATEGIC HOUSING DEVELOPMENT\) REGULATIONS 2017\).](#)
- [S.I. NO. 329/2017 - WATER SERVICES \(NO. 2\) ACT 2013 \(PROPERTY VESTING DAY\) \(NO. 10\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. NO. 330/2017 - WATER SERVICES ACT 2014 \(EXTENSION OF SUSPENSION OF DOMESTIC WATER CHARGES\) \(AMENDMENT\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. NO. 341/2017 - PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT \(HOUSING\) AND RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES ACT 2016 \(COMMENCEMENT OF SECTION 28\(2\)\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. NO. 342/2017 - PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT \(AMENDMENT\) REGULATIONS 2017.](#)
- [S.I. NO. 352/2017 - HOUSING, PLANNING, COMMUNITY AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT \(DELEGATION OF MINISTERIAL FUNCTIONS\) \(NO. 2\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. NO. 353/2017 - APPOINTMENT OF SPECIAL ADVISER \(MINISTER FOR HOUSING, PLANNING, COMMUNITY AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. NO. 357/2017 - COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT \(TRANSFER OF DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION AND MINISTERIAL FUNCTIONS\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. NO. 358/2017 - HOUSING, PLANNING, COMMUNITY AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT \(ALTERATION OF NAME OF DEPARTMENT AND TITLE OF MINISTER\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. NO. 401/2017 - RENT PRESSURE ZONE \(LOCAL ELECTORAL AREA OF GREYSTONES\) ORDER 2017.](#)

- [S.I. NO. 402/2017 - RENT PRESSURE ZONE \(LOCAL ELECTORAL AREA OF DROGHEDA\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. NO. 439/2017 - ENVIRONMENT \(MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS\) ACT 2015 \(PART 3\) \(COMMENCEMENT\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. NO. 464/2017 - EUROPEAN UNION \(DRINKING WATER\) \(AMENDMENT\) REGULATIONS 2017.](#)
- [S.I. NO. 473/2017 - HOUSING, PLANNING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT \(DELEGATION OF MINISTERIAL FUNCTIONS\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. NO. 483/2017 - VALUATION ACT 2001 \(LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL\) \(RATE LIMITATION\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. NO. 484/2017 - LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM ACT 2014 \(RATES\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. NO. 485/2017 - VALUATION ACT 2001 \(OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL\) \(RATE LIMITATION\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. NO. 486/2017 - VALUATION ACT 2001 \(ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL\) \(RATE LIMITATION\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. NO. 487/2017 - VALUATION ACT 2001 \(CARLOW COUNTY COUNCIL\) \(RATE LIMITATION\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. NO. 488/2017 - VALUATION ACT 2001 \(SLIGO COUNTY COUNCIL\) \(RATE LIMITATION\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. NO. 489/2017 - VALUATION ACT 2001 \(KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL\) \(RATE LIMITATION\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. NO. 490/2017 - VALUATION ACT 2001 \(WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL\) \(RATE LIMITATION\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. NO. 491/2017 - VALUATION ACT 2001 \(KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL\)\(RATE LIMITATION\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. NO. 492/2017 - VALUATION ACT 2001 \(SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL\) \(RATE LIMITATION\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. NO. 493/2017 - VALUATION ACT 2001 \(LEITRIM COUNTY COUNCIL\)\(RATE LIMITATION\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. NO. 494/2017 - LOCAL GOVERNMENT \(EXPENSES OF LOCAL AUTHORITY MEMBERS\) \(AMENDMENT\) REGULATIONS 2017.](#)
- [S.I. NO. 511/2017 - WATER SERVICES ACT 2017 \(COMMENCEMENT\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. NO. 534/2017 - THE ERVIA SEVERANCE GRATUITY SCHEME 2017.](#)
- [S.I. NO. 538/2017 - BUILDING REGULATIONS \(TGD PART L AMENDMENT\) REGULATIONS 2017 | DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING, PLANNING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT.](#)

- [S.I. NO. 556/2017 - PYRITE RESOLUTION \(STANDARD FOR TESTING\) REGULATIONS 2017.](#)
- [S.I. NO. 571/2017 - APPOINTMENT OF SPECIAL ADVISER \(MINISTER FOR HOUSING, PLANNING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. NO. 590/2017 - PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT \(HOUSING\) AND RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES ACT 2016 \(COMMENCEMENT OF SECTION 49\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. NO. 597/2017 - WATER SERVICES ACT 2007 \(THRESHOLD AMOUNT AND ALLOWANCE AMOUNT\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. NO. 601/2017 - MOTOR TAX \(TRANSFER OF DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION AND MINISTERIAL FUNCTIONS\) ORDER 2017.](#)
- [S.I. NO. 605/2017 - EUROPEAN UNION \(GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICE FOR PROTECTION OF WATERS\) REGULATIONS 2017.](#)
- [S.I. NO. 607/2017 - WATER SERVICES \(NO. 2\) ACT 2013 \(PROPERTY VESTING DAY\) \(NO. 2\) ORDER 2017.](#)

## APPENDIX 2: Publications in 2017

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The main publications produced by the Department during 2017 are detailed and hyperlinked below.

[Annual Report 2016](#)

[Annual Report 2016 - Section 22 Protected Disclosures Act - Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government](#)

[Be Winter Ready Booklet](#)

[Building Regulations 2011 - Technical Guidance Document L - Conservation of Fuel and Energy – Dwellings \(2017\)](#)

[Building Regulations 2017 - Technical Guidance Document L - Conservation of Fuel and Energy - Buildings other than Dwellings](#)

[Building Regulations 2017 - Technical Guidance Document B - Fire Safety - Volume 2 - Dwelling Houses](#)

[Code of Practice for Fire Safety in New and Existing Community Dwelling Houses](#)

[Cork Local Government Implementation Oversight Group - Proposal for delineation of extended boundary of Cork City](#)

[Cork Local Government Implementation Oversight Group Outline Implementation Plan for Boundary Alteration-Oct 2017](#)

[Corporate Governance Framework - Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government](#)

[Draft River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018 - 2021](#)

[Framework for Enhancing Fire Safety in Dwellings where concerns arise](#)

[Guide to Minimum Standards in Rented Accommodation \(Sept 2017\)](#)

[Guidelines for Housing Authorities - Minimum Standards in Rented Accommodation \(Sept 2017\)](#)

[HAP Tenant Information Booklet](#)

[HAP Landlord Information Booklet](#)

[HAP Information Leaflet](#)

[Housing Supply Coordination Task Force for Dublin Q3 returns 2017](#)

[Interim Report of the Expert Advisory Group on Local Government Arrangements in Galway Ireland 2040, Our Plan, Issues and Choices February 2017](#)

[Ireland 2040 – Our Plan National Planning Framework \(Draft\)](#)

[Irish Language Scheme 2017 – 2020](#)

[Local Authority Budget 2017](#)

[Local Government Fund Account - 2016](#)

[Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund \(LIHAF\) - List of approved projects;](#)  
[Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund \(LIHAF\) - Project descriptions;](#)  
[Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund \(LIHAF\) - FAQs](#)  
[Oireachtas Committee Report on Funding of Water Services - Frequently Asked Questions](#)  
[Overview of the work of the Local Government Audit Service - 2016](#)  
[Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 - Guidelines issued by the Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government under section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000](#)  
[Protected Disclosure Policy 2017](#)  
[Repair and Leasing Scheme \(RLS\) - Frequently Asked Questions](#)  
[Report of the Carlow Boundary Review Committee](#)  
[Report of the Drogheda Boundary Review Committee](#)  
[Report of the Expert Advisory Group on Local Government Arrangements in Cork-April 2017](#)  
[Report of the Expert Panel on Concrete Blocks](#)  
[Report of the Waterford Boundary Committee](#)  
[Report of the Joint Committee on the Future Funding of Domestic Water Services](#)  
[Report of Working Group on Future Funding Model for Irish Water](#)  
[Resolving Unfinished Housing Developments - 2016 Annual Progress Report](#)  
[Review of Funding for Traveller-specific Accommodation and the Implementation of Traveller Accommodation Programmes](#)  
[Review of the Mortgage to Rent Scheme \(February 2017\)](#)  
[Second Quarterly Progress Report on Rebuilding Ireland Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness](#)  
[Statement of Strategy 2016 – 2019](#)  
[Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments - Guidelines for Planning Authorities - Draft Update \(Dec. 2017\)](#)  
[Third Report on the Implementation of the National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011-2016](#)  
[Third Quarterly Progress Report on Rebuilding Ireland Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness](#)  
[Towards a Marine Spatial Plan for Ireland](#)  
[Voting at presidential elections by citizens resident outside the State - Options paper - 22 March 2017](#)

## Additional Publications from Met Éireann in 2017

[Climatological Note No. 16, Long-term Temperature Averages for Ireland, 1981-2010.](#)

[Monthly Climate and Weather Statements](#)

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## APPENDIX 3: Public Consultations undertaken in 2017

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[Design Standards for New Apartments - Guidelines for Planning Authorities - Draft Update \(Dec. 2017\)](#)

[Draft fourth Nitrates Action Programme: Public Consultation on Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment](#)

[European Commission - Public Consultation on the European Citizens' Initiative](#)

[Housing Economics Research Programme - Invitation for Research Topic Suggestions](#)

[Ireland 2040 – Our Plan – Issues and Choices](#)

[Public Consultation – A Review of the Rent Predictability Measure](#)

[Public Consultation on Ireland's Nitrates Action Programme](#)

[Public Consultation on Review of Rebuilding Ireland Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness](#)

[Public Consultation on the draft River Basin Management Plans for Ireland 2018-2021](#)

[Public Consultation on the proposal to legislate for the prohibition of microbeads in certain products](#)

[Public Consultation on the Review of Part L \(Conservation of Fuel and Energy for Buildings other than Dwellings\) 2017](#)

[Public Consultation on the review of the Tenant \(Incremental\) Purchase Scheme 2016](#)

[Public Consultation on the transposition of Directive 2014/52/EU: Environmental Impact Assessment](#)

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