



An Chomhairle Náisiúnta Eacnamaíoch agus Shóisialta
National Economic & Social Council

Housing Supply and Land: Driving Public Action for the Common Good

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The level of housing development and output is low, despite evidence of strong current need and demand and likely future requirements.

Many factors are suggested as have a bearing—costs and returns, finance, planning, regulation, infrastructure including water, standards and the capacity of the construction sector. There are also long-standing issues—Ireland’s system of land allocation and housing supply and level of density and infrastructural connectivity—and a sense that important reforms of the past 15–20 years, such as Strategic Development Zones, remain incomplete.

Under *Construction 2020*, Government introduced a range of processes and measures. To address the lack of activity and new housing supply, these need to be taken further. It is necessary to create an integrated approach in which action on costs and prices is embedded within more concerted public action and comprehensive reform, which can ensure that the planning and housing system works more effectively.

It is important and urgent that there is more authoritative public action on land and housing supply; the goal must be progress from a price floor on land to active land management that puts a ceiling on the degree to which land scarcity and costs feed into the price of housing. The clear goals of Government housing policy—affordability, sustainability and inclusion—define the agenda.

Three actions are proposed:

- a) The public system should use its authority, capacities and resources to take the lead on the resumption of housing supply. This requires a high-level Government decision to enable some of the key capabilities and resources in NAMA, local authorities and other agencies, to be used.
- b) Sustained in-depth exploration and action on the reasons why the costs of housing provision and construction in Ireland make it so difficult to provide affordable housing of the right kind in the right locations.
- c) Drawing on the learning from these actions to address remaining institutional or organisational gaps in the areas of housing, planning and infrastructure.

The actions proposed are an effort to take early and critical steps toward developing an active and innovative approach to housing and land supply management. The depth, duration and inclusiveness of Ireland’s recovery from the vast setback of recent years depends on the success of this approach.

