PRESS RELEASE

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Council ahead of Rebuilding Ireland target by 63%

Fingal County Council is ahead of its target for the 2015-2020 period of the Rebuilding Ireland programme by 63 per cent. The Council has delivered 2,241 social housing homes over the past three years having been set a delivery output target of 1,376 by central government for the first phase of the housing strategy.

The homes were delivered through construction, acquisitions, leasing and renting and the figure of 2,241 does not include homes approved for delivery. The three year delivery figure represents an investment of €151m, which is 86 per cent greater than the Council's initial allocation of €81m from central government.

The figures were presented to Councillors at this evening’s monthly meeting of Fingal County Council in County Hall, Swords, by Director of Housing and Community, Margaret Geraghty, who said: “When we were given our target in April 2015, it looked a daunting task because it required a considerable amount of scaling up from what had been happening in the previous decade. However, our staff, assisted by our councillors and the Approved Housing Bodies we work with, rose to the challenge and worked very hard over the past three years to deliver the target and eventually exceed it by almost 60 per cent.

“We are acutely aware that there is still a lot more to be done to reduce the numbers on our housing list, as well as the numbers presenting as homeless, but our performance over the last three years shows that we are fully committed to doing that and our pipeline for the next three years also reflects this,” she added.
Fingal County Council has been given a target of providing 5,084 social housing homes in the six years to 2020 and tonight’s meeting was told that delivery mechanisms such as the Rent Assistance Scheme (RAS) and Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) can no longer be used towards meeting the final target. That means that the Council will have to supply the remaining 2,833 homes from its construction, acquisition and leasing programmes.

“It is another massive challenge but it reflects the demand for social housing within Fingal and also the change in social housing building policy which the Minister announced at the Housing Summit last September,” said Ms Geraghty. “We have a lot of plans in place so the focus will now be on getting those plans through the various statutory processes, securing the necessary funding from central government and bringing the projects to fruition.

“Because we weren’t building social housing prior to the commencement of the programme in 2015, it has naturally taken us some time to get our construction programme up and running. We constructed 78 homes to the end of 2017 as well as acquiring 114 homes under Part V and directly purchasing a further 96 new homes. The Council plans to construct 1,389 homes between now and 2021 and will continue to add to its housing stock under Part V and by purchasing newly built homes,” added Ms Geraghty.

The Mayor of Fingal, Cllr Mary McCamley, said: “The provision of housing is the biggest challenge currently facing the Council and I am delighted we are ahead of our target under the Rebuilding Ireland programme. The final target can be achieved if everybody works together to not only provide new homes but also the infrastructure that will allow communities to grow and prosper.”

The Chief Executive of Fingal County Council, Paul Reid, said: “I would like to pay tribute to our Director of Housing and Community and her team for the excellent job they have done over the past three years in delivering over 2,200 social housing homes across the Fingal as well as dealing with an increasing numbers of presentations. The housing issue is not just the responsibility of one department within Fingal County Council as many other departments are also involved and they have all made significant contributions over the past three years.”

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For further information please contact press@fingal.ie