Innovation, Change and Delivery Across the Sector

Clúid: Leeside Apartments, Pioneering Social Housing Solution

Túath: Ellis Court, Victorian Social Housing Regeneration

Residential Tenancies Bill 2018

Social Housing Delivery 2018

ICSH & Allianz Community Housing Awards 2019
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**CALL FOR ENTRIES**

**ICSH Allianz**

**COMMUNITY HOUSING AWARDS 2019**

Submissions by 12 noon, Friday 17th May 2019
to catherine@icsh.ie
With forthcoming local and European elections, housing related issues are still to the fore in the public mind. Local elected members indicate that a significant part of their time and clinic work focuses on housing issues, but solutions for constituents can be limited in the current climate. However, elected members also have a key strategic role in supporting partnerships with housing associations. Concrete action can and has been done in the form of enabling transfer of sites for new build or in housing association regeneration projects. Many elected members see the bigger picture of working in joint ventures with housing associations, which has resulted in, for example, newly upgraded social housing for their constituents and a better quality of life.

In 2016, the ICSH commissioned an independent survey of elected members of all political groupings. One important finding was that over 90% of local authority elected members wanted their council to have strong partnerships with housing associations. The ICSH have produced a briefing for all those standing in local and European elections seeking pledges in 4 key areas: delivery, choice in housing options, land & supply and partnership. Newly elected local authority members who support commitments in these areas can expect better housing outcomes for their constituents.

Europe has a role in housing that is often overlooked

Although housing itself is not a competency at EU level, as that is the responsibility of each member state, there are still a range of range of areas where the EU has an indirect role that impacts on social housing providers and tenants. These range from the procurement process; EU structural funds used for energy efficiency (which local authorities have accessed); European Social Funds for training, upskilling, and exchanges in social inclusion such as homelessness (housing associations and the ICSH have partners with EU organisations in specific programmes); state aid rules (which guide Government spending and eligibility for social housing); Eurostat classification on guidelines on debt and off-balance sheet financing (some housing associations funding has been classified as ‘on the state’s balance sheet’). Therefore, there are a growing number of housing related areas that candidates for the European Parliament should be made aware of in the forthcoming European elections.

At European level, one of the key priorities in the next Parliament will be greater action on reducing carbon emissions and greater use of sustainable renewables. This is certainly one area that the social housing sector can take a lead, especially where housing has to be used for future generations, while limiting fuel poverty.

There has been recent discussion on newly constructed turnkey homes and how investment funds that have bought these from the private development sector (often late in the development process) may have led to the displacement of potential homeowners who wish to buy. For some housing associations that have successfully used a turnkey process to deliver new homes in recent years, this has been an efficient approach, which can de-risk the process for housing associations. When public expressions of interest are sought by housing associations and evaluated by price, quality and delivery, the appointed contractor will employ construction workers and a team to deliver the project. It must be remembered that housing associations require significant loan finance in place to deliver on these projects. This process generally will have a lead-in time and it is up to the contractor or developer to agree to build and provide these social rented new homes under contract at a certain date. If contractors don’t wish to provide these for social housing then they won’t. Importantly, there is a small (but growing) number of contractors or developers with their own sites or properties who are looking for these sites to be developed for social housing and managed by housing associations. This type of procurement of social housing through turnkey is fairly typical in all other EU member states. This is a significant part of social housing delivery in the UK and also Vienna (recently heralded for their efficient and consistent supply of social and affordable housing). It is important that in all these discussions in Ireland, that social housing delivery is not pushed to the back of the queue behind other tenures.
Regulation and Legislation Update

Residential Tenancies (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 2018

The Residential Tenancies (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 2018 is currently at Committee stage in Dáil Éireann. The Bill provides for the following: powers to carry out investigations of landlords and impose administrative sanctions; offences in relation to non-compliance with rent increase restrictions in rent pressure zones; increases in the notice periods to be provided in the case of termination of a tenancy by a landlord; annual registration by landlords of tenancies and amendments to the registration process; and mandatory publication of determination orders by the Residential Tenancies Board, as well as other provisions.

Section 12 of the Bill requires the annual registration of tenancies with the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB) across the private and AHB sector. The ICSH is concerned about the financial burden the changes to registration will put on the sector as well as the continuous administrative burden that individual and annual tenancy renewal (required under the proposed reforms) will place on our members, particularly our Tier 1 members. In addition, the Market rent aspects of the legislation such as the enforcement of RPZs (a major part of the new bill) does not apply to AHBs.

The ICSH propose that AHB tenancies should be excluded from the requirement to re-register their tenancies every year on the basis that they are providing long-term social housing tenancies and their rents are not market rents, which are part of the private sector rent regulations.

Overall it is hoped that the Bill will bring in new protections and powers to improve the security of tenure for tenants in the private rented sector.

Voluntary Regulation Code

Performance Standard

The Housing Agency Regulation Office published the Performance Standard in December 2018 and it joins the Financial Standard and Governance Standard to form part of the regulatory framework under the Voluntary Regulation Code.

The Performance Standard incorporates aspects of the relationship between the AHB and the tenant. It sets out a challenging assessment framework that includes: how properties are maintained, improved and repaired over time and how those works are paid for; how rents are set, charged, collected and debts recovered; how properties are allocated and let, and how tenancies are managed and terminated. It also “establishes a standard in relation to properties and services for the people who live in them, in addition to seeking assurance that all AHBs have sufficient policies and procedures in operation to deliver good quality and consistent services across all tenancies”.

The Performance Standard comes into operation for Tier 3s in 2019, Tier 2s in 2020 and Tier 1s in 2021, although it is important to note that many of its provisions have been made current requirements.

Oireachtas Housing Committee

Work Programme 2019

The Joint Committee on Housing, Planning & Local Government has published its Work Programme January-December 2019, in which the committee has outlined its key policy priorities. There are a number of policy areas of particular importance to the housing association sector including:

- Reclassification and future output of Approved Housing Bodies
- Housing Management Agencies
- Child and Family Homelessness
- Housing First
- Review of all Current Expenditure on Social Housing
- Energy Efficient Housing
- Cost Rental Housing
- Consideration of the DPER/IGEES Report; Analysis of Current Expenditure on Housing Supports
- Exploring Affordability in the Irish Housing Market
- Consideration of the National Planning Framework

The ICSH will continue to engage closely with the Committee on key issues that impact on the development and sustainability of our AHB member organisations.
Túath Housing Refurbishment of Landmark Victorian Social Housing

This year Túath Housing will commence work on Ellis Court, a Victorian flat complex in Dublin’s north-west inner city, which has been derelict since it was severely damaged by a fire in 2005. Ellis Court, constructed in the 1880s, was one of Dublin City Council’s first ever purpose-built corporation flat complexes.

Túath has already secured planning permission for the work, which will involve the refurbishment of the old flats and the construction of an extension to provide six one-bed apartments, 13 two-bed apartments, two two-bed townhouses and one three-bed townhouse. Once built, the 22 new homes will be allocated to applicants on the city council’s housing waiting list. The estimated cost for the refurbishment is €6m and Túath hopes to commence work in May 2019 with a scheduled completion date before the end of 2020.

Nick Sheward, director of construction and property services with Túath Housing Association said that

“Ellis Court is an exciting and significant project that is being developed in partnership with Dublin City Council with the support of the Department of Housing. We are delighted to have had the opportunity to work once again with both Dublin and the Department on this building of historic interest, so that we can bring back in to use what was one of Dublin City Council’s first every social housing projects”.

Ellis Court, Dublin
Ravenswood - First Greenfield Development for Peter McVerry Trust

The scheme of eight one-bedroom homes together with a small community building is the charity’s first greenfield development. It has been specifically designed to provide housing to single people with the most complex needs. Supported by Fingal County Council and the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, the scheme was also supported by money raised in 2018 through the Refund Project, an initiative to encourage people to donate their refunds from Irish Water to three of Ireland’s leading homeless charities.

The new tenants of Ravenswood will have access to both visiting and on-site supports from Peter McVerry Trust staff, while the community building will provide residents with a central location in which to socialise. Ravenswood was designed by architects Fitzgerald Kavanagh and Partners, and was supported by Fingal County Council and the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government through Rebuilding Ireland.

Peter McVerry Trust Convert Commercial Units into Nine New Homes

Peter McVerry Trust recently launched nine new social housing units in Kilbeggan Co. Westmeath. It marks the start of the charity’s work to respond to the social housing need in Westmeath, where it will specifically help people impacted by homelessness in the county. The mix of one and two-bed units will particularly benefit single people and couples who often find it harder to secure housing.

The nine apartments include five two-bed and four one-bed units, which were delivered in partnership with Westmeath County Council through the long-term Social Housing Leasing Scheme under Rebuilding Ireland. The apartments in Kilbeggan were refurbished and converted from a number of unused commercial units and all tenants in the development will have access to Peter McVerry Trust’s Housing with Supports Team.

Pat Doyle CEO of Peter McVerry Trust is encouraging owners of vacant houses or commercial buildings in town centres to contact the charity, which has built up expertise in reusing long-term empty or derelict buildings for social housing.

Recent Schemes From Respond

Respond have a National Development Programme committed to delivering at least 2,500 homes over the next five years.

Martello Place, Balbriggan, Co. Dublin. This is a development of 18 three bed semi-detached houses located north-west of Balbriggan town centre, adjacent to the Balbriggan Educate Together school. These A3-rated homes were acquired by Respond mid-2018 through CALF funding from Fingal County Council, Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government and private finance from the Housing Finance Agency.

Weston Avenue, Carrigaline, Co. Cork. This is a development of 10 three-bed semi-detached homes, seven houses acquired by Respond and the remainder acquired by Cork County Council. This development just outside Cork City is adjacent to St John’s School in the expanding suburb of Carrigaline. These houses have an A2 rating and are equipped with air-to-water heat pumps and solar PV panels. These homes were acquired through CALF funding from Cork County Council, Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government and private finance from the Housing Finance Agency.

Bellingsfield Estate in Pipers Hill, Naas. Eight Part V allocated homes in December 2018 with the remaining two units scheduled for completion in March 2019. The acquisition is funded through CALF funding from Kildare County Council and the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government and private finance from the Housing Finance Agency.
Clúid Closes purchase of 78 Apartments at Leeside, Cork

On 28th March last, Clúid Housing completed the purchase of 78 apartments at Leeside on Bachelor’s Quay in Cork City. The four blocks, located in the heart of the city, have undergone a multi-million-euro refurbishment after being vacated last year.

News of this acquisition hit the local and national airwaves on the morning of 29th March and gained momentum subsequently. James O’Halloran, New Business Manager at Clúid, said that the purchase represented a major milestone for Clúid. He said that Clúid worked with Cork City Council to deliver these units in a matter of months and it showed what can be achieved when stakeholders who are committed to housing delivery work together. Brian Geaney, Director of Services for Housing at Cork City Council, said the project was another example of the Council taking a pioneering role in relation to the delivery of social housing and its willingness to take a multi-faceted approach to finding solutions to housing challenges in the City.

The 78-unit apartment complex was purchased from an investment company for €20 million, but to build the complex would have cost €25 million to €26 million, so it represented very good value. Clúid will use the units to provide long-term, quality housing for people on Cork City Council’s housing list. Private tenants in the blocks will also benefit from Clúid’s management of common areas as their tenancy switches to the organisation.

Leeside is part of Clúid’s ongoing work in Cork. The association currently has planning permission for 112 units in Blackpool on the city’s northside and is working with Cork City Council and developers to identify additional sites.

Clúid is financing the development of these units through a combination of a Capital Advance and Availability Payment from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government and a loan facility with the Housing Finance Agency (HFA). Cork City Council will act as a conduit for the departmental funding.

The extensive coverage of this purchase by Clúid is a resoundingly positive endorsement of the work AHBs are doing as part of the Rebuilding Ireland programme. Not only this, but it has brought the work of AHBs to audiences who might not be familiar with their work or how they partner with local authorities (LAs). It also highlights the positive outcomes from collaboration between local authorities and AHBs in securing long-term housing for people on the social housing waiting lists.

New Housing Schemes from Túath Housing

SNAPSHOT

Túath Housing have an ambitious programme for 2019 including the following: 14 units in Carlow, 63 in Kildare, 64 homes in Meath and phased delivery of 217 homes in two separate schemes in Louth, due for completion in early 2020.
Clúid Housing Upgrade of Ernedale Heights, Co. Donegal

Clúid Housing partnered with Donegal County Council to carry out a full refurbishment of 11 houses at Ernedale Heights. The houses were built by Donegal County Council in the mid-1970s and were located at the entrance to Ernedale Heights housing estate. Over the years, the properties had fallen into varying states of disrepair. Some houses were derelict and hot spots for anti-social behaviour.

By 2015, four of the houses were long-term unoccupied. Clúid Housing partnered with Donegal County Council to upgrade the houses and provide warm, comfortable homes. The houses were transferred into the ownership of Clúid Housing with private finance from the Housing Finance Agency and CALF funding from Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government to finance the extensive refurbishment works.

Fold Ireland Provides 47 New Homes for Older People in Coolock

The Tonlegee Road development contains 47 one-bed apartments that were provided under the Rebuilding Ireland Action Plan. Dublin City Council were the sanctioning authority for the scheme with funding of €10 million from the Department of Housing and the Housing Finance Agency (HFA).

Fold were delighted to deliver these much-needed new homes, which were fully occupied by tenants in March 2019. The block is fully designed to the latest Universal Design guidelines and has the needs of older residents fully considered with automated door entry and lifts to upper floors along with a Radius Connect 24 service in every home. The development is in an ideal location with easy access to the city as well as a wide range of local services and amenities. Fold have many other social housing developments currently under construction in the Dublin area, and aim to continue providing for those in need of good quality affordable housing.

Clúid Housing Provide 26 Families with Homes on Sleaty Street Carlow Town

26 families have received keys to their new homes in Sleaty Park View, on Sleaty Street in Carlow Town. They had been waiting five years on average on the social housing waiting list. The homes were delivered by Clúid Housing, in partnership with the developer, Byrne & Byrne Construction Ltd, and Carlow County Council after only 13 months in construction.

In addition to Sleaty Park View, Clúid has 180 properties in Co. Carlow.

Clúid is looking for new opportunities to develop further in the county and beyond and seeks to partner with developers and local authorities to deliver 2,500 units nationwide over three years.

Latest Sod-Turning Sees Major Growth in Supported Housing for Charleville

Charleville Sheltered Housing Services received Capital Assistance Scheme funding of €793,000 through Cork County Council to build four additional units. Chairperson of Charleville Sheltered Housing Services, John O’Donnell, said “the sod-turning is a strong endorsement of the progressive supported housing model that Charleville Sheltered Housing Services has been championing for 30 years. Residents of the Charleville Sheltered Housing Services range in age from 55 to 93 years. There are a higher number of people living alone now, and 14% of the population of Cork North-west are aged over 65 years. So we see our clustered housing model, located in the centre of Charleville, as the way forward.”

The organisation currently provides 25 individual housing units and a group house that can cater for three higher dependency individuals. Recent approval for a second development of eight units means the needs of 40 individuals from the community will be met, enabling residents to age-in-place and live independently in their own self-contained home.

Fold Ireland, Tonlegee Road, Coolock

Charleville Sheltered Housing Services Sod-Turning

Ernedale Heights, Donegal
**Social Housing Delivery 2018 Report**

Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government, Eoghan Murphy TD, recently launched a report on social housing delivery in 2018. The report notes that 27,103 households had their housing need met under Rebuilding Ireland in 2018, compared to 25,469 in 2017, under the categories of build, voids, acquisitions, leasing, RAS and HAP. 7,095 units were delivered in 2017 under the build, acquisitions, leasing and voids programme, whereas 8,422 were delivered in 2018. Housing associations were responsible for 2,330 units in 2017 (33%) and in 2018, our sector delivered 3,228 units (38%).

The ICSH issued a press release on foot of the publication, in which we stated that housing associations were continuing to scale-up housing delivery working in partnership with local authorities and the private sector. We also noted that almost 25% of all new build housing in 2018 was social housing.

What is particularly heartening, however, is the fact that there was an 85% increase in the number of new build social homes compared to 2017: 4,251 in total. Newly constructed homes delivered by AHBs increased from 1078 units in 2017 to 1388 in 2018. The number of voids recorded under the 2018 delivery figure is also capped at the national Rebuilding Ireland target (560 units) and this is important, as a very significant percentage of the 2017 social housing output was via the voids programme (1,757 units).

Commenting on the challenges ahead, ICSH Chief Executive Donal McManus said that the Social Housing Delivery 2018 report communicates steady progress, but that we can do more with enhanced capacity. He said that over the coming years, land would be critical to underpin delivery. "Going forward, we need to ring-fence state lands for affordable housing delivery. The public interest is best served by ensuring that a very a significant proportion of social and affordable housing is built on state lands."

**Social Housing Delivery 2018**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Delivery Method</th>
<th>2017 Output</th>
<th>2018 Target</th>
<th>2018 Output</th>
<th>% of 2018 Target Achieved</th>
<th>Change in Delivery 2018 vs 2017</th>
<th>% Change in Delivery 2018 vs 2017</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Build</strong></td>
<td>2,257</td>
<td>4,469</td>
<td>4,251</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>1,954</td>
<td>+95%</td>
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<td><strong>Voids</strong></td>
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<td>560</td>
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<td><strong>Acquisitions</strong></td>
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<td><strong>HAP</strong></td>
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<td>17,000</td>
<td>17,926</td>
<td>105%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>23,991</td>
<td>25,469</td>
<td>27,103</td>
<td>106%</td>
<td>1,534</td>
<td>+5%</td>
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*Build refers to Local Authority and Approved Housing Body construction, turnkeys, rapid build delivery, regeneration and homes delivered through the Part V mechanism.*

**Voids delivery from 2018 is capped at national Rebuilding Ireland target and cannot be compared to prior periods—greater detail is available in the detail statistics page on the Department’s website.*
Rebuilding Ireland Quarter 4 Social Housing Construction Report

The Social Housing Construction Status Report (Q 4 2018) was published in March. The quarterly report is a compendium of live LA and AHB new-build social housing activity across the period 2016-2021. The following social housing construction programmes are represented:

- Social Housing Capital Investment Programme (SHCIP)
- Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS)
- Capital Advance Leasing Facility (CALF)
- Public Private Partnership (PPP)

Looking again at Rebuilding Ireland targets for build (33,617), acquisition (6,830) and Leasing (10,036), we can see that at the half-way point in the Rebuilding Ireland programme, we are facing significant challenges. The cumulative build figures are at only 7,205 or just over 20% of the build target, acquisitions (6,781) have almost reached their target and the number of leased units (2,620) are at 25% of their target. It seems clear that the acquisition target will need to be revised if we are to deliver on the 50,000 new social homes by 2021.

The report records 1,299 schemes (or phases of the same scheme) delivering 19,134 homes. Of these 6,334 units have already been delivered during 2016, 2017 and to end Q4 2018. The AHB sector has a current pipeline of 4951 units under the CALF construction, CALF turnkey, CAS construction and regeneration funding programmes.

Housing for Older People Policy Statement

Minister for Housing and Urban Renewal, Damien English TD, and Minister for Mental Health and Older People, Jim Daly TD, launched the Joint Policy Statement Housing Options for our Ageing Population in February 2019. The report was compiled in response to a consultation process and sets out a framework by which the Government aims to create a much wider spectrum of options and choices for older people in Ireland. The report drew on contributions from a number of stakeholder groups including the ICSH, government departments, the HSE, Age Friendly Ireland, the Housing Agency and the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (CEUD).

The statement identifies a number of key actions under the following themes: housing options, consistent data, collaboration, delivering choice, support, comfort and security and maintaining momentum. The statement commits to developing a statutory scheme and system of regulation for home support services, as well as bringing universal design principles into new developments that are suitable for older people or for people with a mobility impairment.

The Housing for Older People Policy Statement is available to download at www.rebuildingireland.ie
Other News

A new Support Services first anniversary celebration of Cherry Blossom Cottage

ICSH member Anew, recently held its First Anniversary Celebration of Cherry Blossom Cottage at Swords Castle. The event included a photography exhibition, representing the achievements of the women who have used Anew’s service in the past year. The images celebrated motherhood and challenged perceptions of a 'typical' homeless person.

Cherry Blossom Cottage is a Supported Temporary Accommodation Service that provides emergency accommodation to pregnant women experiencing homelessness. The aim of the service is to exit women from homeless services as quickly as possible and to achieve positive outcomes for the woman and her child. The effectiveness of this approach demonstrates how investment into services such as this saves money in the long term, achieving sustainable exits from homelessness and positive long-term maternal outcomes. The service is funded in partnership with the Dublin Region Homeless Executive (DRHE) and Tusla, the Child and Family Agency. Anew’s services are also substantially supported by Fingal County Council and the local community in Swords.

Cherry Blossom Cottage opened in March 2018 and is currently the only emergency accommodation service that works specifically with pregnant women and new mothers who are experiencing homelessness. Despite having a capacity of just four beds, the service has worked with 16 women in the last 12 months who have had 14 babies. Of those 16 women, 10 are now in long-term homes and remain supported by Anew in relation to parenting and maternal wellbeing.

Fiona Barry, National Accommodation Manager at Anew, opened the event and staff members recounted (anonymised) client stories to illustrate the issues faced by the women who Anew support. Marian Barnard, Chief Executive of Anew, spoke of the particular challenges facing pregnant women experiencing homelessness and Valerie Mawe, a Professional Support Manager at Tusla, emphasised the importance of investing in pregnancy and early childhood in order to support sustainable outcomes for mothers and children. Paul Reid, Chief Executive of Fingal County Council, outlined the changing demographics of homelessness and the actions Fingal County Council is taking to tackle homelessness, specifically for pregnant women and families. And Senator Joan Freeman delivered a closing statement commending women’s resilience and their ability to overcome personal and societal obstacles. She encouraged all women to use the support networks available to them.

Anew Support Services also won the award for Women’s Support Group of the year at the recently held Irish Women’s Awards 2019.
ALONE Technology Solutions
Support Ageing in Place

ALONE’s vision is for every older person to age happily and securely in their own home. Based on ALONE’s experience as a service provider and approved housing body for older people, the organisation has developed two technology solutions, BConnect and BHome to support approved housing bodies with tenant and property management. These tools enable approved housing bodies to:

- Support vulnerable tenants
- Capture data for Key performance indicators for regulatory returns
- Support early detection of tenant health and safety issues
- Manage properties more effectively
- Support remote property maintenance

The BConnect platform is a cloud-based property and tenant management database and is designed to support organisations to deliver a more efficient and effective service to their tenants. It supports organisations to:

- Securely store information about tenants and properties
- Enable remote working allowing you to reach more tenants
- Increase efficiencies with information stored in a central location
- Improve report creation with real-time reporting tools

BHome smart home and emergency response devices is designed to enhance ageing at home, improving safety, security and confidence to live independently, as well as monitoring for health and environmental concerns. These devices are installed in the property and can detect:

- unusual activity or inactivity in the home
- ambient temperature
- door opening at unusual times or being left open
- panic alarm with 24-7 cover

If you are interested in these solutions for your organisation, please email bconnect@alone.ie or phone 01 679 1032.

The Vienna Model: Housing for the 21st Century City

The Vienna Model of housing is internationally regarded for its continued achievement of sustainable, high quality residential development using a cost-rental approach that in effect delivers housing for all. The exhibition centres on sixty prototypical Viennese projects from the last hundred years, with a special focus on the public art that has complemented Vienna’s housing since the First Republic. A joint partnership between the Housing Agency, Dublin City Council and the City of Vienna, the exhibition was presented alongside a number of seminars and workshops that ran from April 1st-25th 2019. Vienna has been ranked the best city in the world to live in for the 10th year running and this is partly due to the sustainable and affordable public housing model championed by the municipality of Vienna. Seminar topics included the following:

- Planning and Housing for the 21st Century;
- Sustainable Development via Rapid Urbanism or Gentle Urban Renewal?
- Demography, Migration, Integration and Housing;
- Housing Investment, Development and Skill; Housing, Community and Environment;
- Delivering New Affordable Rental for Dublin

More information is available at www.housingmodeldublin.ie
Tier 3 Briefing on AHB Reclassification & Strategic Direction

The ICSH held a briefing event for Tier Three board members and senior staff on the issue of reclassification and other strategic challenges in the Davenport Hotel on the 29th January 2019.

The event began with Donal McManus, ICSH CEO outlining the challenge that has resulted from the Eurostat decision to reclassify all Tier 3 housing association debt as part of general government debt or ‘on-balance sheet’ debt as well as identifying other current challenges in the sector. John Hannigan, CEO of Circle VHA gave a presentation identifying the background, methodology and results of the reclassification decision on housing associations as well as how the ICSH and Housing Alliance are engaging with the central stakeholders (such as the Dept of Finance and the CSO) to set in place a framework for reversing the decision, focusing on the key areas of risk, finance and control.

Jack O’Keeffe from Merrion Capital outlined the new context and options for funding in the sector as well as the appetite for various new funders to become involved and the terms that they expect. This was followed by a brief presentation from Frank Allen (Chairman, Iarnród Éireann) who set out some preliminary thoughts and outcomes from engagement meetings that he is undertaking as part of the ICSH Strategic Plan Review.

Finally, Fiona Barron, Chair of Clúid Housing Association, outlined her thoughts on the challenge of reclassification and the changing context that housing associations now operate in, and this was followed by a Q&A and discussion from the floor, which resulted in a very positive engagement from those in attendance.

TopHouse Project

The latest meeting of TopHouse project partners (which includes the ICSH) took place from 18-22 March in London and involved the presentation of training modules developed as part of the project. TopHouse involves the development of assessment tools to allow housing and support providers deliver their services in a person-centred way, underpinned by the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

The second output of TopHouse is a suite of training materials based around 8 modules:

- Effective interviewing skills
- Tools for effective assessment
- Personalisation, choice and co-production
- Professional boundaries
- Networking and partnership working
- Safety planning
- Safeguarding and protection from abuse
- Human rights, equality and diversity

These modules have been developed by Homeless Link in the UK and will be contextualised to each partner country and piloted over the coming months. If you are interested in finding out more about this project or attending the pilot training, please contact Catherine McGillycuddy at Catherine@icsh.ie or 01 6618334. There will be further information available soon on pilot training opportunities.
ICSHP Presentation to the Public Accounts Committee

The ICSH was invited to present to the Public Accounts Committee on 21st February in respect of Vote 34 (Housing, Planning and Local Government) of the Comptroller and Auditor General’s Appropriation Accounts. Representing ICSH was Donal McManus (Chief Executive), Karen Murphy (Policy Director, ICSH) Tina Donaghy (ICSH Board member and Head of Development at Fold Ireland) and John Hannigan (ICSH Council member and CEO of Circle Voluntary Housing Association). The chief purpose of the meeting was to provide information to PAC members on funding mechanisms provided by central government and private finance to AHBs for social housing delivery and clarification around the governance and accountability of the sector.

Deputy David Cullinane (Waterford, Sinn Fein) sought reassurance that housing would remain in use as social housing after the mortgage has been paid-off. Donal McManus and Karen Murphy reassured PAC members that as companies limited by guarantee with charitable status, their memorandums and articles of association, as well as the emerging regulatory framework meant that there were safeguards in place to prevent AHBs from disposing of properties in the open market. Deputy Cullinane also raised the challenges facing the sector to move off-balance sheet given the funding and rental model in operation. John Hannigan agreed that the challenge was complex but that the ethos of the sector did not need to change, rather the mechanisms through which AHBs operate, and that the fundamental advantage to being off-balance sheet would be greater provision of social housing. Deputy Catherine Connolly sought clarification on the role of the Regulation Office from Susanna Lyons, Head of the AHB Regulation Office (based in the Housing Agency) and was reassured by ICSH representatives on the percentage of AHB tenant allocations that come from local authority waiting lists. Clarification was also sought around security of tenure and additional questions from PAC members included information on AHBs with sinking funds (which now stands at 94% of Tier 3s, 73% of Tier 2s and 72% of Tier 1s), vacancy rates, and the impact of voluntary regulation on AHBs’ access to private finance.

You can watch or read the debate on www.oireachtas.ie.
ICSH & Allianz Community Housing Awards 2019

The ICSH is proud to again partner with Allianz for the 2019 Community Housing Awards, the tenth presentation of these awards recognising excellence in social housing design, development and delivery.

The ICSH is seeking as many entries as possible for this year’s awards. At a time of increased pressure for delivery from the sector, we want to showcase the numerous approved housing bodies and local authorities rising to the challenge and continually making efforts to meet high levels of housing demand. The 2019 awards seek to recognise excellence across ten individual categories reflecting the current housing landscape. Category entries are sought across urban and rural areas seeking to display a true reflection of the diverse range of housing developments delivered across the local authority and approved housing body sector.

The awards are open to all housing associations, housing co-operatives and local authorities across the country presenting an opportunity to recognise work and achievements from both large and small organisations embracing a diverse range of people, skills and activities. Winners will be announced at the ICSH Biennial National Social Housing Conference gala dinner, in White’s Hotel, Wexford on October 10th.

There are ten award categories:
- Housing for Older People
- Homeless Projects
- Housing for People with Disabilities
- Housing for Families
- Regeneration
- Most Creative Supply Response
- Collaboration Initiatives
- Community Integration in Housing
- Housing Management models to improve performance
- Achievement in Community Housing

The deadline for submissions is 12pm on 17th May 2019. Full details including eligibility criteria, awarding criteria and an application form are on www.icsh.ie or contact Catherine McGillycuddy on 01 6618334 or Catherine@icsh.ie.

ICSH Regional Member Meetings 2019

The ICSH has scheduled a number of regional member meetings that will be held over the course of May-June 2019. These meetings provide an open forum for the ICSH to assist members in the development, management and compliance/governance of their associations; as well as an opportunity to engage with other stakeholders in the sector such as local authority staff members, the Department of Housing Planning and Local Government (at selected meetings) and the HSE, in the development and management of social housing. The meeting will facilitate discussion on current issues and offer members an opportunity to raise any issues of relevance to their own individual associations.

The regional meetings will include updates from the ICSH on Regulation, RTB issues, Development, the Community Housing Awards and Board Succession Planning, as well as a presentation from Age Friendly Ireland. Members are welcome to attend any meeting if it is more suitable to their schedule/location. All meetings will begin at 7.00pm with refreshments available from 6.30pm. To confirm attendance please contact Mairéad Holohan in the ICSH by email mairedaholohan@icsh.ie or by Phone 01 6618334. Please note that refreshments will be available from 6.30pm.

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Start Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tues 14th May</td>
<td>Limerick</td>
<td>South Court Hotel</td>
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<td>Thurs 16th May</td>
<td>Cork</td>
<td>Westgate Foundation</td>
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<td>Tues 21st May</td>
<td>Claremorris</td>
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<td>Thurs 23rd May</td>
<td>Cavan</td>
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<td>Tues 11th June</td>
<td>Kilkenny</td>
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ICSH Communications Workshop

The ICSH held a communications workshop in March 2019 attended by members of the communications working group as well as a number of other AHB participants. The goal of the event was to agree on shared messaging for our sector, as well as to identify some of the obstacles to communicating positive messages on the role of housing associations in providing social and affordable housing. The workshop encouraged members to draw-on their own personal/professional experiences when identifying issues, while seeking agreement on core messages as an output from the workshop.

The workshop was facilitated by Gert Ackermann (Communications Manager at the Wheel). Three groups worked together to identify 5-10 key messages that best described the positive work of the sector. The Workshop outcomes will feed into the work of the communications working group and will inform forthcoming ICSH publication aimed at promoting the sector and increasing its visibility.
Housing Overseas

Europe
Feantsa Report: 4th Overview of Housing Exclusion in Europe
This year’s report (by FEANTSA and the Foundation Abbé Pierre) explores the state of access to emergency accommodation in Europe. The report says that the inadequacy of services to increasingly diverse homeless populations and the shortage of sustainable and affordable housing solutions after leaving these facilities render the fundamental right to an emergency shelter meaningless. The report also estimates that the Housing Cost Overburden Rate for Ireland has increased by 61% from 2007-2017. It says the European Union has a unique role to play in protecting fundamental rights and it must stop hiding behind the argument that it lacks competency in order justify its inaction. The report states that structural funds and the investment programme should both be used to promote the reduction of homelessness as housing exclusion has a very high human and economic cost.

USA
Companies Need to Invest in Affordable Housing
There are a number of companies in the US (such as Google, Amazon and Microsoft) that are increasingly concerned about the supply of affordable housing as their workforce increases. Microsoft has indicated that employment has increased by 21% since 2011, while housing has only increased by 13% in the communities in which they operate, and this has sent house prices soaring for local residents. Since 2010, median home values have doubled in San Francisco, Seattle and Boston. Microsoft is now set to invest $250m for middle income housing, $225m to support low-income housing and $25m to tackling homelessness. Housing experts cite two impacts on the housing market in areas where large companies are expanding. One is the immediate local impact, with potentially large scale displacement of residents who have been living there for generations. The second is the regional impact, where affordable homes are only available in outlying areas with a detrimental effect on traffic and quality of life. A recent survey in California found that 43% of voters in California said they couldn’t afford to live in the state, with 61% of 18-34-year-olds indicating California was beyond their means. One solution has been to use off-site assembly leading to a 30% reduction in prices over on-site building. In addition, the City of San Francisco elected members are examining property tax options for companies over a certain turnover. Commentators in San Francisco have said that a solution will not be found if multi-billion high tech companies do not see housing as a core part of their corporate responsibility. History has shown that, as even far back as the Victorian era, large companies in the EU played a key role in sustaining communities in the long-term.

Germany
Berlin: Radical Proposal in Referendum to Curb Rising Rents
Berliners took to the streets on Saturday 6th April to protest against increasingly unaffordable rent hikes throughout the city. It’s estimated that housing costs have doubled in Berlin over the past 10 years. The protest has arisen out of the ‘Deutsche Wohnen & Co Enteignen’ initiative, which seeks to ‘re-municipalise’ the housing stock of large-scale landlords with more than 3,000 units. The call is based on articles 14 and 15 of the German constitution, which articulates the possibility of ‘expropriation’ of property if it takes place for the greater public good. Protestors are seeking a referendum on the issue, which will need 170,000 signatures as a first step in the process.

Singapore
Control and Management of Land Big Factors in Success of Public Housing
80% of households live in public housing in Singapore (with a population of 5.7 million). This figure was 9% in 1959, when it became independent from Britain. Four key elements are key to its success. These include: the importance of neighbourhoods; smart use of urban density; an integrated approach to housing from planning and design, land assembly to construction, management and maintenance; and long-term political support. These approaches include mixed income housing on carefully designed estates, with each estate having access to high quality public transport and education, as well as the famous ‘hawkers centres’, where all income groups meet, socialise and dine. Apartment blocks are designed to support the ‘kampong spirit’ (social cohesion). Importantly, 90% of land is owned by the state, with emphasis placed on standardisation and efficiencies in construction. Merit stars are awarded to contractors who perform consistently well and a contractor can enjoy a 0.5% bidding preference when tenders are evaluated.