Wishing all of our members a peaceful Christmas and New Year
Editorial

The recent budget estimate process increased the targets for social housing delivery from 47,000 to 50,000 as part of Rebuilding Ireland. A significant amount of work is continuing in 2017 in completing new social rented homes as well as new homes commencing onsite. New build social housing delivery is coming from a historically low base from the period of 2013-2014, which was essentially the ground zero of new social housing completions. New individual social housing developments of 70+ homes is also bringing greater scale to new supply. However, larger developments need to be more the norm in the coming years as part of mixed tenure developments. And new types of intermediate affordable renting for households on moderate incomes is still the significant challenge that needs to be overcome in the housing market to meet housing need, as well as ensuring mobility in the labour market.

What we can learn from the last large expansion of social and affordable type housing programmes in the period from 2000-2006 is that the supply of sites for building is crucial to the continuous annual pipeline of new projects. Previously, the local authority low-cost site scheme was an enabling role for local authorities in providing sites to housing associations. This allowed the housing association sector to expand from 8,000 to 32,000 homes in the last 15 years. Part V channelled another 2,000 units to housing associations, particularly in the period up to 2010 before the private housing market collapse.

In recent years, the expansion of the new mixed funding model of loan finance and CALF/P&A has facilitated housing associations to engage with the private sector to deliver newly constructed turnkey homes. In order to ensure a continuous increase in delivery of new homes, local authority Land Management Plans (when they are produced) will be crucial for targeting more sites for delivery. While utilising land from the private sector is important, it should not be seen as an alternative to proactive utilisation of state lands.

Housing associations can have a significant role in delivering social housing on local authority and state lands as part of mixed developments. Time invested in getting land supply and site assembly right should yield good results in the coming years. It is essential that there are sufficient project management and multi-disciplinary skills to deliver land management objectives in local areas. For the delivery of social and affordable housing, land assembly and land banking need to be central to the agenda both on a strategic (land use) and operational (delivery) level.

The emerging trend of acquisition and purchasing advance land options for residential construction is increasing in the private sector. It is essential, therefore, that land for social housing is not displaced. Otherwise, the increased targets for social housing under Rebuilding Ireland will take longer to achieve.

Fold Ireland’s housing regeneration scheme at Ballygall Road, Glasnevin, overall winner at the 8th ICSH Biennial Community Housing Awards 2017
Residential Tenancies (Amendment) Act Update
Since the Act’s commencement, the Residential Tenancies Board has received approximately 28,000 registration applications from 309 housing associations across the country. The RTB have also received 144 dispute cases from our sector. Some interesting facts about these disputes are as follows:

- 144 dispute cases to date. This represents only 0.5% of the total number of tenancy registrations (28,000) to date.
- The dispute applicant breakdown is: 56% landlord, 41% tenant, 3% third party.
- The majority of cases determined so far are going in favour of the AHB.
- The favoured method of dispute resolution is still adjudication although mediation is still being used also. There have been 15 tribunal cases to date.
- The top case type is still around the validity of Notices of Termination. Interestingly, in these cases, the majority of NOTs were found to be valid, which means that the sector is using the legislation correctly (in contrast to the private sector which has a very high rate of invalid NOTs).

The RTB organised an AHB specific event around disputes looking at cases to date: what has worked well, what hasn’t, outcomes, and learnings. The event was held on 7th December in the Hilton Hotel, Kilmainham, Dublin 8 and was well attended by ICSH members who learned about the dispute processes with case study examples from our sector.

If you have any queries in relation to the RTA/RTB, please contact Keelin McCarthy, Development Officer (Housing Management) at keelin@icsh.ie.

Are you ready for the General Data Protection Regulation?
The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) will come into force on the 25th May 2018, replacing the existing data protection framework under the EU Data Protection Directive. At the centre of the new law is the requirement for organisations and businesses to be fully transparent about how they are using and safeguarding personal data, and to be able to demonstrate accountability for their data processing activities.

The Regulation applies to all organisations (private, state and voluntary), including housing associations, in the EU/EEA and also organisations that are outside of the EU, that collect, share and use the personal data of EU residents (such as tenant personal data).

All housing associations should be starting to think about compliance with the GDPR now. The following are a few points to start considering in relation to the GDPR and ICSH have a guidance note available with further details.

- **Staff training/Awareness.** Are staff familiar with the GDPR principles and the organisation’s data protection policy? Meet with staff to discuss current data processing, security measures and how to ensure compliance with GDPR.
- **Identify and review the data you process and store.** Consider the following: why are you holding it? how did you obtain it? why was it originally gathered? how long will you retain it? how secure is it, both in terms of encryption and accessibility? do you ever share it with third parties and on what basis might you do so?
- **Identify what your data purpose is.** Why are you collecting the data?
- **Identify if consent was obtained.** Was the consent recorded? Do you need to retrospectively obtain consent for existing data if consent is not recorded?
- **Update/create policies and procedures to demonstrate compliance with the GDPR** e.g. data protection policy, incident response plan, privacy policy, remote access policy, email/internet policy, portable device policy e.g. phones, laptops, USB.
- **Be prepared for access requests and potential breaches.** How will you handle data access requests? what is your incident response plan if a breach occurs?
- **Review existing agreements/contracts with suppliers who have access to your data** e.g. with an IT support company, payroll company. what security procedures and policies are in place and who is liable should a breach occur?

ICSH will also be running a training seminar on the Regulation early in 2018. We will keep our members updated on this. For further information on GDPR, please contact Keelin McCarthy, Development Officer (Housing Management) on keelin@icsh.ie

Joint Committee on Finance - Review of the Credit Union Sector
The Joint Committee on Finance has published its Review of the Credit Union Sector. The Report recommends that “the credit union movement should be empowered to contribute to alleviating the housing crisis in the State and the current regulations are not adequate to this imperative”. This proposal relates to the possibility of the credit union movement collectively lending to approved housing bodies and to local authorities to assist in the provision of social housing. In evidence to the Committee, the representative bodies stated that approximately €800 million in funding would have been available for social housing investment in 2016. In written evidence, the Credit Union Development Association (CUDA) proposed a revision to the Credit Union and Co-Operation with Overseas Regulators Act 2012 to enable credit unions to lend for social housing purposes. The Central Bank carried out a public consultation this year on a number of issues including consideration of additional potential investment classes for credit unions, including investments in Tier 3 Approved Housing Bodies. The ICSH responded to this consultation (CP109) and it is expected that a statement will be issued by the Central Bank in early 2018 on this potential change in policy.

ICSH Social Housing
The Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2017

The new Regulations came into operation on 1 July 2017 and replace the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2008 and the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) (Amendment) Regulations 2009. The regulations require landlords of rented houses to ensure that such houses meet certain minimum standards. The standards relate to structural conditions, provision of sanitary facilities, food preparation, storage and laundry, availability of adequate heating, lighting and ventilation, safety of electricity and gas installation, fire safety and refuse facilities.

Overall, the provisions in the 2008/2009 still stand, with the main amendments in the 2017 Regulations affecting housing association as follows:

- The requirement for fire detection and alarm systems to comply with the standards produced by the National Standards Authority of Ireland for Fire Detection and Fire Alarm Systems in Buildings and for Emergency Lighting.
- The requirement for the provision of a carbon monoxide alarm.
- The requirement for window safety restrictors where a window has an opening section through which a person may fall, and the bottom of the opening section is more than 1400mm above external ground level.

ICSH have a full guidance note available on the regulations as they apply to housing associations. Please contact Keelin McCarthy, Development Officer (Housing Management) at keelin@icsh.ie for further information.

New AHB Services Unit Begins Operation

A New AHB Services Unit has recently commenced operation within the Housing Agency in accordance with Action 2.14 of Rebuilding Ireland. The commitment under this Action was to “establish a dedicated one-stop-shop within the Housing Agency to support AHBs, which will allow for better coordinated delivery under various mechanisms across all local authority areas”.

The ICSH, in its 2016 submission on the Housing action plan, called for the establishment of a dedicated unit to provide an enabling and supportive function to underpin the delivery of a significant volume of homes by housing associations by 2021. It reflected a similar commitment (called for by the ICSH) in the Programme for Government (May 2016).

The commitment was sought to replace the former ‘voluntary and co-operative housing unit’, a unit within the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government that was disbanded following the downturn. The Unit had acted as a positive resource to assist in the expansion of the housing association sector during the period of the National Development Plan. During that period, the housing association sector grew to deliver 2,000 social homes at its peak. Given the severe social housing shortage, it was felt that such a delivery focus would again assist in increasing the number of homes developed for people in need of social housing.

The new Services Unit has stated that one of its main areas of operation is the assessment of AHB CALF funding applications and reporting recommendations to the Department. The Unit will liaise closely with AHBs and the Department in relation to the operation of CALF. The Department is currently reviewing the CALF model, namely the assessment assumptions to reflect the current market conditions. The Unit will assist in this and engage in consultation with the sector during this review. The Unit will also provide advice and guidance to AHBs and local authorities in relation to a number of areas of delivery including CALF and P&A agreements, the sale of units to AHBs under the Housing Agency’s revolving fund and undertaking a review of the Communications Protocol established between LAs and AHBs.

As a matter of priority, the ICSH has requested the Unit to identify state owned sites for development by AHBs in order for the sector to reach its target under Rebuilding Ireland. In addition, as an enabling support, there is a crucial need for the development of innovative financial models, including an affordable rental model.

There are a number of challenges facing AHBs including the potential outcome of the classification review being carried out by the CSO. The Unit will, no doubt, work closely with the sector in dealing with any issues or challenges and strive to support the delivery and expansion of social housing through strategic planning and co-operation.
Budget 2018 Analysis

A total of €1.83 billion has been allocated to housing in Budget 2018. €1.14 billion has been allocated for the delivery of almost 5,900 social homes via build and acquisition and €760m has been allocated to support the delivery of 19,600 units through the HAP and RAS programmes as well as homelessness services and the Social Housing Current Expenditure Programme (SHCEP).

The ICSH responded to this year’s housing budget with some optimism. The allocation is an increase of 50% on last year and is therefore welcome. An additional €500 million of capital funding, specifically earmarked for new social housing, has also been committed to from 2018-2021. That brings the Rebuilding Ireland target to 50,000, the minimum recommendation from last year’s Committee on Housing and Homelessness report.

€1.14 billion has been allocated for the delivery of 5,900 new social homes through construction (5,000) and acquisition (900). These numbers are only marginally higher than the 2018 targets Simon Coveney committed to last year, listing more new builds and fewer acquisitions. So there’s no new ambition here. But if we look at social housing delivery new build figures for 2016 (2,965), the bulk of the units delivered that year was through void refurbishment, so we are starting from a very low base. There are now far fewer voids out there that are suitable for regeneration. Therefore, the 2018 targets will represent a very significant scaling-up in new builds by housing associations and local authorities. And the housing association development pipeline reflects this ambition. It’s important though that the 2017 social housing output figures (as soon as we have them) are accurate and verifiable as there has been too much fudging of data on delivery of late. Transparency is vital if we are to realise the Rebuilding Ireland targets.

Social Housing Targets 2018

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Delivery Method</th>
<th>2018 Targets</th>
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<tr>
<td>Build</td>
<td>4,969</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acquisitions</td>
<td>900</td>
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<tr>
<td>Long Term Leasing</td>
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<td>RAS &amp; HAP</td>
<td>17,600</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>25,469</td>
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Social Housing Targets 2016-2021

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Build</th>
<th>Acquisition</th>
<th>Leasing</th>
<th>RAS</th>
<th>HAP</th>
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<td>2016</td>
<td>Target</td>
<td>2,260</td>
<td>755</td>
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<td>2016</td>
<td>Delivered</td>
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<td>2017</td>
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<td>600</td>
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<td>Target</td>
<td>8,907</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>2,450</td>
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</table>

Of the €600 million in additional funding, €149 million has been allocated to the HAP programme, bringing its total budget to €301 million for 2018. The ICSH is very concerned about the expansion of the HAP programme as there isn’t enough rental stock out there. Less than 10% of the rental properties available in Dublin on Budget Day were under the HAP maximum rate of €1300 per family, and almost all were one-bed units. The ICSH views this as over-reliance on the private rented sector, which has continually failed to deliver for low-income households.

An allocation of €116 million (+€18m on 2017) is being made to homelessness services in 2018 including an additional €18 million for 2018 to support the wrap-around services and running costs of the Family hubs. The hubs are an important first response for families that become homeless. But long-term homes must remain the primary goal. The Department of Housing anticipates more than 3,000 exits from emergency accommodation through the provision of social homes and the Housing Assistance Payment. So there’s a major challenge to bring new homes onstream both in the social and private sector.

The ICSH welcomes the vacant site levy increases as well as capital gains tax measures in Budget 2018. These have, to date, rewarded land hoarding and property speculation. However, there’s a need for more innovative thinking. Minister Murphy’s Budget statement makes frequent reference to measures that will make housing more affordable and the Department states that the majority of the 34 Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF) sites being opened up will have a proportion of housing available at under €320,000. However, there’s little detail here, and it’s certainly questionable whether €320,000 is affordable. Budget 2018 was also a missed opportunity to see fresh thinking in capital funding to support housing for older people and people with disabilities, and evidence of innovation around flexible models for supported housing for older people. Such measure could see family homes released in high-demand urban locations.
Pathways Housing First Partnership to Help Ireland’s Most Vulnerable Homeless Individuals

Peter McVerry Trust has launched a new international partnership with Pathways Housing First Institute (USA). The charity believes the new partnership will result in a larger number of people with complex needs leaving homelessness and offer improved levels of tenancy sustainment for those that secure a new home.

Pat Doyle, CEO of Peter McVerry Trust said, “Peter McVerry Trust was an early adopter of the housing first model and has invested heavily in a housing first response to homelessness in recent times. The aim of this partnership is to ensure that, as we continue to expand our housing first work, we do so in line with international best practice. That’s important because the quality of our work will ensure that we deliver the best possible outcome for people in homelessness.”

He said the charity’s housing first work would focus on a number of key target groups. “Our plan is to increase the use of the housing first approach for rough sleepers, those who are long-term shelter residents, young people exiting care and those exiting institutions such as prison and hospitals. Our goal is to upscale our housing first work not just in Dublin but in other regions such as Kildare and Limerick.”

National Planning Framework ‘Ireland 2040’

The draft Ireland 2040 report was published at the end of September, which marked the final round of consultations in relation to the National Planning Framework. The ICSH submitted an initial submission in March 2017, in which we called for (amongst other proposals) a national policy on land use, the development of joined-up thinking that locates communities adjacent to their workplaces, a plan that re-establishes housing as a social good, as well as supported housing for the increasing number of older people.

The ICSH were disappointed that the plan did not include a proposal for a land use strategy and there is a real concern that the plan in its current form will facilitate continued uncontrolled sprawl in Dublin and increased commuting times and congestion. The draft report is strong on the need for an evidence base to support the future location, typology and tenure of housing. The report also includes an objective to reduce vacancy rates to 5% by 2040, as well as supporting the provision of lifetime adaptable homes that can accommodate the changing needs of a household over time.

Such proposals and innovations are positive. However, the report has no mention of the scale of social and affordable housing planned as a percentage of the 550,000 homes required by the state. And in the context of housing ‘resilience’ measures, the draft makes no mention of rebuilding Ireland’s social housing stock to support the delivery of affordable housing for future generations. It is hoped that the report’s proposed Housing Need Demand Assessment (HNDA) tool – required to be undertaken in future planning – will address this.

The initial ICSH National Planning Framework issues paper submission called for the development of social housing to be underpinned by development principles that identify the transport, health and education services essential for social and environmental sustainability. The Framework should also reflect and make reference to Target 11 of the Sustainable Development Goals to ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and also acknowledge commitments in the UN New Urban Agenda – Habitat III, that cities and human settlements are inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. But SDGs and Habitat III get no mention. It is hoped that the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government will listen to feedback and develops a robust and coherent ‘Masterplan’ for Ireland.

Irish Red Cross Accommodation and Integration Supports under the Irish Refugee Protection Programme

The Irish Red Cross have been mandated by the Department of Justice and Equality to assist with the delivery and provision of accommodation and integration supports under the Irish Refugee Protection Programme. The organisation is tasked with managing charitable pledges of housing offered by the public and is currently placing families and individuals in accommodation across the country.

The organisation has a number of refugees waiting for homes and would like to encourage all members of the ICSH to contact them if they have accommodation that can be made available through the nomination process. In addition, they are seeking private rented accommodation for housing refugees under the housing assistance payment (HAP). Ideally, properties should be available for a minimum of 18 months.

All accommodation should be in or close to urban centres with good public transport linkages to support refugees with access to jobs, education, English language training and social and community supports.

For further information and to assist, please contact René O’Malley on 01 6424600 or migrationcrisis@redcross.ie
ICSH Biennial National Social Housing

The ICSH Biennial National Social Housing Conference, supported by Gas Networks Ireland and the Allianz Community Housing Awards took place on the 27th & 28th September 2017 in the Limerick Strand Hotel. The two-day conference was officially opened by Eoghan Murphy TD, Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government, with more than 300 delegates attending, including representatives of non-profit housing associations, local authority officials, policymakers and politicians.

The theme for the 2017 Biennial National Social Housing Conference was Social Housing – The Next Phase: Scale, Innovation and New Housing Choices.

Over the course of two days, the Conference theme was explored during five major panel discussions. The conference also included smaller parallel sessions on Housing for People with Disabilities, Creating Outcomes in Housing Delivery, Collaboration and Finance and Asset Management.

Fourteen exhibitors profiled their organisations and promoted their products and services in the conference exhibition space. This opportunity for networking and relationship-building is one that delegates continue to value at the ICSH Biennial Social Housing Conference.

Rebuilding Ireland One Year On

Alan Ahearne of the Whitaker Institute, NUI Galway opened this year’s conference looking at population growth, an increasing demand for housing and stretched affordability. Jonas Högset outlined the Swedish Association of Public Housing Companies Kombohouse scheme, a new approach to procurement that sets the price up-front, inviting construction companies to compete for volume building contracts. The end-result is a reduction of 25% in construction costs. John O’Connor of the Housing Agency presented details of progress and challenges under Rebuilding Ireland, asking delegates how they might actively support mixed tenure and mixed-use developments.

Providing Outcomes for Vulnerable Households

The iCare Mortgage to Rent scheme was launched at the event and CEO David Hall outlined the organisation’s debtor focused plans in relation to 32,500 homes in long term arrears, each with an average of €75,000 arrears. Mike Allen, Director of Advocacy, Focus Ireland identified homelessness as the tip of the housing crisis iceberg and presented data on the precarity of private rental housing, the trajectories into homelessness and the problems associated with short-term responses.

Innovation in Housing Solutions – Projects, Schemes & Infrastructure

Chaired by ICSH CEO, Donal McManus, the third session explored innovative solutions in housing. Ilka Ruby, Publisher and Curator on Architecture, Urbanism and Collective Housing and Aidan O’Reilly and Marguerite Ryan of the Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government Housing Delivery Division updated delegates on social housing ambition budget and delivery and Thomas Flanagan of Gas Networks Ireland (GNI) outlined GNI’s energy efficient solutions, with over 1,000 social homes contracted to connect in 2017.
Conference 2017

Strategic Approach to Regeneration & Delivery

The final conference session delivered by Carmel Kirby, of Limerick City and County Council, James O’Halloran of Clúid Housing and Gene Clayton of the Iveagh Trust looked to a future with a focus on regeneration and quality housing, building community stability and the knock-on socio-economic benefits.

Driving Affordability in Housing

Willem Adema of the OECD offered a comparative outlook on affordability across OECD members, identifying a high mortgage overburden rate in Ireland and volatile residential investment and prices. Eva Bauer of the Austrian Federation of Limited Profit Housing Providers outlined the Austrian housing system and focused, in particular, on cost rental models and architect, Mel Reynolds, gave a striking presentation in which he compared the building costs of private developers, housing associations and cooperatives, and local authorities. Using the Cherrywood SDZ as an example, he proposed a local authority direct build solution, for the 10% Part V.

Community Housing Awards

Fold Ireland’s housing regeneration scheme at Ballygall Road, Glasnevin, Dublin scooped the overall winner award at the 8th Biennial Community Housing Awards, sponsored by Allianz, on Wednesday 27th September in Limerick. The awards, showcasing housing quality, innovation and partnership are open to housing associations, housing cooperatives and local authorities.

Amongst the large number of entries, the number of homeless projects served as a stark reminder of the immediacy of the housing crisis. The projects also demonstrated that both local authorities and housing associations are tackling the issue head-on and working collaboratively to provide short-term and long-term housing solutions for those most in need. In addition, with this year’s new build projects, we’ve seen best practice solutions in sustainability and cost effectiveness, delivering new housing for older people, people with disabilities and families.

This year’s conference and awards were enormously successful and the ICSH would like to thank all of the delegates who attended and shared their housing expertise and general good humour. The ICSH very much appreciate the collective efforts of staff and member organisations that help to ensure the conference’s continued success. Conference presentations are available to download at www.icsh.ie
Innovation, Change and Delivery Across the Sector

Broome Lodge: 43 Apartments Designed for Independent Living under the Principles of Universal Design

Clúid Housing officially launched its latest development, Broome Lodge, on Tuesday 28th November. The 43 one and two-bedroom apartments in Cabra, Dublin 7, was opened by Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government, Eoghan Murphy TD and Minister for Finance and Public Expenditure & Reform, Paschal Donohoe TD as well as the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Micheál MacDonncha.

Clúid worked in partnership with a number of stakeholders to deliver this much-needed housing in an area of high demand. The project is being delivered in partnership with Dublin City Council, the Housing Finance Agency, the European Investment Bank and the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.

51 senior citizens received the keys to their new homes in a development that has been specifically designed to promote independent living in an age friendly society. Clúid’s Head of Delivery, Eibhlin O’Connor, said that, in supporting senior citizens to ‘age in place’, Clúid’s design standard follows the Universal Design principle in its approach to delivering sustainable housing.

Universal Design is the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability. The major benefits of this approach include:

■ Greater independence for residents;
■ Residents can remain in their own home for longer;
■ Elimination of need for retrofitting;
■ Elimination of adaptation costs;
■ Reduction in the capital cost of disability grants;
■ Less need for support services.

The Cabra development cost just over €8 million. The average cost per apartment totalled just under €190,000, representing excellent value for money. The construction was funded by loans from the Housing Finance Agency and financial support from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government; and the site was provided by Dublin City Council.

Oaklee Housing Progressing 30 Social Homes in Kilkenny

Schemes to provide 30 new homes in Kilkenny are being progressed by Oaklee housing. Nine bungalows at Moneenroe, near Castlecomer, are close to completion and include a mix of two and three-bedroom units. Meanwhile at Logan Street, Thomastown, Oaklee has acquired a scheme that was abandoned during the downturn and this will provide 21 new homes comprising of a mix of one, two and three-bedrooms apartments. Oaklee has secured funding for the schemes through a combination of finance from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government’s Capital Advance Leasing Facility (CALF) and Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS); and the Housing Finance Agency.

Minister of State at the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, John Paul Phelan TD, visited the schemes recently and noted that the project was an example of successful joint working between Kilkenny County Council and Oaklee at a local level. The Minister said that if we are to realise the full ambition of Rebuilding Ireland, we must continue to develop the strong pipeline of social housing projects around the country, many of which use new and innovative ways of delivering social housing.

Oaklee Housing works in close partnership with a range of local authorities, government agencies and developers to accelerate the delivery of social and affordable homes, and a collaborative approach can enable the organisation to provide an effective response to the Rebuilding Ireland agenda.
Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) Opens Seven Houses for People with Physical Disabilities in Belmullet, Co. Mayo

As a Voluntary Housing Association, Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) provides housing designed to give people with physical disabilities, many of whom use wheelchairs, an opportunity to live independently in a community of their choice. The project to build seven houses in Belmullet, Co. Mayo began with a need identified for wheelchair accessible housing for people with physical disabilities from the local area.

IWA’s social housing development, An Fraoch, was officially opened by Michael Ring TD, Minister for Rural & Community Development, on Friday 20th October 2017. These wheelchair accessible houses were designed and built by IWA with each house tailored to the specific requirements of the future tenants.

The new houses were designed in accordance with IWA’s Best Practice Access Guidelines and are also fitted with a range of environmental controls, all of which support independence. The IWA Best Practice Access Guidelines are designed to ensure improved access standards within the built environment for people with physical disabilities. They have been previously utilised by a number of local authorities and housing associations during the design process of several housing projects for people with disabilities.

People with disabilities have very specific housing requirements and often find it difficult to gain access to their preferred living situation. Standard homes, private and social housing are not generally wheelchair accessible. Over 4,500 people with disabilities are currently seeking affordable, accessible and appropriate accommodation according to the most recent Housing Needs Assessment conducted by the Department of Housing in 2016. IWA encourages all local authorities and approved housing bodies to plan, design and build wheelchair accessible houses in each social housing development to meet the identified need.

For further information about IWA Housing Developments please visit www.iwa.ie/house or to source a copy of IWA’s Best Practice Access Guidelines or to seek information about IWA’s Access Consultancy Service, please call IWA on 01 8186400.
An Taoiseach and Minister Eoghan Murphy Unveil Foundation Stone for 84 new Social Homes

An Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar TD, and Minister for Housing, Planning & Local Government, Eoghan Murphy TD, unveiled the foundation stone for 84 new social homes in Clongriffin Dublin 13 on Monday, November 20th.

Gannon Homes have partnered with The Iveagh Trust to deliver the 84 social housing units within the overall development of Clongriffin Town. Delivery of the project has been achieved through agreement with Dublin City Council and is funded by the National Asset Management Agency. The scheme is one of the largest Part V developments to come on-stream in some time and marks another significant step towards the Iveagh Trust’s target of delivering 650 additional units by 2020, having already delivered 70 new homes as part of a supported housing scheme for older people in Ballyfermot, earlier this year.

Gene Clayton, CEO of the Iveagh Trust says that the Iveagh Trust is playing its part in meeting the huge need that exists for social & affordable rented homes.

Taoiseach Turns Sod on 19 New Apartments by the Royal Hospital Donnybrook Housing Association

The Voluntary Housing Association of the Royal Hospital Donnybrook (RHD Housing), is working with Dublin City Council and the Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government to build a complex of 19 apartments at Beech Hill, Donnybrook through refurbishing and extending a vacant Dublin City Council site. Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, and the Minister for Housing, Deputy Eoghan Murphy, who is a former member of the Board of the Royal Hospital Donnybrook, attended the sod-turning ceremony on Thursday, October 26th.

RHD Housing was established in 1993 as a social housing provider for older adults and people with disabilities. It was founded by the Royal Hospital Donnybrook, which has been providing care for disadvantaged and disabled people for 270 years. Over the life of RHD Housing’s Strategic Plan, the organisation plans to add an additional 130 units to their development pipeline, bringing the total to approximately 200 in order to meet the demand arising from an increase in the number of older people living in the area.

Remember to keep us updated of your projects in the pipeline. Please contact kenreid@icsh.ie.
First Phase of the Rebuilding Ireland Review

The first phase of the Rebuilding Ireland review was announced by Minister Murphy after a high-level housing summit was convened with the 31 local authority CEOs on foot of the publication of the July homelessness figures. The figures saw a spike in homelessness, particularly amongst children, rising from 2895 in June, to 2973 in July.

This first phase of the review includes 200 additional emergency beds as well as additional (pre-budget 2018) funding for homeless hubs. The Minister also announced the establishment of a Homeless Inter-Agency Group to deliver homeless services in a coherent and joined-up way between the relevant departments and agencies. The group has met since on several occasions and is specifically looking into homeless help supports and mental health addiction services in emergency accommodation. The Minister announced a new mortgage to rent scheme (iCare Housing), which was subsequently launched at the ICSH biennial conference in September. The review also committed to an expansion of housing first to other urban areas and the appointment of a Director of Housing First.

This initial phase of the review is an important first step, and a major focus on prevention to stem the flow of people and families moving into homelessness is absolutely necessary. The ICSH submission on the review focused on medium and long-term measures to support housing association delivery. These recommendations included a rolling CAS call and multi-annual CALF funding; embedding an active land management strategy into the housing system; enhanced security of tenure for tenants in private rental; a commitment for a programme on affordable rental for housing associations and an Assisted Independent Living Scheme. It is important that the next phase of the review looks at adapting current policy and practice to ramp-up social housing delivery.

Short Term Lettings Regulation

The summary of actions from last year’s Strategy for the Rental Sector included a commitment to ‘provide clarity in relation to the appropriate regulatory approach, from a planning perspective, for short term tourism-related lettings’. This is in response to the proliferation of unregulated private lettings, primarily in Dublin and via the Airbnb website, and the impact this is having on the rental sector and the broader housing system. A working Group was set up to issue recommendations and was due to report by Q2 2017.

Last year, An Bord Pleanála upheld a council decision that an apartment in Temple Bar had been changed from residential use to short-term letting. The ruling did not stipulate that Airbnb lettings require planning permission, but it opened the door for case-specific challenges. Earlier this year, a comprehensive overview of the extent of Airbnb lettings in Dublin was presented to Dublin City Council’s Housing SPC by Dr Daithí Downey. Currently about 100 apartment owners are under investigation for inappropriate use as short-term lets.

In October this year, the Joint Committee on Housing, Planning & Local Government produced a report on the Impact of Short Term Lettings on Ireland’s Housing and Rental Market. The Committee made a number of recommendations including a regulatory regime to distinguish between commercial lettings and primary residence lettings of less than 90 days. The Committee also called for the Memorandum of Understanding between the Department and Airbnb to cease as it did not believe the Memorandum to be sufficient.

The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government issued a circular in October aimed at ‘providing transitional guidance to Local Authorities until a more developed regulatory structure can be finalised’. However, a Dublin City Council spokesperson said that the guidance had not led to any real changes as investigations were already being carried out. The Working Group has yet to produce its report, and it’s likely that one of the issues will be whether the available data is of sufficient quality to identify the impact of short-term lettings. However, it’s clear that a robust regulatory framework is required.
Rebuilding Ireland Social Housing Status Report Q3 2017
On 7 December, Minister Murphy published an updated status list of social housing construction schemes that are advancing nationwide. This is the fourth Rebuilding Ireland status report and the number of construction projects represent 12,300 new homes. The previous quarterly report listed 11,000 social homes at different stages of development. This is the first status report to be published under the revised (post Budget 2018) Rebuilding Ireland target of 50,000 social homes, with a budget of €6 billion.

ICSH News and Events

Community Housing Award Winners Dublin Celebration
The Irish Council for Social Housing celebrated the winners of the Community Housing Awards 2017 on Wednesday, 15th November in the Irish Architectural Archive, Dublin. Damien English TD, Minister for Housing and Urban Renewal, launched the winners’ brochure alongside representatives of the winning entries. And an exhibition showcased the diversity and innovative work of the housing associations and local authorities participating. The projects submitted for the Awards are very much local responses to local housing need, and the shortlisted projects, from new builds to regeneration and the re-use of vacant properties, are a strong signal of what can be achieved for people in need of social housing.

Overall Award winners, Ballygall Road East Glasnevin Regeneration project from Fold Ireland were Joe Knowles, Cathy Norris, Minister Damien English, Mary Clarke, Sue Taylor and Tina Donaghy. The ICSH Biennial Community Housing Awards are supported by Allianz Insurance.

Winners in the category of Housing for Older People, St Michael’s Housing Scheme, Foxford, Co Mayo FROM LEFT: Architect John Halligan, Damien English Minister of State for Housing and Urban Development, Joe Davitt and Paula Kenny from St Vincent de Paul. The ICSH Biennial Community Housing Awards are supported by Allianz Insurance.

Special Recognition Award Winners St Vincent de Paul, Upperchurch, Thurles, Tipperary FROM LEFT: Richard Ryan, Pat Buckley, Mary Ryan, Con Ryan, Minister Damien English, Kathleen Hayes, PJ Harrington and Paula Kenny. The ICSH Biennial Community Housing Awards are supported by Allianz Insurance.

Community Integration award winners Clúid Housing for their Syrian Refugee Resettlement project, Portlaoise, FROM LEFT: Radwan Abouhajar and his daughter Naya with Catherine Oakley Dickson from Clúid Housing Association and Mohammad Omish. The ICSH Biennial Community Housing Awards are supported by Allianz Insurance.
HAPM 2016

HAPM (Housing Association Performance Management) has been developed and managed by the ICSH since 2004 and is an important self-monitoring tool for housing associations to assess their performance and benchmark this within the sector. The number of participating members and tenancies covered by the HAPM framework has grown in recent years and the ICSH is delighted to see this trend has continued into 2016.

- 50 Housing Associations participated in the full year reports, with a further 22 participating throughout the year
- 18,806 units of accommodation were covered in the survey
- €55.96 was the average weekly CAS rent
- €47.12 was the average weekly CLSS rent
- €46.81 was the average weekly rent for leased units
- 5949 tenancies had an additional service charge for utilities
- 860 tenancies had an additional support service charge
- 100.2% of rent owed was collected
- 4.79% of rent receivable was outstanding as rent arrears
- 891 properties were vacant at some stage throughout 2016
- The average void period was 11 weeks
- 4.15% of properties were re-let in 2016
- Repairs completed or responded to within target timescales:
  - Emergency repairs (24 hours) – 88.5%
  - Urgent repairs (5-7 days) – 91.6%
  - Routine (28-30 days) – 94.9%
  - 130 Notices of Termination were issued

The full 2016 results are available to download at www.icsh.ie

Collaboration Case Studies

The ICSH is currently finalising a series of case studies to showcase some of the innovative practices currently underway in local volunteer-led community based housing associations. These will illustrate some of the recent and ongoing decisions that associations, commonly known as the ‘Tier Ones’, are facing as they continue to contribute to meeting local housing need in their areas.

In recent years, with an increase in the regulatory burden, there has been a feeling among some of these associations that additional supports are required. By delegating work for the first time to paid staff members, the association can make it more attractive to become a voluntary director, as well as encouraging existing directors to stay on the Board.

Many associations are bringing in external expertise by pooling resources collaboratively (with other similar organisations) or employing someone directly (sometimes on a part-time basis) to oversee the day-to-day administrative functions.

These case studies will give other housing associations some insights into the benefits, as well as some of the challenges, of adopting a similar approach.

ICSH Council 2018-2020 Election Results

The tenure of the 15 elected ICSH member organisation representatives to the council will end in 2017. An election process must then take place to elect six representatives, two from each of Tiers 1, 2 and 3 as required by the Memorandum & Articles (Constitution) of the ICSH.

TIER 1
- James Rocke, Mayo Living Housing, West/North West
- Jim Quinn, Rights of the Elderly Co. Offaly, South East/Leinster
- Regina Mac Cormack, Castleblaney Care Housing Association, North East/Greater Dublin
- Munster Region, election results still pending

TIER 2
- Margaret Daly, Foscadh Housing, Co. Louth
- Tina Donaghy, FOLD Ireland, Dublin 7
- Pat Doyle, Peter McVerry Trust, Dublin 1
- Michael Haynes, Clanmil Housing Association, Dublin 22
- Eli McMahon, SONAS, Dublin 8

TIER 3
- Ned Brennan, Respond! Housing Association, Waterford
- Liz Carey, Focus Ireland, Dublin 8
- John Hannigan, Circle Voluntary Housing Association, Dublin 2
- Paula Kenny, Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Dublin 1
- Alison O’Gorman, Tuath Housing, Dublin 2
Housing Europe: The State of Housing in the EU 2017

Housing Europe published the 2017 edition of its flagship report ‘The State of Housing in the EU’ on October 17th. The report found that house prices are growing faster than income in the majority of EU Member States and that inequality and housing exclusion were mutually reinforcing. Housing has now become the highest expenditure for Europeans, with the overburden rate hitting the poor disproportionately, and increasing levels of homelessness following. In the case of Ireland, the report identifies major challenges to reverse the dependency on the private market to increase the scale of new social housing delivery, stating that increased construction was required to counterbalance reliance on the private market. The report noted that work had been undertaken to identify sites, including sites in public ownership, that housing associations can get access to, but there was no co-ordinated programme.

UK to Leave European Investment Bank

As a result of Brexit, it has been announced by the European Investment Bank (EIB) that the UK is to leave the non-profit bank. The UK had 16% of the shareholding of the bank. Over the last decade, the UK has received more than £4bn for social housing and urban renewal. Since 1998, the Housing Finance Corporation administered £2.8bn from the EIB for the housing sector. A number of housing associations in the UK are still awaiting sign-off with the EIB for a number of large bilateral loans (totalling £1bn). An EIB loan was also part of the Affordable Homes Guarantees Programme.

Finland Plans for Major Demographic Shift

Finland has a strong record in reducing homelessness, especially chronic homelessness through the ‘Housing First’ model. The country is now focusing on the major demographic trend of an ageing population. The Finnish Government has produced a new strategy Socially Sustainable Fund 2020: Strategy for social and health policy. Part of this includes decreasing housing costs to a manageable level by developing the housing support system, building sustainable and community-friendly housing and building a well-being network for the ageing population. The strategy is one that policymakers in Ireland should heed.

Housing Rights Watch and FEANTSA Launch the Homeless Bill of Rights

Launched on 28 November 2017, the Homeless Bill of Rights is an initiative from Housing Rights Watch and FEANTSA to recognise and protect the rights of homeless people. The Homeless Bill of Rights is a compilation of basic rights drawn from European and International human rights law. With an increase in the criminalisation of homeless people across the EU (such as the Public Space Protection Orders in the UK), the Bill is an opportunity for cities to reaffirm their commitment to human rights, which should be their guide in tackling the root causes of poverty and homelessness. Within the EU Urban Agenda, the Urban Poverty Partnership has identified homelessness as a priority issue and has called on cities to take human rights-based approaches to tackling urban poverty and homelessness in their draft Action Plan. Housing Rights Watch and FEANTSA encourage cities to translate and adapt the Bill to their own context and to build a participatory strategy at local level to involve all stakeholders before it is signed.

For more information, go to www.feantsa.org.

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