

Fingal County Council

Press Release

July 22, 2016

Fingal County Council commences implementation of Government's new housing plan

Fingal County Council has started to implement *Rebuilding Ireland*, the Government's new Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness which was launched by the Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government, Mr Simon Coveney, TD, last Tuesday.

The Plan addresses all aspects of the housing system under five pillars which cover homelessness, social housing, home construction, the rental sector and the utilisation of existing housing.

Fingal County Council has already begun putting the Plan into action and is working with a number of developers across the county with the Director of Housing, Ms Margaret Geraghty, and her department interested in talking to others about how to support them in producing houses to buy and rent.

Ms Geraghty said: "Fingal County Council would welcome approaches from developers and builders interested in talking to us about supporting their ability to bring housing to the market for purchase and leasing. We are already actively working with a number of developers across the county along with Approved Housing Bodies and other service providers such as the HSE, not-for-profit organisations and education institutions to meet the diverse needs of our fast growing population.

"Delivery of housing in Fingal is a key management priority within the Council and a whole of management approach is in place to drive and support delivery of housing which is a key element necessary to support economic development across the county and to attracting further investment into Fingal."

Fingal County Council is already on track to exceed by 45 per cent the current target of 1,376 social housing units it was given under the Social Housing Strategy 2020.

The Chief Executive of Fingal County Council, Mr Paul Reid, welcomed the Plan as it brings together a range of key elements to drive a co-ordinated approach to

increasing the housing supply. He added that Council is confident it will meet whatever target is ultimately given by the Department.

Mr Reid said: "The housing market is very complex and no one initiative on its own will increase supply. That is why our 10 point housing strategy has been so successful in not only delivering but exceeding our target under the previous plan.

"A major element of our strategy has been to bring forward plans to the elected members on a regular basis for building social housing on land in the ownership of the Council and we have brought through more proposals in the past eight months, than we have been in a position to do over the previous six years or so.

"We have also used long term leasing and rent accommodation supplement, as well as purchasing properties from a wide variety of sources, in addition to taking up our right to 10 per cent of the planned units to be built on private developments. We are progressing plans to commence the construction of rapid build homes and we have also been very successful in reducing the number of voids to less than one per cent of our social housing stock.

"We have also identified the infrastructure required to allow sites to be developed and have also calculated the cost of putting in roads and services as well as the number of housing units this will facilitate. This has put us in a strong position to access the €200 million infrastructure fund recently announced by the Minister.

"One of the reasons we have been able to exceed our targets is because we actively manage housing development sites across the county. We currently have a total of 45 active sites across Fingal where we liaise closely with the developers on any issues that arise so that we can ensure a continuous pipeline of completed houses. We have strong project management system which results in a relentless focus on every stage of the process.

"There has been some unjust public criticism that Local Authorities have been slow to respond to the current housing crisis. I believe that Fingal has mobilised comprehensively over the past few years. We have good support from our elected members, department officials and our staff, who have stepped up to the mark in an exceptional manner. We will continue to do so with the Government's new action plan particularly as it will also allow us to recruit additional skilled resources to our team."

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