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Repositioning housing associations to meet future housing needs for the next 20 years

Over the last 20 years, the housing association (AHB) sector has increased in scale from around 9,000 homes for rent in 1998 to an estimated 35,000 by the end of 2018 that are owned and managed by housing associations. This almost four-fold increase in the last 20 years includes the period of the economic, fiscal and banking crisis, which most acutely impacted on state social housing spending from 2009-2014. Housing associations, after significant change to funding schemes from 2011 on, have finally returned in 2017 to the level of housing delivery that peaked in 2009 (over 2,000 completions). 2017 represented the highest ever output by the AHB sector with 2,330 homes provided through increased new build construction, acquisition and leasing. Working as project leaders, the AHB sector achieved this through key partnerships with the local authorities, the Housing Agency and the private sector, both from a development and financing perspective.

The expansion and evolution of the AHB sector has also been associated with new types of housing choices being provided for special needs groups such as older people, homeless households and people with disabilities in both urban and rural areas. Housing associations focus on meeting the needs of families on local authority lists as well as assisting local authorities with the regeneration of some of their estates. This is now an increasing feature of the partnership model between local authorities and housing associations. Communication has improved significantly between local authorities and housing association but needs to be continually enhanced especially with the growing role that the private sector (both in development and financing) is playing with AHBs and local authorities. Private sector bodies bring their own requirements, but there needs to much more standardisation of approach (particularly in terms of documentation) from the private sector.

Local authorities undertake multiple functions; from housing delivery, including administration of schemes, to planning to a whole range of other non-housing statutory functions. Housing associations tend to be more single purpose organisations focusing on development and management of social housing. AHBs have a distinct offer to local authorities around housing management, new types of development and financing, and taking people off the local authority waiting list. The ask from AHBs to local authorities is to gain support for proposed projects, accessing sites or Part V projects, whilst obtaining timely nominations from local authorities for potential tenants.

Importantly, AHBs have had to undertake significant organisational restructuring since 2011, taking on more responsibility and risk with new loan financing. This followed later in 2013 with new targeted regulatory requirements for AHBs. This was to provide a strong foundation for drawing in private finance. The responsibility in using loan finance requires a different model to using primarily grant based funding whereas new AHB financing comprises ongoing financial responsibilities for AHBs in servicing loans.

The recent reclassification of AHBs has complicated matters for the sector - as we are in the middle of Rebuilding Ireland delivery targets - and needs to be addressed. However, it does allow us to examine how the sector could be repositioned. The transferable housing management experience and knowledge of AHBs providing social housing can be readily used for other types of cost and affordable rental housing. This would include intermediate renting for households and individuals who would not qualify for social housing or may not want or be able to become an owner occupier. A few AHBs do manage some limited non-social housing homes on a small scale in the private sector. This area could be scaled-up.

One area where housing associations provide added value is in their long-term commitment and investment in communities where they provide housing and support, which contributes to the sustainability of local communities. The focus of the private sector may be dominated by developing and building new projects and moving-on after a number of years to the next ‘development opportunity’. In contrast, housing associations have a long-term interest and commitment to their projects and tenants. Housing associations emerged out of responding to a local need or to developing new projects in new areas. But they have invested long term and have put-in-place measures for enhanced quality of life for their tenants and people in the local community.

The sheer scale of the housing response that is needed now, but also over the next 10 years (and informed by changing demographics), will mean that AHBs will have to continue to be flexible and adaptable to the changing housing needs of our population.
Regulation and Legislation Update

Residential Tenancies Board Enforcement Procedures

As of 26th February 2018, the enforcement of Residential Tenancies Board (RTB) Determination Orders has moved from the Circuit Court to the District Court. As there are more District Courts nationwide, which sit more often than the Circuit Court, this will provide for quicker access to the Courts at a significantly reduced cost.

When landlords, tenants and third parties bring disputes to the RTB through mediation, adjudication or tribunal, they receive a legally binding Determination Order. The majority of these are complied with but where they are not, the RTB takes non-compliance very seriously. The change, therefore, is important and welcome in terms of trying to address these issues more quickly.

What to do if a Determination Order is not complied with?

If an order is not complied with, there are two options for enforcement. You can, (1) make an application for the RTB to take enforcement in the courts on your behalf or, (2) you can take your own enforcement proceedings in the Court. In order to support parties that wish to take their own enforcement proceedings, the RTB have developed a step-by-step guide to the new process in the District Court which can be downloaded from their website.

The RTB will take a large amount of the requested enforcement cases, but it does not have the budget to take them all. To help lower the cost of enforcement for the RTB, the RTB has created a panel of solicitors who will take enforcement proceedings on behalf of the RTB. While the budget for RTB activities is limited, it is expected that by reducing the cost of enforcement proceedings, including the move to the District Court, this will allow the RTB to provide legal assistance in a higher number of cases. If you wish to request the RTB to provide assistance to you to pursue enforcement, you can email enforceorder@rtb.ie to request an application form. Decisions on urgent cases are prioritised first, including cases concerning overholding, serious rent arrears, non-return of deposits and unlawful termination.

What if you have an existing case going through the Circuit Court?

The District court is responsible for all new enforcement cases as of 26th February. If you already have a scheduled date for enforcement within the Circuit Court, this should go ahead as planned in the Circuit Court. All other cases will be dealt with in your local District Court. Further information on enforcement can be found at onestopshop.rtb.ie. It’s worth noting that the RTB has recently set-up its Twitter account. Their handle is @RTBinfo.

Residential Tenancies Board Strategic Plan 2018-2022

The Residential Tenancies Board have just launched (July 2018) their Strategic plan 2018-2022. The plan is intended to support and complement the Rebuilding Ireland - Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness and the Strategy for the Rental Sector. The plan reflects a growing rental sector (nearly 30%) that is changing all the time. There were over 340,000 tenancies registered with the RTB at the end of 2017 and tenancies are also lasting longer. It also highlights the expanded role of the RTB, which now extends beyond dispute resolution to a regulatory enforcement role.

You can download the Strategic Plan 2018-2022 at www.onestopshop.rtb.ie.
Assisted Decision-Making Act

A recent update on the status of the Act indicates that it will not now be commenced until 2019. However, a limited number of provisions have been commenced, a new Office of Decision Support Services (DSS) has been set-up and the Director, Aine Flynn, has been appointed.

The Director has responsibility for the implementation of many of the important changes brought about by the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act of 2015. Central to the Act are the guiding principles of presumption of capacity, and minimal intervention in the affairs of others in order to respect individual will and preferences. The Director has a duty to inform the public about the Act, and about the supports available through the DSS to those who require assistance with their decision-making. The Director will establish and maintain panels of suitable people willing to act as decision-making representatives, court friends and special and general visitors. She will also supervise and handle complaints against decision-making assistants, co-decision makers, decision-making representatives, attorneys with enduring powers of attorney and designated healthcare representatives. The Director will also approve and publish Codes of Practice in relation to the Act. Significant progress has already been made by specially commissioned expert groups tasked with the preparation of these codes.

It is also being proposed that there will be an additional piece of legislation (Deprivation of Liberty - Safeguard Proposals) to be added to the Act around examining consent for admissions to nursing homes and residential facilities. An open consultation was held in relation to this propose legislation.

The ICSH will be monitoring the status of the Act and will be providing guidance and support to our members as further developments arise and a commencement date is agreed. In the meantime, for further information on the status of the Act and the Decision Support Service Office, please go to: www.mhcirl.ie/DSS/CS_DSS/

Homeless Action Plan for the Dublin Region 2017-2020

The ICSH made a submission towards the development of the Framework Statutory Homeless Action Plan for the Dublin Region 2017-2020. In it, we welcomed Government policy that a Housing-Led and Housing First approach would underpin any strategy or action plan. In our submission we repeated our call to remove impediments to the supply of permanent social housing, specifically obstacles to delivery under the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS). Amongst other recommendations, we highlighted the lower priority assigned to single persons as a cohort of persons in housing need, and we recommended a significant expansion of the rapid-build housing programme as an alternative to emergency accommodation. While recognising the important role that family hubs play within the context of short-term emergency accommodation, the ICSH submission stresses the importance of focusing on permanent long-term housing solutions.

You can download the submission at www.icsh.ie

Are you compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)?

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into force on the 25th May 2018, replacing the existing data protection framework under the EU Data Protection Directive. All organisations that collect personal data should be in compliance as of this date. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) increases the obligations and responsibilities for organisations in how they collect, use and protect personal data. At the centre of the new law is the requirement for organisations 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. This will give EU residents more control over their personal data.

ICSH delivered two successful training seminars to our members earlier in the year to address specific data protection issues that affect the sector and prepare our members for the new requirements. Feedback from these seminars called for further guidance and templates for the housing sector, which the ICSH developed and made available in the member’s section of the ICSH website: www.icsh.ie

The following are some points to consider in determining whether you are GDPR compliant:

- Are all staff now familiar with the GDPR principles and the organisation’s data protection policy?
- Have you identified and reviewed the data you process and store?
- Have you identified what your data purpose is i.e. why are you collecting the data? Is there a legal basis for it?
- If you are relying on consent for data collection, can you show evidence of consent being obtained?
- Have you updated and/or created policies and procedures to demonstrate compliance with the GDPR such as: data protection policy, incident response plan, privacy policy, remote access policy, email/internet policy, portable device policy e.g. phones, laptops, USB
- Are you prepared for subject access requests and potential breaches?
- Have you reviewed all your existing agreements/contracts with suppliers who have access to your data?

The guidance document will address these points above and assist you in putting the required policies and procedures in place. For further information on GDPR, please contact Keelin McCarthy, Development Officer (Housing Management) at keelin@icsh.ie
Peter McVerry Trust Unlocking Empty Homes

A recently launched app is helping track down Ireland’s empty buildings. The Reusing Dublin project is a partnership between Space Engagers (a social enterprise) and Peter McVerry Trust. They hope that the new app and relaunched website www.reusingdublin.ie will tap into people’s knowledge of their local community and help Peter McVerry Trust identify empty buildings that may be suitable for re-use as social housing. Within the first few weeks of the app’s launch, over 100 properties had been logged and are now being reviewed and investigated by Peter McVerry Trust. At the launch of the app, Peter McVerry Trust highlighted examples of properties that had been logged with them by members of the public. One such building is in Ballyfermot, Dublin 10, which is also the first property to be completed under the Repair and Leasing scheme in Dublin City.

In late August 2017, Peter McVerry Trust was contacted by a member of the public to report an empty building in Ballyfermot. When Peter McVerry Trust’s Empty Homes Officer subsequently visited the location, it was not obvious that the property was vacant, as it appeared to be well kept and in good order. The property, which had been vacant for a number of years, underwent a huge transformation for a budget of €39,000, with the work completed in little over 8 weeks. Minister for Housing, Eoghan Murphy was on hand to officially unveil this new social home in May and meet the new tenants, who were exiting homelessness after two years in hotels.

Ten Turnkeys from Tintéan in Bagenalstown

Tintéan was delighted to hand over the keys to ten families for their new homes at Presentation Place, Barret Street, Bagenalstown. This turnkey development consists of 10 three-bed terraced houses that were provided under the Rebuilding Ireland Action Plan as a collaboration between Tintéan, Carlow County Council, The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, The Housing Agency and the Housing Finance Agency. The project is funded by CALF and HFA borrowing. Tintéan continues to build its capacity by working with their partners to effectively deliver much needed sustainable homes to residents and communities.

Minister Eoghan Murphy Opens Tintéan Willow in Carlow

Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government Eoghan Murphy TD, officially opened Tintéan Willow, the first group home for people with disabilities designed and constructed to passive house standards. This is a home from home for older special needs tenants with care provided by the Delta Centre in Carlow. The opening ceremony was also attended by Brian O’Donoghue, Cathaoirleach of Carlow County Council.

Tintéan Willow was developed by Tintéan Housing in partnership with Carlow County Council and the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government. The house was completed in 2017 with funding from the Capital Assistance Scheme plus funds from Tintéan. The project also scooped the disability award at the ICSH 8th Biennial Community Housing Awards in 2017.
Nine Unit Social Housing Development in Rosscarbery

Rosscarbery Social Housing is progressing a development of social housing at Ceim Hill, Rosscarbery. The development will see the construction of nine houses providing long-term accommodation.

Cork County Council is the sanctioning authority for the project and assisted in securing funding to the value of €2.35M from the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government through the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS).

Commenting on the development, Mayor of the County of Cork, Councillor Declan Hurley, said it would allow older people to live in their own homes for as long as possible and enjoy a high quality of life through established connections with the community.

Rosscarbery Social Housing Association is a non-profit organisation located in Rosscarbery. Its main objective is to provide affordable housing in the Rosscarbery catchment area, specifically for the older population. The Association currently has 12 units, which were completed in December 2005, and are currently fully occupied.

Building is expected to be completed by the end of February 2019, with the properties made available to older people in need of social housing on Cork County Council’s housing list.

Túath Ard Dealgan Refurbishment Dundalk

Túath were thrilled to be involved in this ground-breaking public, private, voluntary sector collaboration and have signed contracts with Celtic Social Housing Development Co Ltd to bring 68 homes at the Dundalk development back into use.

The complex, which is being refurbished, will be made available to applicants on Louth County Council’s social housing waiting list in mid-2019.

Ard Dealgan has lain vacant since it was the subject of a Fire Closure Notice in 2009. Louth County Council had begun a Compulsory Purchase Order process when the site was sold out of receivership to Celtic Social Housing Development Co Ltd, who offered it to the Council as a refurbishment project for social housing. In 2019, it will reopen as Halliday Mills, named after Arthur Halliday, who employed more than 1,000 people in his shoe factory in the 1960s, located on this site.

Upon completion, the redeveloped complex will contain 68 apartments, comprising 10 one-bed, 46 two-bed and 7 three-bed apartments, as well as 3 two-bed and 2 four-bed duplexes.

For Túath, Ard Dealgan represents an opportunity to grow its social housing portfolio in County Louth from its current 175 homes. With other social housing developments in planning or on site in the County in partnership with the Council, Túath aims to have over 500 homes in Co. Louth by the end of 2019.
New Homes for 67 Families

67 families have received keys to their new homes in Milltown Meadows, Ashbourne, Co. Meath, after waiting seven years (on average) on the social housing waiting list. Milltown Meadows is a mix of two, three and four bed houses, with a very high spec finish, energy efficient heating and an A-rated BER. The location is excellent and gives easy access to the city as well as a range of local services. The Minister of State at the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, Damien English, T.D, welcomed the new residents, who also include seven Syrian families.

After only 15 months in construction, Clúid Housing, in partnership with Glenveagh Properties and Meath County Council, has delivered a new estate bringing much needed affordable housing to the area. The surrounding area is predominantly privately owned residential housing. Little or no social housing has been built in Ashbourne for over 15 years. This has left significant demand for good quality affordable housing. There are currently 3,779 households on the Meath County Council housing waiting list.

Clúid funded the scheme using a government loan of 24% of the total purchase price to leverage a larger loan from the Housing Finance Agency. Clúid will repay those loans using the rent paid by tenants (which is always affordable) and an availability payment from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.

Social Housing Development in Ballingeary Cork

The approved housing body, Coiste Tithe Uibh Laoire Teo is progressing a new development of social housing at Cuan Barra, Kilmore, Ballingeary between the approved housing body and Droumleigh Construction Limited. The development will see the construction of three houses providing long-term accommodation. Cork County Council is the sanctioning authority for the project and assisted in securing funding to the value of €623,545 from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government through the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS).

In welcoming the development, Mayor Declan Hurley praised the long-standing relationship between the Council and community driven organisations such as Coiste Tithe Uibh Laoire Teo, a non-profit organisation located in the Gaeltacht village of Ballingeary in the parish of Uibh Laoire. It has developed a purpose-built community centre (Cuan Barra), a childcare facility and playground (Spraoi na Laoi) along with social housing and a rural transport bus. These facilities are used regularly for a diverse range of activities to improve the lives of local people. Coiste Tithe Uibh Laoire Teo hopes to have tenants in place by Christmas 2018.

Value for Money for Túath in Dublin Docklands

After several years of a very challenging acquisition process, Túath completed the purchase of 26 apartments at Northbank, Castleforbes, D1, for just under €5M. The apartments have been refurbished and comprise a mix of 6 x one beds, 16 x two beds and 4 x three beds. The homes were bought under Section 25 (DDDA Part V) from a receiver. At an average cost of €190,000 per property, the acquisition represents excellent value for money. No capital finance was required from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, with loan funding provided entirely by the Housing Finance Agency on a 25-year term at a fixed interest rate of 3.5%, resulting in an overall Loan to Value of 63%.
Oaklee €50M Loan Facility for New Social Homes

Oaklee Housing has secured a €50m debt financing agreement with Norddeutsche Landesbank (NORD/LB) based on a project financing structure, and secured through a wholly owned subsidiary and charity (or Special Purpose Vehicle) of Oaklee.

Oaklee manages 900 social homes and said the loan facility will be used to purchase 250 additional residential units for social housing throughout Ireland. A deal has already been agreed with the Housing Agency for the acquisition of 148 vacant properties, with the majority located in Dublin.

Sharon Cosgrove, Chief Executive of Oaklee Housing, said: “This is one of the most cost-effective long-term finance arrangements ever used in Ireland and means that we can make public money go further and deliver more. It represents good business for Oaklee and is a strong vote of confidence in our ability to deliver high quality homes for those in greatest need across Ireland in the years ahead.”

For more information on this new innovative financing structure, go to www.oaklee.ie.

NEHA homes Trim and Monaghan

North & East housing association recently allocated 10 new homes in Lough na Glack, Carickmacross, Co. Monaghan. The houses are the second phase of 38 homes in this previously unfinished estate to be provided by North & East in partnership Monaghan County Council and NARPS (NAMA). 11 homes have also been recently allocated at Millrace Court Trim, Co. Meath.

Nine Future-proofed Oaklee Homes in Castlecomer, Kilkenny

Located on the outskirts of the Castlecomer village of Kilkenny, the Moneenroe development sits on the Castlecomer-Athy road. This development consists of nine bungalows consisting of two- and three-bed dwellings, providing general needs support. Additionally, these properties have been designed to allow for disabled access, in order to meet the needs of all prospective tenants.
Ireland’s Ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and Its Impact on Housing

How will the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD) impact the largest group in society who are in need of affordable, appropriate and accessible housing? Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA), an approved housing body and a member of ICSH, outlines the impacts the ratification of the framework will have on people with disabilities:

Ireland was one of the first countries to sign the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD) on March 30, 2007. On March 7 2018 (11 years later), Ireland became the last EU member state to ratify the Convention. The CRPD is an International Agreement directed at changing attitudes and approaches to persons with disabilities. The convention ensures that people with disabilities have the right to be consulted about their own welfare and enshrines their rights around access to education, transport, employment, independent living and so on. The UNCRPD will provide the structure to promote, protect and ensure the rights of all people with disabilities and will also promote equal rights in all areas of life. In particular, Article 19 of the UNCRPD refers to: the importance of living independently and being included in the community.

For many years, Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) has lobbied successive Governments to ratify the UNCRPD and to also provide affordable, accessible and appropriate accommodation for people with physical disabilities. In the 2017 Triennial Housing Needs Assessment, people with disabilities were the single largest group of people with a specific type of housing need, with almost 6,000 individuals registered on social housing lists nationally. This number does not include the 2,647 people with disabilities for whom it is intended to move from congregated settings in the near future, nor the full number of people on housing Lists with a medical priority. It also does not capture the housing needs that will emerge over the next ten years.

In 2017, as the 10-year anniversary of Ireland’s signing fast approached, debates and discussions began to take place in Ireland around the Ratification of the UNCRPD. Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA), amongst other disability organisations, was invited to speak to Government on the impacts and benefits that the UNCRPD would bring to over 13% of the Irish population for whom it is intended to move from congregated settings in the near future, nor the full number of people on housing Lists with a medical priority. It also does not capture the housing needs that will emerge over the next ten years.

People with disabilities often have very specific housing and accommodation requirements and have always faced challenges in trying to live independently. With this in mind, the IWA Housing Support Service and National Housing Group works to further the housing agenda on behalf of IWA’s 20,000 members nationwide.

Now, post ratification, people with disabilities and their representative organisations continue to lobby the Government and other agencies to ensure that people with disabilities have equal rights, choices and opportunities in how they live their lives. Changes to housing policy, legislation or the construction of affordable homes will not begin until adequate funding and resources is provided. Unfortunately, ratification of the UNCRPD will not result in resources. For people with physical disabilities and IWA members (such as Brendan Sinclair), the wait for affordable, accessible and appropriate housing continues. Irish Wheelchair Association is available and can support other voluntary housing providers to increase awareness and encourage the development of action plans to meet the specific wheelchair accessible accommodation requirements of people with disabilities in housing, supported housing and residential care developments.

As a Voluntary Housing Association, IWA provides a range of wheelchair accessible housing options to people with disabilities in Dublin, Kilkenny, Carlow, Tipperary, Galway, Roscommon and Mayo. IWA advises and lobbies Government, local authorities and other voluntary housing providers to increase awareness and encourage the development of action plans to meet the specific wheelchair accessible accommodation requirements of people with disabilities in housing, supported housing and residential care developments.

IWA promotes best practice in accessibility for people with physical disabilities and has developed IWA Best Practice Access Guidelines to support improved access in all areas of the built environment including housing. Chapter 10 gives design guidance on both lifetime adaptable and fully wheelchair accessible housing. https://www.iwa.ie/downloads/about/iwa-access-guidelines.pdf

For further information about IWA Housing Support Services please visit www.iwa.ie/house or call 01 8186400.
Rebuilding Ireland Two Years On

Rebuilding Ireland was launched on 19 July 2016, and within the 100-day timeframe set-out in the Programme for a Partnership Government. ICSH welcomed the Plan and its recognition of the high level of political leadership required to address our housing crisis. In particular, we welcomed the development of a co-ordination unit to assist housing association supply. We highlighted the Plan’s twin track approach: boost supply and prevent households from becoming homeless in the short term as well as measures to re-position social housing as a long term infrastructural investment. However, at the time we had concerns over the reliance on the private rental market to provide accommodation for people eligible for social housing which was built into the Plan.

It’s worth looking at Rebuilding Ireland progress with these key issues in mind.

- Coordination Unit: The AHB Services Unit [one-stop-shop] commenced operation in late 2017, one-year on from the Q3 2016 timeline. It’s an important vehicle to support AHBs in relation to delivery mechanisms, procurement and providing additional social homes. Work is underway assisting in the CALF model review as well as the local authority/AHB communications protocol.

- Boost Social Housing Supply: The Action Plan relies heavily on the private market for an increase in social housing supports through HAP. Key issues for the successful roll-out of HAP are supply, affordability and security of tenure, and these remain problematic. In addition, the plan’s own targets should see a gradual decrease in the number of HAP recipients post-2018. This will need to be monitored. The Department has been emphasising the need for collaborative responses. However, we’ve seen a modest response to date from initiatives such as the Repair and Leasing and Buy and Renew schemes as well as the Enhanced Leasing Scheme. Affordable housing is in the pipeline but has not delivered as yet. Again, it’s important to see a statewide public land management plan in place for all local authorities and state agencies. It is hoped that the new National Regeneration and Development Agency (NRDA) will prioritise rapid site assembly of state lands for AHB construction programmes.

- Homelessness: Progress on preventing Homelessness has been more challenging. The government failed to end the use of hotels for emergency accommodation by summer 2017 and there are now almost 10,000 people in emergency accommodation. In addition, the number of children accessing emergency accommodation has increased by 40% in one year. Measures such as rapid build housing for homeless households have been slow to take-off. But 845 homes of 1,500 committed to under Rebuilding Ireland are expected by end 2019. On a positive note, the Focus Ireland-Peter McVerry Trust consortium has delivered more than 220 Housing First tenancies to individuals in Supported Temporary Accommodation and with a history of rough sleeping, and the Department has committed to tripling the targets for Housing First tenancies. In addition to increased current spending allocation on homelessness, an estimated €40m in capital funding will be allocated during 2018 primarily towards family hubs. Housing association have led in the provision of family hub accommodation for homeless households and there are 21 in operation with two opening outside Dublin in Louth and Galway. Hubs provide wraparound services and are an important first response for families that become homeless and a better solution than hotel accommodation. However, they must be seen as temporary and a step towards long-term housing.

UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing Visits Ireland

The UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, Leilani Farha, made a visit to Ireland in June. She attended several housing related events including the Simon Communities Making the Case for a Right to Housing as well as presenting to the Oireachtas Housing Committee. Leilani spoke of the knock-on impact of inadequate housing and that a human rights response was one that recognised ‘rights-holders’ rather than ‘recipients of charity’. She said that an interconnected, whole of government, response was needed to develop rights-based housing strategies and that, in this context, there was a need to regulate financial markets, which cannot be delegated to private actors.

The Mercy Law Resource Centre also published their second right to housing report, The Right to Housing in Comparative Perspective. The report offers a comparative perspective on the right to housing by looking at the legal systems of Finland, Scotland, France and South Africa. It emphasises that there is no ‘one size fits all’ model, and that a legally enforceable right to housing does not ‘give a key to a home for all’ but, rather, puts in place a basic floor of protection, in recognition that a home is central to a person’s dignity.
Improvements in Housing Data Landscape

The controversy over the accuracy, or reliability, of housing data that has rumbled on for a number of years has been addressed (in part) through the emergence of two new policy advancements. The thorny issue of housing output has been cleared-up with recent statistics by the CSO on new housing supply. For a very long time, the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government has used information from the ESB on electricity connections as a proxy for estimating the extent of new supply. For policy makers, this has been a limited metric and, at a time of crisis, simply not robust enough.

The CSO figures will be released as a new quarterly series on the number of new dwellings built in Ireland. The number of new dwellings in 2017 was 14,446, significantly less than the ESB figures. In the first quarter of 2018, there were 3,526 new dwellings built. The figures are key to providing a shared understanding of the extent of current new homes provision and the scale of undersupply that policymakers and all stakeholders must find a way of addressing.

The Dublin Housing Observatory (DHO), a collaboration between DCC, the All-Ireland Research Observatory (Maynooth University) and Ordinance Survey Ireland was launched by Dublin City Council (DCC) in July. The DHO is tasked with numerous research, data, support and analysis functions to help deliver the strategy to make Dublin city an affordable and sustainable place to live. A mapping viewer was unveiled at the launch, which provides data on sales prices, rents, locations, the number of social housing and private rented housing and the numbers of people living in homes in a particular area. This is all vital housing data, now freely available through one source that will assist in the planning of housing and urban development. For AHBs planning a housing project, the mapping viewer will be of huge significance.

For more information on the DHO mapping tool, go to: https://airomaps.geohive.ie/dho/

Housing for Older People Reports

This summer saw the publication of two timely reports on the housing needs of older people.

The Joint Committee on Housing, Planning & Local Government published their Housing Options for Older People. The report looks specifically at the areas of housing adaptation, Universal Design and technology, downsizing and community supports & sheltered housing. Recommendations include that housing typologies match the age demographic of the area and that incentives are put in place to develop housing options for older people in central locations. Other recommendations include reducing the housing adaptation grant eligibility age threshold alongside standardised funding across local authorities. And, in relation to downsizing, the report calls for local authority choice-based downsizing to be rolled-out nationwide.

ALONE recently published the report Housing Choices for Older People: Time for Action. The report calls for an integrated housing approach for older people to be included within Rebuilding Ireland and investment in a range of housing options: dispersed housing (general housing); shared housing in the community; dedicated sheltered housing for older people (social, affordable and private); and nursing homes. The report also identifies the number of housing units required across the spectrum of housing options for older people over a 10-year period. The important role for housing association in providing both housing with supports and supportive housing features prominently.
Housing Association Activity Report 2017

The ICSH launched the Housing Association Activity Report 2017 in our Merrion Square office on Wednesday 9th May. Over a light lunch with members, elected representatives and journalists, we showcased member development figures for 2017. In 2017, 2,330 homes (1 in every 3 new long-term social homes) were delivered by housing associations through a combination of build, acquisition and leasing.

Chief Executive Donal McManus reminded those in attendance that 2013 was ground zero for the sector, with only a few hundred units delivered in that year. Housing Associations are tasked with delivering more than 15,000 of the 50,000 social homes committed to in Rebuilding Ireland. According to the latest ICSH Development Survey, there are over 5,756 homes in the development pipeline, which will continue to ramp-up over the coming years. ICSH believe this number can be increased with specific actions by Government, and Dr. McManus urged Government to bring forward the plans for the new Regeneration and Development Agency and release strategically located land banks for social and affordable housing.

Approved Housing Body Output 2017

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Funding Scheme</th>
<th>Construction</th>
<th>Acquisitions</th>
<th>Leasing</th>
<th>Subtotal</th>
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<td>CAS</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>357</td>
<td></td>
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<td>SHCEP</td>
<td>996</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>1891</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1078</td>
<td>760</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>2,330</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Innovative Housing Management Solutions

At our recent AGM, the ICSH launched a series of case studies relating to innovative ways that our smaller Tier 1 members are responding to challenges such as an increased administrative and regulatory burden as well as board renewal. These case studies may be informative to other bodies that wish to respond to these challenges, either as an individual organisation, or by collaborating with other associations.

For more information or to discuss potential options further, please contact Kevin at 01 661 8334 or kevin@icsh.ie
ICSH AGM 2018

A well-attended ICSH Annual General Meeting was held on Monday June 18th in the Aisling Hotel, Dublin. This year, a principal issue of concern was the CSO/Eurostat reclassification of housing associations as part of the local government sub-sector. Members spoke of the challenges facing housing associations, and the ICSH as membership body, and recurring concerns facing our smaller (Tier 1) members around long-serving voluntary board members and the problem of succession and governance were also raised. The ICSH also used the occasion to call for the National Planning Framework (Project Ireland 2040) to deliver a reconfigured Nursing Homes Support Scheme (Fair Deal) to assist older people moving to supported housing and not just nursing homes. We recommended that the starting point for this should be within the existing network of supported housing schemes provided by housing associations.

Minister Eoghan Murphy attended to launch the ICSH Annual Report 2017, and to address the concerns of members in attendance. This year’s AGM, like last year, gained considerable media attention, reflecting the enhanced visibility of sector and recognition of its role in managing and delivering social housing across the country. Minister Murphy spoke of the housing association sector as critical to the delivery of social housing under Rebuilding Ireland.

You can download the ICSH Annual Report at www.icsh.ie.

Tier One Seminar - September 2018

The ICSH is delighted to host its 3rd Tier One Seminar in the Ashling Hotel, Dublin on the 18th September 2018. This seminar is suitable for board members and staff of smaller housing associations and attendees will benefit from a full programme that includes:

- Asset Management Strategies for smaller housing associations
- Technology and elderly housing: Latest Developments
- Presentation from the Housing Regulation Office
- The future of community-based housing associations: Possible directions

The seminar will begin at 10.30am and finish at 3.30 pm and the cost, which includes lunch, is €50 per attendee. As places are limited please contact Mairéad at 01 661 8334 or mairead@icsh.ie to confirm your place.
2017 Housing Association Performance Management Results

The ICSH’s performance management framework, Housing Association Performance Management (HAPM), saw its most successful year in terms of participation in 2017. This is the fourteenth year that HAPM has been in operation and the system has developed over the years to take into account the changing nature of the voluntary housing sector.

HAPM is a quarterly survey of key performance indicators that collects information on various aspects of housing management – size of housing stock, rents and service charges, rent collected and arrears, allocations, voids, response repairs and maintenance and landlord and tenant relations.

Members receive a survey that is proportional to their organisational size. Tier 2 and Tier 3 members receive the full HAPM framework that covers all the above categories. Smaller Tier 1 members receive a shorter framework that focuses on the key indicators of rents, voids and repairs as requested in Building for the Future, A Voluntary Regulation Code for Approved Housing Bodies in Ireland.

In 2017, 109 ICSH members completed HAPM returns for some or all of the year and we received 69 returns covering the full year with data on 20,136 tenancies, the highest number ever recorded. The ICSH very much welcomes this level of openness and transparency from members and their ongoing commitment to good governance and performance management.

Some of the key findings from the 2017 HAPM survey include:

- Average CAS rent of €74.23
- Average CLSS rent of €53.50
- 100.62% of rent owed was collected (This figure includes current and former tenants paying off rent arrears)
- 4.86% of rent receivable was outstanding as rent arrears
- The average void period was 8.3 weeks
- 90.3% of emergency repairs were responded to in the target timescale, 89.2% of urgent repairs and 93.3% of routine repairs
- Only 101 formal complaints were received by HAPM participants
- Of the 20,136 tenancies covered in the HAPM survey, notices of termination were only issued 113 times

Further findings and analysis are available from the 2017 HAPM report, which has been distributed to members and is available on our website.

TopHouse

The ICSH has been keeping members informed throughout the year about our involvement in TopHouse (Towards Person Centred Housing Services in Europe). This project aims to develop tools to assist housing and support workers and allocations officers in assessing a person’s housing and support needs and to use these to develop person-centred support plans and make more appropriate housing allocations. The project is funded through Erasmus+ as a strategic partnership for vocational education and training.

In July, the ICSH hosted the latest meeting of project partners and we were delighted to welcome to Dublin the Essl Foundation from Austria, Jugend am Werk from Austria, Support (formerly known as Fundacio Tutelar de les Comarques Gironines) from Catalonia in Spain, the Aspa Foundation from Finland and Homeless Link from the UK. The meeting also had input from the European Association of Service Providers for People with Disabilities (EASPD) from Belgium over Skype.

The two-day meeting reviewed progress to date, which involved compiling best practice examples of housing and support assessment, allocation and provision from across Europe. These were used to develop and inform the project outputs, which include draft assessment and allocation tools. Following July’s meetings, these will be worked on further over the coming months and finalised. A training pack is also being developed with the intention that this will be localised for each participating country and delivered to frontline housing and support staff across Europe.

We will be in touch with members and other stakeholders shortly about the next phase of TopHouse, which will involve delivering this training to interested members. For further information on this project, please contact Catherine McGillycuddy on 01 6618334 or catherine@icsh.ie.
ICSH Regional Member Meetings 2018

The ICSH completed a round of very successful regional meetings in spring 2018 with meetings in Cork, Limerick, Mayo, Kilkenny and Cavan. Regional meetings remain an important forum for discussion on current issues and challenges facing members, as well as an opportunity to engage with the ICSH on issues of importance for members such as housing management, regulation and development opportunities. Pat Doyle, ICSH President, attended and contributed to four of the five meetings and a flavour of some of the issues discussed at each venue is given below.

Development

- In relation to CAS, the length, delays and over-complicated process with different requirements from each local authority were discussed.
- Insights into the advantages of the Repair and Leasing scheme were provided.
- Frustrations with the Buy and Renew scheme (applications ongoing for 14 months in one case) and problems for some smaller associations fronting costs in surveying properties were also identified. The potential to access the resources of bigger associations was raised.
- SEAI Grants were seen as a good way to get work done and any new scheme should be promoted to members.
- The issue of revenue funding sustainability for units that are four bedrooms or fewer in special needs accommodation was raised.
- There was interest in developing a housing with care (non-nursing) model and the need for a similar model to be rolled out to meet changing demographics.

Governance

- Options for board renewal were discussed.
- Data retention periods and the pending introduction of GDPR were discussed.
- There was a query on the role of councils in taking back units if an association is at risk, feeling that they should have an obligation to do so.
- Ongoing issues with local authority rent calculations as well as scrutiny were seen as issues affecting the sustainability of some associations long-term.
- The benefits of having a part-time worker for smaller associations was outlined. It was great from a tenant service perspective and also gave the board a more strategic role.

Inter-agency working

- Problems with inter-agency and inter-department workings, such as the HSE and Department of Social Protection roles on RAS (in particular) and the need for better coordination were raised.
- There was a call for the ICSH to seek a designated officer in each Local Authority to deal directly with AHBs, as had been in place previously.
- The ability to facilitate increased mobility in housing waiting list applicants was raised.
- There was an Issue with the lack of engagement from Irish Water delaying a project. ICSH is currently looking at setting up a mechanism to deal with similar cases.
- Issues were raised about the quality of RTB supports including the payment registration process and call centre supports.
- Fair Deal is seen as a big block on renting vacant units. It was felt that ICSH should lead on trying to change this.

Maintenance

- Queries were raised on who can carry out Stock Condition Surveys, what externally validated means, and a sample vs 100% survey. There were calls for ICSH to set up a scheme for member stock condition surveys and audits at a set price.
- Flooding and insurance was also brought up as an issue in planning new acquisitions.
The ICSH Finance & Development Conference, supported by Gas Networks Ireland will take place on the 25th & 26th October 2018 at the Lyrath Conference Centre, Kilkenny. The Finance Conference has this year extended to include development as we reflect on the shifting landscape within the social housing sector and the strong connections linking financial capacity with development. The 2018 Finance and Development Conference reflects the need to drive forward the delivery of social housing to the scale and extent that will provide homes under the objectives of Rebuilding Ireland.

The objective of this conference is to challenge our current policies and debate solutions to develop our thinking in critical areas of affordability, cost, scale, and innovation. Speakers from Ireland and abroad will provide insights from their own experiences and delegates will have the opportunity to deliberate on possible solutions for the Irish housing system.

Conference Themes Include:

- Classification and impacts on financing
- The financial environment for delivery of social housing
- Modelling for mixed tenure
- Asset management & financial commitments
- Joint ventures in housing delivery – private and public
- The AHB sector financial and delivery vehicles
- Social indicators for financing social housing
- Financing developments for special needs
- Scaling up for regeneration, stock transfer and management
- Use of Building Information Modelling (BIM): can it deliver an efficient process?
- European modular housing for increased scale and delivery time
- SORP
- Sustainability of housing associations, collaboration and mergers
- Standardisation of financial documentation

Conference programme including full list of speakers to follow.

Fees

The Conference fee per delegate is as follows:

- ICSH Member Organisations: €255
- Statutory / Private Organisations: €270
- SPECIAL OFFER: book three places and get the third half price

The conference fee includes documentation, lunches and conference dinner. Overnight accommodation or travel costs are not included. To book a place at the conference, use our online booking form or email mairead@icsh.ie or call +353 1 6618334

Delegate Accommodation Rates

The Lyrath Hotel is offering a delegate rate of €115.00 B&B single occupancy and €125.00 B&B twin/double occupancy. Bookable via the hotel directly tel: +353 56 7760088.

The Springhill Court Hotel is offering a delegate rate of €75.00 B&B single occupancy and €85.00 B&B twin/double occupancy. Bookable via the hotel directly tel: +353 56 7721122.
Housing Overseas

Leaders Meet in First EU Social Housing Summit

Housing Europe, the EU representative body of National Social Housing Federations, held the first-ever Housing Europe leaders’ summit on Tuesday, April 24th in Barcelona. They invited over 30 CEOs of national housing federations (including the ICSH) to assess and propose solutions to address major housing problems in EU member states. Issues such as affordability, housing supply for low to moderate income groups, land costs, financing of social housing, homelessness, new delivery production, state aid, energy reduction and digitisation were some of the common issues affecting many member states and regions in the EU. Although housing per se is not an EU competency, many EU programmes and directives such as public procurement, energy requirements, state aid, services of general economic interest and Eurostat accounting rules, all have a direct spill-over and impact into national housing and social housing policies. In Ireland, we have most recently witnessed the impact of the reclassification by Eurostat of Tier 3 housing associations as part of the local government sub-sector.

Austria

Although Austria is known for its supply of affordable rental housing (held in high regard by Austrians), housing associations are facing significant challenges to keep a sufficient supply of rental housing. From 2011-2016, Austrian housing associations provided double the number of homes than the private (for profit) sector (66,000 vs 31,000 over the period). In addition, the size of housing association homes was 16% larger and rents 19% lower than new homes provided by the private sector. However, some emerging problems for housing associations include: the price of land increasing rapidly due to a boom in construction for owner occupation; the costs of construction and building requirements being too high; and also, the cost of finance increasing due to Basel 111 and IV regulatory requirements for financial institutions.
France

Major changes in the social housing finance regime in France has impacted on the subsidies towards the social housing sector, and this has resulted in a reduction in cashflow of €500m to 240 social housing operators. 85 of these organisations are subjected to enhanced financial supervision by the regulator due to their financial weakness in the face of Government changes. There were 600 operators in 2017 and more than 12 social companies operating in certain areas. This meant that competition was leading to increased land prices. Social housing operators will have to comply with a requirement of having no less than 15,000 homes, with a few exceptions.

Growth of Airbnb in London and EU Cities

Research from Airbnb has indicated a huge boom in Airbnb arrivals in London, from a trickle in 2009 to 4 million in 2017. And the City of London, like Dublin, has been face huge housing affordability problems in recent years. Some of the approaches and instruments used in different EU cities have included the following: cooperation and prohibition, data sharing, registration and permission, limitations, inspection and sanctions. Overall, it has been found that regulation has an impact alongside enforcement.

Estonia: Smart Communities and Cities

Housing Europe’s annual conference (alongside the European Federation of Public, Cooperative and Social Housing and EKYL—the Estonian Union of Co-operative Housing Associations) was held in Tallinn Estonia in June and the event marked the 30-year anniversary of Housing Europe. Estonia recently held the presidency of the European Union and its particular focus has been on the digitised city. Since 2001, there has significant changes in Estonia, where the internet is viewed as a social right. 99% of services are online and every Estonian has an electronic ID. In particular, in the City of Tartu, the focus has been on creating a smart city, and part of this includes regenerating previous older Soviet blocks.