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Quarter 2 Progress Report – Housing for All

New €50m Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund to Refurbish Vacant properties, Increase Home Ownership and Revitalise Communities

Taoiseach Micheál Martin, together with Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien T.D., Minister of State Peter Burke T.D and Minister of State Malcolm Noonan T.D updated on progress of the implementation of **Housing for All**, including the launch of a **new €50m Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund** which will support bringing vacant and underused buildings in our towns and villages back into residential use.

Since the launch of Housing for All in September, 17,000 new homes have been delivered and we are on track to deliver the 2022 target of 24,600 new homes. The progress report details the delivery of significant measures aimed at addressing viability of home delivery, providing additional supports for first-time buyers and bringing vacant homes back into use.

These include launch of the **First Home Shared Equity Scheme**, reform of the **Fair Deal Scheme** to incentivise rental, applications received for the **Croí Cónaithe (Cities) Scheme** and the identification of a consortium to host a **Construction Technology Centre**.

The **Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund** will benefit those who wish to turn a formerly vacant house or building into their permanent home and become part of the community in the area, furthering the aim to create town centres that function as viable, vibrant and attractive locations for people to live, work and visit, while also functioning as the service, social, cultural and recreational hub for the local community.

The Fund will be delivered through local authorities who will provide a grant to support the refurbishment of vacant properties, with priority given to applications in areas where the level of vacancy or dereliction is high. A grant of up to **€30,000** will be available for the refurbishment, including the conversion of a property which has not been used as a home before now.

Where a property is derelict, a maximum top-up grant amount of up to €20,000 will be available, bringing the total grant available for a derelict property up to a maximum of **€50,000**. This can also be combined with the SEAI Better Energy Home Scheme that covers works of up to €26,750.

Speaking at today's event, Taoiseach Micheál Martin said:

“Housing for All provides a comprehensive plan, and record levels of funding to tackle the single most urgent and important social issue facing our country. Despite the challenges, we are on track to deliver 24,600 new homes in 2022. And we need to do more. This new Croí Cónaithe Towns scheme will help turn vacant properties into homes again, and create vibrant communities. It is one of a range of measures in Housing for All designed to ensure that everyone has access to good quality housing, and access to sustainable towns and villages.”

Commenting on the launch of Croí Cónaithe Towns Minister Darragh O'Brien TD said:

“The Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund is another key delivery milestone in the Government's Housing for All plan and supporting home ownership. Recently we launched our new First Home Scheme, announced affordable and cost rental accommodation to be developed through the Land Development Agency at Shanganagh and promoted the development of apartments for owner occupiers through the Croí Cónaithe Cities fund. Today, this scheme becomes our latest addition to boosting home ownership by supporting people to refurbish vacant properties to become their homes, enabling them to live in towns and villages and addressing vacancy through sustainable reuse. At the same we are adding to the vibrancy of towns and villages across the country and supporting local communities. I also intend extending the scheme further into city areas with high vacancy or dereliction in the coming months”

Minister Peter Burke stated that *“Today's new fund is part of a suite of measures undertaken by the government to tackle vacancy. It will be complemented by the upcoming Vacant Property Tax to help bring more properties back into use across the country”*.

Minister Malcolm Noonan commented that *“This new scheme complements changes to planning laws that facilitate the conversion of properties into residential use. It can also be combined with the SEAI grant to make it more viable for old buildings to be brought back into use. It's a major step forward for our towns and villages”*.

The application form, eligibility criteria and associated FAQs as published ([available here](#)) will provide additional information to people who would like to apply for the grant. Further information will be available from each local authority.

ENDS

Notes to the editor

Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund

- Properties considered for inclusion must be vacant for two years or more and built before 1993.
- Confirmation of vacancy can be validated and verified by the use of, for example, Utility Bills which can help determine vacancy periods (e.g. pattern of usage or disconnection) or such other proofs as are available to the satisfaction of the local authority.
- The scheme is exclusively available to individuals or households for which the property will be their principal private residence. It is not available to undertakings and/or developers, etc.
- A Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) Better Energy Home Scheme Grant may be available in combination with this grant. Works covered by SEAI Better Energy Homes Scheme will therefore not be covered.
- Proof of both vacancy and ownership will be required to support the grant payment. In terms of ownership, it is a matter for the applicant to confirm ownership with the local authority.
- A local authority may give approval in principle to a grant application where the applicant is able to provide evidence of active negotiations to purchase a property i.e. confirmation of engagement from the estate agency or owner of the property and where the owner provides such evidence as to vacancy as is required under the scheme on behalf of the applicant.
- The following categories of works will be eligible for grant assistance, subject to a reasonable cost assessment by the local authority and to any limits for specific works:
 - Substructure works, including works to foundations, rising walls, floor slabs, damp-proofing and underpinning
 - Structural works to superstructure, including walls, party walls, chimneys, suspended timber floors, structural timbers
 - Works to internal walls, stairs, and landings, and internal wall completions including doors, windows, and applied finishes
 - External walls completions including doors, windows, sills, and applied finishes
 - Roof completions, including flashings, fascias, soffits, gutters, downpipes
 - Building services including plumbing, heating, ventilation, electrical services, telecommunications,
 - Painting and decoration required because of works carried out
 - Extension within the ambit of exempt development under planning regulations, as part of a wider refurbishment
 - Necessary external works and site development works carried out within the curtilage of the site
 - Professional services associated with works

- There are over 500 towns and villages in Ireland with a population of over 400 people. It is intended that the Crói Cónaithe Fund will apply in all such towns, and also to some smaller villages, which may not be defined towns or villages for the purposes of the CSO Census mapping but with sufficient provision of services and amenities.
- While initially the Fund will not apply to towns within the city and suburb boundaries of Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford, as defined by the CSO Census mapping, the potential for inclusion of such towns within cities and suburbs will be further considered during the initial phase of the programme.
- Towns outside of the city and suburb boundary in the CSO Census are defined as a separate 'town' and will therefore be eligible, e.g. Balbriggan.
- Applicants may only avail of the grant once in keeping with the requirement that it be their principal private residence.

Housing for All

- 'Housing for All' is the Government's housing plan for Ireland to 2030. It can be read at www.gov.ie/housingforall. The plan's overall objective is: 'Everyone in the State should have access to a home to purchase or rent at an affordable price, built to a high standard and in the right place, offering a high quality of life.'
- The Housing for All – Q2 2022 Progress Report can be read here: <https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/9d2ee-housing-for-all-quarterly-progress-reports/>
- 'Housing for All' contains four pathways:
 - Pathway to Supporting Homeownership and Increasing Affordability
 - Pathway to Eradicating Homelessness, Increasing Social Housing Delivery and Supporting Social Inclusion
 - Pathway to Increasing New Housing Supply
 - Pathways to Addressing Vacancy and Efficient Use of Existing Stock

These four pathways are underpinned by a range of actions to enable a sustainable housing system.

- 'Housing for All' contains the following supply targets:
 - 33,000 new units, on average, per annum up to and including 2030. This will include, on average, 10,000 social housing units, 4,000 homes for Affordable Purchase, 2,000 Cost Rental homes and 17,000 private homes.
 - Over the lifetime of the plan (to the end of 2030) the 300,000 required homes are expected to consist of: 90,000 social homes; 36,000 Affordable Purchase homes, 18,000 'Cost Rental' homes and approximately 156,000 private homes.
 - The State land bank will provide land to bring forward up to 15,000 units and the State will fund local authorities for land acquisition. Each local authority has been given Housing Supply Targets.
 - A table of yearly targets, broken down by tenure type, is contained in the plan.
 - This is the fourth Progress Report under the Housing for All Plan showing continued progress towards increasing housing supply and affordability, whilst fundamentally reforming our housing system to ensure it is sustainable into the future.
 - So far, of the 213 actions in Housing for All, 156 have been delivered or progressed. Of the 30 measures due for delivery in Q2 2022, 16 were delivered on schedule, giving a delivery rate of 53% this quarter. Whilst the full implementation of 14 measures has been delayed, significant progress has been made on the majority of

these actions. 12 of these delayed measures have a revised target date before the end of 2022.