



Supporting The Four Pathways: Enabling a Sustainable Housing System

The current context:

The vision for Ireland's housing system over the longer term is to have a steady supply of houses in the right place. Economic, social and environmental sustainability must be built into this system. Regulatory reforms will also be introduced to ensure that our planning system is plan-led and fit for purpose. Compliance in the construction and housing sectors is vital so that they enjoy the confidence of all.

Increasing housing supply requires critical infrastructure, including transport, utility supplies and communication services to accompany housing. The 33,000 homes that will be constructed annually will need to form sustainable communities where people of all incomes live side-by-side, with the right community infrastructure in place to help our cities, towns and villages thrive.

In order to increase housing supply and home ownership it is critical to reduce construction costs. They have risen in recent years through a combination of increased costs from regulatory compliance and general increases in labour and materials costs. As a result, new builds, especially apartments, are beyond the reach of many first-time buyers.

The future environmental sustainability of our housing stock, including low-carbon housing, is imperative in our national action against climate change.

Key actions in Housing for All:

- Increase funding to local authorities in order to retrofit 36,500 local authority-owned homes to B2 Building Energy Rating (BER) (Cost Optimal equivalent) by 2030.
- An average of 33,000 Nearly Zero Energy Building Dwellings to be delivered each year across all sectors to 2030.
- Reform 'Part V' of the Planning and Development Act 2000 to ensure that the tenure mix is a minimum of 10% social housing and a further 10% for affordable housing and Cost Rental.
- Introduce an 'End of Waste' exemption to reduce construction and demolition waste costs. Reduce demand for virgin raw materials and support re-use.
- Build institutional capacity in the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and across the Local Government, State Agency and Approved Housing Body (AHB) sectors to support Housing for All. Resourcing will be made available to meet the scale of ambition. Every opportunity will be explored for the use of

Centre of Excellences and shared services to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of delivery.

- All approval and other pre-contract processes will be reviewed and streamlined, to accelerate the delivery of Local Authority, AHB and LDA social housing proposals.
- The Housing Agency's Procurement and Delivery Unit will be expanded and will provide technical services and supports to local authorities.
- Embed compliance in the construction sector through Building Regulations and Building Control Regulations. This will include establishing registers of competent builders by placing the Construction Industry Register Ireland on a statutory footing.
- Examine the creation of an independent Building Standards Regulator to oversee building control nationwide and to act as custodian of the Building Control Management System.
- Accelerate the delivery of the National Broadband Plan.
- Ensure electricity connections to housing schemes are delivered in a timely and cost-effective manner.
- Continue to deliver high-level investment in water infrastructure to support housing delivery nationwide.
- Irish Water will ensure that its network delivery stream supports timely delivery of housing connections.
- An accreditation scheme will be advanced to facilitate developers in providing water services infrastructure, provided agreed standards are met.
- Irish Water will roll out a national water supply capacity register, to complement the waste water capacity register, to bring greater clarity to planning for housing. It will identify where capacity facilitates early housing provision or where constraints may exist.
- Develop a national zoned housing land register based on local authority Development Plans, including the potential housing yield/capacity. This can also form the basis for the associated calculation of use values required for Land Value Sharing measures.
- Address issues in relation to the Defective Concrete Blocks Grant Scheme.
- Enhance the remit of the Construction Technology Centre (CTC) and the Construction Sector Group (CSG) for the next three years to include a focus on residential construction.
- A dedicated sub-group of the Housing for All Delivery Group (comprised of relevant Secretaries General of Government departments) will ensure that initiatives associated with innovation and productivity; skills and capacity; enterprise support; standards and compliance and sectoral engagement; are fully aligned with the objective of reducing the cost of construction of apartments and houses, leading to demonstrable changes in these costs.
- Expand the role of enterprise agencies to include funding and supports for innovation and productivity-related projects in the domestic residential construction sector, with funding for research, innovation and productivity to be provided commensurate with the scale of construction in the domestic economy and in compliance with State Aid rules.
- Promote a culture of compliant good quality sustainable innovation in residential construction through development of Modern Methods of Construction (MMC), including the establishment of a demonstration park for MMCs.

- Expand our water network to support housing delivery through continued high-level investment in water infrastructure.

The expected outcomes:

- An average of 33,000 Nearly Zero Energy homes will be supplied annually
- A coordinated review of residential construction costs
- Higher standards in residential construction quality
- Enhanced environmental sustainability in the construction industry
- Existing housing stock will be more sustainable
- 36,500 local authority homes retrofitted to a BER of B2 or Cost Optimal Equivalent
- Expanded capacity of local authorities, so they are enabled to initiate, design, plan, develop and manage more housing projects
- Critical infrastructure will be in place for the supply of the required housing

These measures, combined with others, will make Ireland's housing system more economic, social and environmental sustainable.

Housing Commission

The Government is committed to establishing a Commission on Housing this year to examine issues such as tenure, standards, sustainability and quality-of-life issues in the provision of housing, all of which have long-term impacts on communities. The commission will consider how to improve and develop our housing system in the long-term, including areas such as:

- providing balance and choice of tenures
- the future of rent controls, rental and income supports
- the merits of an independent social housing regulator
- the optimum role of Approved Housing Bodies in the provision of housing

The Commission will also bring forward proposals on the referendum on housing and examine the various proposals that have been made around potential wording for an amendment to the Constitution.

The Commission on Housing will be formally established later in 2021, once the Terms of Reference and Membership of the Commission have been finalised. The Terms of Reference will be drafted in consultation with the Chair designate, having regard to the Programme for Government and the priorities set out in Housing for All.

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