

15 Housing schemes — funding and delivery

- 15.1** In September 2021, the Government launched *Housing for All — a New Housing Plan for Ireland (Housing for All)*.¹ The plan set out the overall objective that 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, and offering a high quality of life.
- 15.2** *Housing for All* indicated a commitment to invest over €20 billion in housing between 2021 and 2025, with a target to deliver over 300,000 new homes by 2030.² The funding is being provided from the Exchequer, the Land Development Agency (LDA) and the Housing Finance Agency (HFA).
- 15.3** This examination was undertaken to
- determine the main sources and level of State funding made available for the provision and delivery of housing in 2024
 - identify the main funding flows between the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (the Department) and housing providers in Ireland
 - establish what information the Department has in relation to the costs and delivery of social and affordable housing projects in receipt of State funding, and whether it is reliable and appropriate
 - report, on a case study basis, on the performance of several social and affordable new-build housing projects completed in the last five years.
- 15.4** The examination team reviewed documentation and engaged with relevant staff in the Department, the Housing Agency, the LDA, local authorities and approved housing bodies (AHBs). The team also conducted onsite fieldwork of six projects linked to five local authorities — Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, Cork City, Fingal, Galway City and Waterford.

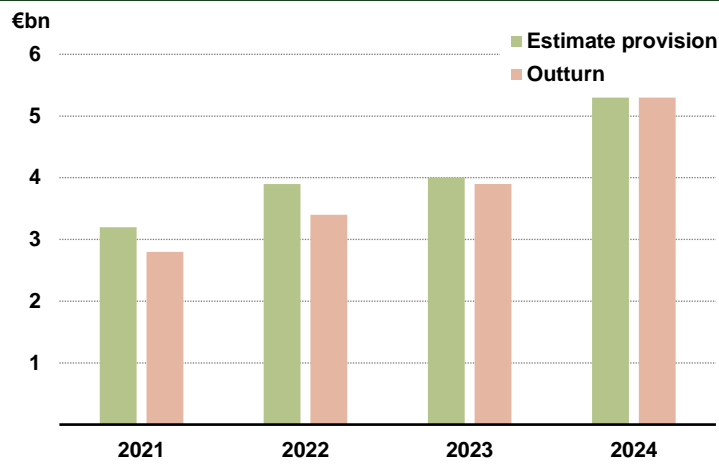
Profile of departmental expenditure on housing

- 15.5** The Department is tasked with supporting the planning and building of housing in Ireland. The Department's accounts show that vote-funded expenditure on housing almost doubled between 2021 and 2024 (see Figure 15.1).
- 15.6** In addition to vote-funded expenditure of €5.3 billion, €151 million was spent from local property tax allocation in 2024, bringing total expenditure on the Department's housing programme to almost €5.5 billion for the year. Capital expenditure accounted for 68% of this spending.

¹ [Housing for All — a New Housing Plan for Ireland](#). Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, September 2021.

² The target for 2025 – 2030 was revised upwards in November 2024 to 303,000 new homes.

Figure 15.1 Department’s vote-funded expenditure on housing, 2021 – 2024^a



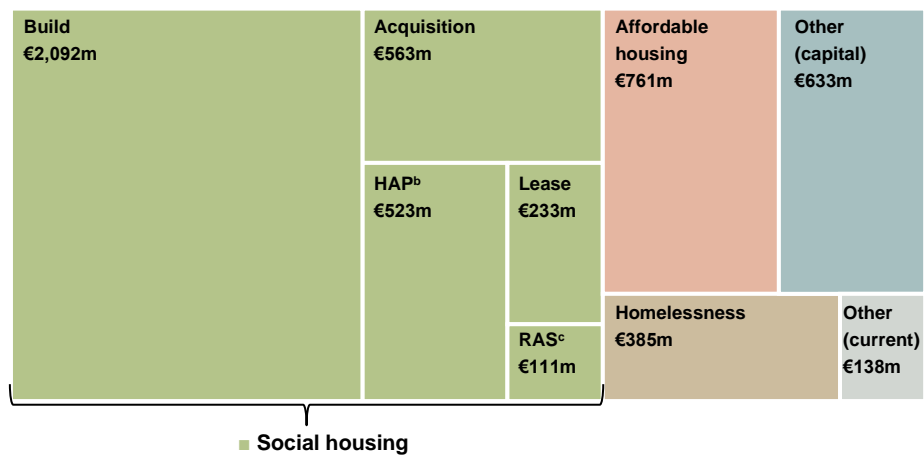
Source: Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage; Vote 34 appropriation accounts 2021 – 2024

Note: a Vote-funded expenditure excludes annual spending from local property tax allocations.

15.7 The Department categorises its housing expenditure under five main delivery streams — social, affordable, homelessness, other capital programmes and other current programmes (see Figure 15.2). Expenditure on the delivery streams is spread across several subheads in the Department’s appropriation account.

15.8 The main expenditure items in each stream are the various housing schemes administered by or on behalf of the Department. There were 11 funding schemes contributing to the delivery of social and affordable housing in 2024.¹ In addition, capital expenditure on the delivery of social housing is supported with current funding through the Social Housing Current Expenditure Programme (SHCEP).

Figure 15.2 Expenditure by housing delivery stream, 2024^a



Source: Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

Notes: a Includes €151 million in local property tax allocation. Excludes pay and non-pay administration expenditure (subheads A.1 and A.2).

b Housing assistance payments.

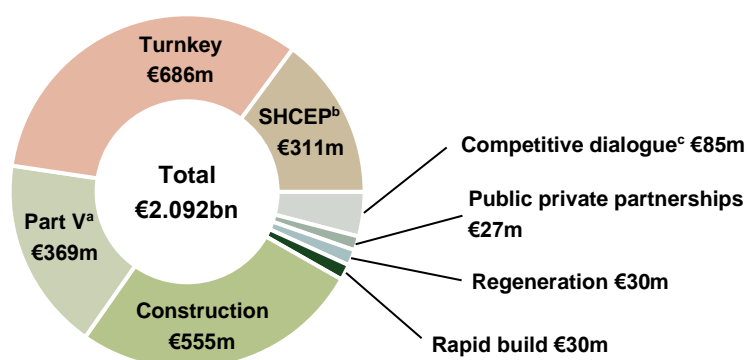
c Rental accommodation scheme.

¹ Funding schemes can include different delivery mechanisms (e.g. acquisition, construction).

Social housing

- 15.9** The Department defines social housing as the provision by Government of housing support for vulnerable individuals and those unable to provide for their accommodation needs from within their own resources.
- 15.10** In 2024, €3.5 billion (64%) — including €137.4 million in local property tax allocation — was spent on social housing delivery.
- 15.11** Social housing build expenditure of €2.092 billion comprised the cost of delivering new-build units through local authorities, AHBs and public-private partnerships (see Figure 15.3).
- 15.12** Acquisition expenditure of €563 million related to the purchase of second-hand homes for social housing purposes. Local authority acquisitions accounted for 81% of spending under this category.

Figure 15.3 Breakdown of build expenditure for social housing, 2024



Source: Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Analysis by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General. Any apparent differences in totals are due to rounding.

- Notes:
- a Part V of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 – 2024 provides for local authorities to acquire up to 20% of land zoned for housing development at existing use value to facilitate the delivery of social and affordable housing. While the primary way to satisfy Part V is the transfer of land to local authorities, the Acts also set out alternative options that include the transfer of housing on the site granted planning permission; the transfer of housing on another site; the leasing of housing on-site or off-site; or any combination of these options.
 - b Capital expenditure on the delivery of new-build social housing under the Capital Advance Leasing Facility is supported by current funding provided through the SHCEP.
 - c Competitive dialogue is a procurement mechanism that allows local authorities to discuss with tenderers before deciding on a housing delivery solution.

Affordable housing

15.13 Affordable housing is generally considered as accommodation where a person/ household is spending less than 35% of their income on rent or mortgage payments. In 2024, affordable housing was the second-biggest delivery stream in terms of spending and accounted for 14% of total expenditure on the Department’s housing programme. The expenditure was incurred under six housing schemes.

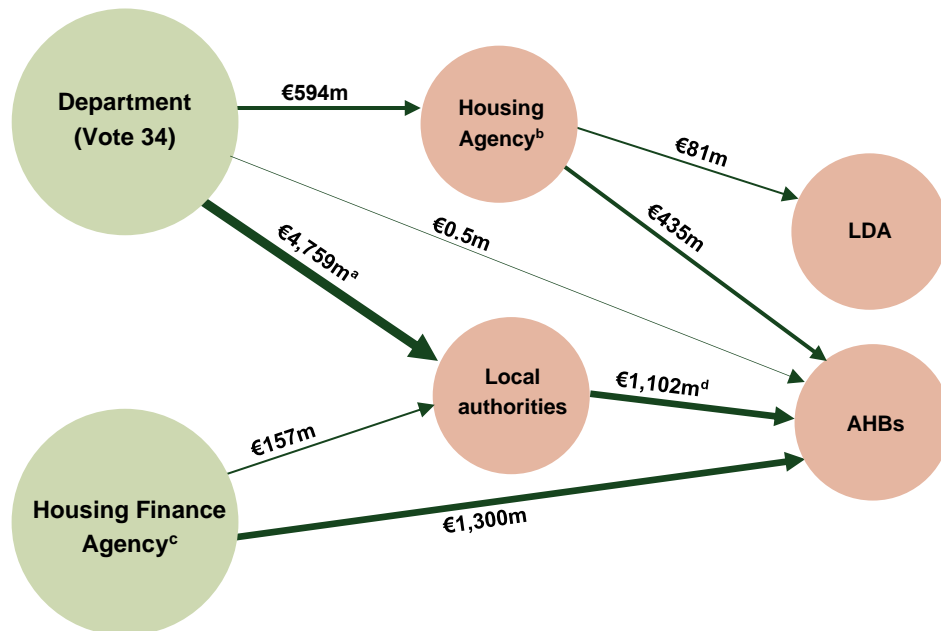
- Cost Rental Tenant-in-Situ (CRTIS)
- Cost Rental Equity Loan (CREL)
- Secure Tenancy Affordable Rental (STAR)
- Affordable Housing Fund
- Croí Cónaithe (Towns)
- First Home Scheme

15.14 Three of the schemes — CREL, CRTIS and STAR — are managed by the Housing Agency on behalf of the Department.

Housing funding flows

15.15 The main recipients of Department funding to support the provision and delivery of housing in Ireland are local authorities, AHBs, the LDA and the Housing Agency (see Figure 15.4).

Figure 15.4 Flows of funding from the Department and the HFA to bodies responsible for housing delivery in 2024



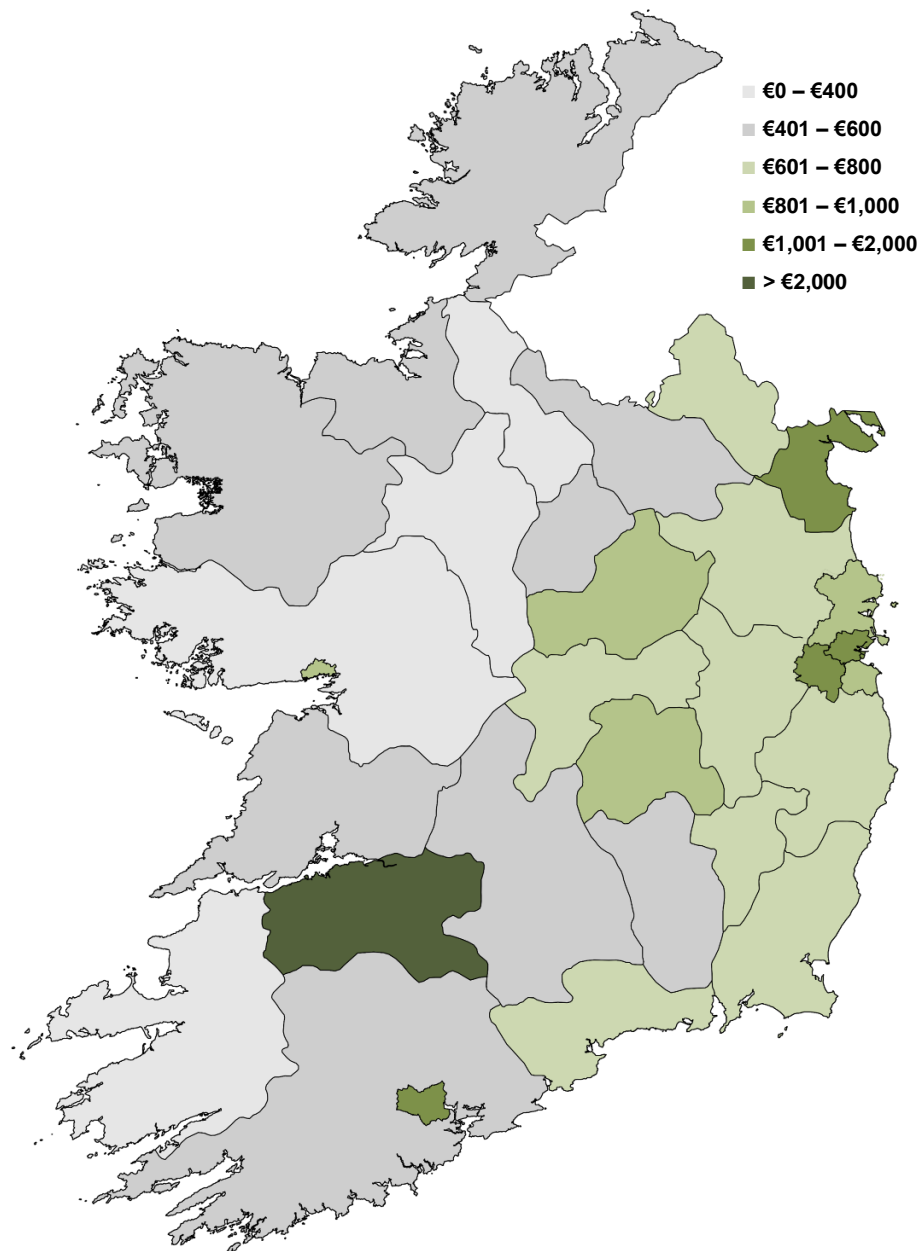
Source: Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Analysis by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General.

- Notes:
- a Includes funding of €151 million from the local property tax allocation that local authorities above the baseline are required to spend on housing in lieu of Exchequer funding.
 - b Most of the €594 million received by the Housing Agency related to schemes it administers on behalf of the Department. This included €50 million paid in respect of the CRTIS scheme under which the Housing Agency acquires homes it then maintains as secured tenancies for existing tenants.
 - c Funding from the HFA corresponds to gross lending amounts for 2024.
 - d Estimate by the Department based on funding provided to the local authorities under the main AHB-related schemes.

Local authorities

15.16 In 2024, the Department provided just under €4.8 billion to local authorities under its housing programme. This included €151 million provided by ten local authorities from local property tax receipts. The funding relates to a broad range of housing programmes, including the delivery of social and affordable housing. Figure 15.5 shows the geographical distribution of this direct funding to local authorities, per capita by local authority for the year.

Figure 15.5 Department funding for housing per capita by local authority, 2024



Source: Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Analysis by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General.

Approved housing bodies

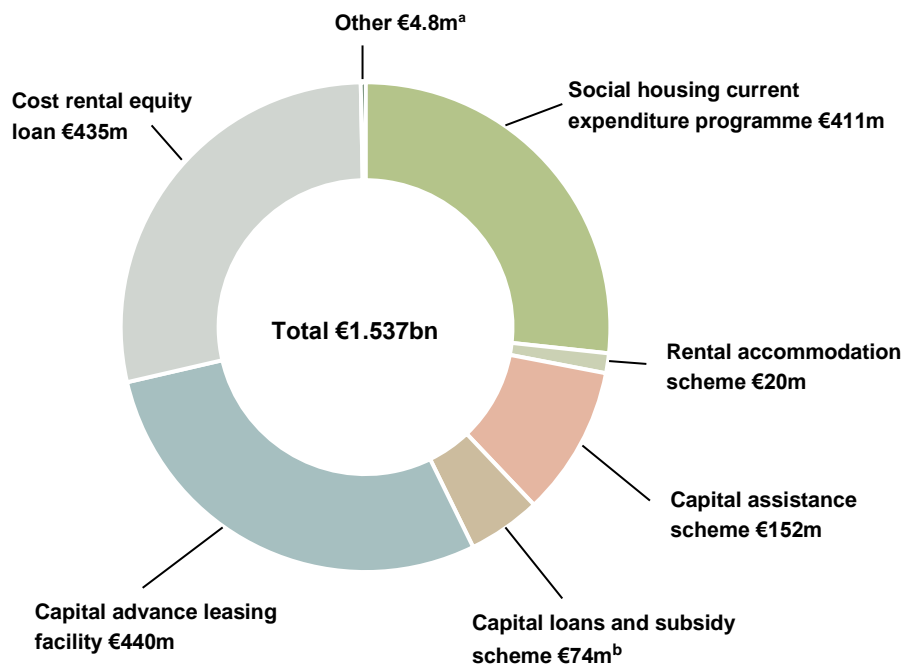
- 15.17** In 2024, AHBs received over €1.5 billion from the Department through the local authorities and the Housing Agency (see Figure 15.6). The funding relates to the delivery of both social and affordable housing. AHBs also received €457,000 directly from the Department in start-up grants for turnkey projects, payments to facilitate the setting up of rental agreements and expenditure incurred acquiring property under the Mortgage to Rent scheme.

- 15.18** In addition to departmental funding, AHBs finance capital projects by way of loans from the HFA.¹ Almost all — circa €1,293 million — of the HFA’s gross lending to AHBs in 2024 was to fund new housing projects or purchases. The remaining €7 million is in respect of second-hand homes.

- 15.19** The HFA operates as a public company limited under the aegis of the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage. It is owned by the Minister for Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation.

- 15.20** Home Building Finance Ireland operates as a private company, wholly owned by the Minister for Finance.² It provides loans to developers at market rates for commercially viable residential developments in Ireland.

Figure 15.6 Department expenditure on AHB-related schemes in 2024



¹ The HFA is not audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General.

² Home Building Finance Ireland is audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General.

Source: Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Any apparent differences in totals are due to rounding.

Notes: a 'Other' includes Communal facilities (€0.5 million), the Mortgage to Rent scheme (€4.1 million) and the Repair and Leasing scheme (€0.2 million).
 b Includes €13.5 million in local property tax allocation.

Management information

15.21 The Department's Social Housing and Affordable Housing Divisions are split into units that administer the different social and affordable housing schemes.

15.22 There is no central database within the Department of all social and affordable housing capital projects delivered or being delivered under its housing programme. In 2020, the Department stated that it was working on the development of an integrated system for the management of housing-related data and schemes and that it would be an end-to-end solution from application through to completion.¹

15.23 In November 2020, the Department developed a business case for a proposed solution for the management of housing programmes. The business case noted

- there had been limited investment in technology solutions to support the delivery of housing programmes
- the difficulties in generating a single accurate picture of the current status of housing progress as
 - processes are highly manual and less efficient,
 - data and information are siloed and
 - significant time and effort is required to ensure the quality of information.

The challenges that impact the efficient and effective management of housing programmes as noted in the business case are set out in full in Annex 15A.

15.24 In the course of this examination, the Department confirmed it is still in the process of developing an IT system to

- improve and standardise work processes
- improve data management and reporting
- ensure better information flows between the Department, local authorities and other key stakeholders involved in housing delivery.

15.25 The Department stated that the development project is being implemented on a phased basis with a target completion date in 2028. The project has a contract cost of €10.5 million inclusive of VAT over five years, with an additional €2.3 million to be paid towards five-year post-implementation support. Phase 1 of the development — to deliver 13 existing housing acquisition processes on a new platform for Department users, local authorities, AHBs and the Housing Agency — is nearing completion and expected to go live by the end of 2025.²

15.26 During this examination, the Department stated that each local authority operates a tracker to record its own social and affordable housing projects. The Housing Delivery Coordination Office within the Local Government Management Agency manages this reporting system and extracts data from each local authority's tracker to generate an overall report.³

¹ Report on the Accounts of the Public Services 2019, chapter 11, [Measuring performance for Exchequer spending on social housing](#).

² The Department stated that anticipated benefits include reduced duplication; more streamlined processes; significant time and efficiency savings; reduced manual effort; improved information quality; substantial reduction in reporting overhead; real-time visibility and ease of consistent reporting; and enhanced reporting and analysis leading to informed decision making.

³ The Local Government Management Agency is an agency of the Department which provides professional services to local authorities.

- 15.27** Data recorded in relation to those projects includes *inter alia* the local authority and/or AHB involved in the project, the project's application status and construction status, and the expected and actual number of units delivered. The Department indicated that the tracker system does not hold any financial information on housing projects.
- 15.28** The Department stated that it maintains datasets at scheme level to record key information (e.g. project name, address, current status, budget, stage approval) and to track spending on each housing project. Teams also use these datasets to answer parliamentary questions and follow up on issues or queries with local authorities when required.
- 15.29** The Department provided the examination team with lists of new-build capital projects delivered over the past five years under the main social and affordable housing schemes. In addition to identifying the project lead and number of units delivered, the lists included the overall capital cost for each project.

Assessing output

- 15.30** Government departments have an ongoing obligation to demonstrate that they have used funding provided by the Oireachtas in the manner intended and to good effect. As part of the annual estimates process, targets for key activities and outputs to be delivered by the Department are set.
- 15.31** The Department is in the process of improving its systems of data management, however it produces information annually on its output relative to the targets set in the estimates process.
- 15.32** Approximately 39% of the funding to local authorities relates to capital funding provided under subhead A.3 Local authority housing. A delivery target set for this funding is the number of new-build and acquisition units to deliver through the local authority capital programme. The Department reported that the outturn for 2024 was 5,165 units, a shortfall of 10% on the target number.
- 15.33** A key performance metric for affordable housing is the total number of new cost rental and affordable purchase homes delivered. The Department has reported that it exceeded its 2024 target by 11%, with 7,125 new cost rental and affordable purchase homes delivered.
- 15.34** Several housing unit targets are also set for AHB-related schemes. The Department reported the following results for 2024
- Social Housing Current Expenditure Programme (subhead A.4) — target 6,345 units; outturn 4,750 units; a shortfall of 25%
 - Capital Assistance Scheme (subhead A.7) — target 700 units; outturn 585 units; a shortfall of 16%
 - Capital Advance Leasing Facility (subhead A.11) — target 4,215 units; outturn 3,527 units; a shortfall of 16%
 - Cost Rental Equity Loan (subhead A.28) — target 800 units; outturn 1,213 units; a surplus of 52%.

- 15.35** The Department stated that overall housing and programme-specific targets are reviewed and monitored on an ongoing basis. The Department engages with the Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation where adjustments or enhancements to schemes are required to support and optimise delivery.
- 15.36** The Department reported that, as at August 2025, the social housing build pipeline included 28,042 units to be delivered over the period 2025 – 2028. This figure reflects the level of delivery expected at a point in time and is subject to frequent changes as new projects are approved and delivery dates are updated.
- 15.37** The information provided to the examination team did not include the expected total cost of delivering those social housing units. The Department stated that the multiannual nature of construction and capital spending for both social and affordable housing makes it difficult to determine a clear relationship between expenditure and output within a specified period.¹

Department reporting

- 15.38** Under guidelines for central government financial reporting, the Department is required to report each year the aggregate value of capital projects involving financial commitments of €50,000 or more.² It is not clear from the appropriation account for Vote 34 Housing, Local Government and Heritage how much this commitment is each year. Separately, the Department is required to report on individual major capital projects with commitments more than €20 million.³
- 15.39** The note on major capital project commitments discloses the expected total spend by the Department and local authority over the lifetime of a project. The amount disclosed will therefore differ from total project costs for projects only partially funded by the Department. The note does not include any information on the number of units to be delivered by each project.
- 15.40** Of the six capital projects examined during the examination, only two — Poulavone, Co. Cork (€23.4 million) and Mount William, Co. Waterford (€13.7 million) — were reported on individually in the Department’s appropriation account.⁴ One project — at Hansfield in Fingal — received funding of €31.6 million from the Department but was not listed in the commitments note. The remaining three were not listed because the Department’s commitment to the projects was less than the €10 million reporting threshold in place at the time. The value of the housing schemes in those cases was in the range €30 million to €50 million each.
- 15.41** The Department publishes a Social Housing Construction Projects Status Report on a quarterly basis.⁵ The report provides information on the status of social housing developments, the scheme under which they are funded and the number of housing units delivered or to be delivered. It does not include information on costs or on the level of Department funding approved for each project.
- 15.42** The Department also publishes local authority housing scheme statistics to report on activity across the various funding schemes.⁶ The statistics provide details on the number of social and affordable housing units delivered against *Housing for All* targets. They do not include any information on the cost of delivering those units.

¹ In January 2025, the Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service (IGEES) published a [Review of Social Housing Delivery and Spend](#) covering the period 2017 – 2023.

² [Circular 20/2024: Requirements for Appropriation Accounts 2024](#).

³ Until 2023, the threshold for major capital projects to be included in the list of commitments was €10 million. It has been increased to €20 million per project for 2024.

⁴ Mount William appeared in the major capital project commitments in 2020, 2021 and 2022. Poulavone appeared in the major capital project commitments in the 2023 and 2024 appropriation accounts.

⁵ The reports can be found on the Department’s [website](#).

⁶ [Local Authority Housing Scheme Statistics](#).

Case studies

15.43 The examination team reviewed six capital projects as part of the examination (see Figure 15.7). The case studies were selected from lists, collated by the Department, of projects delivered under the Department's main housing funding schemes.

15.44 The projects selected are intended to be an illustrative (rather than representative) sample of housing delivery in Ireland. Selection was made using the following criteria

- delivery status — completed or substantially completed in the past five years
- scale — at least 50 residential units
- costs — total project costs more than €10 million
- tenure type — affordable and/or social housing
- project type — new build; mix of turnkey and construction projects
- location — at least two different local authorities across different provinces
- project lead — mix of projects led by local authorities, AHBs and the LDA.

15.45 The total project costs for each case study correspond to total costs as communicated to the Department by the project leads in their most recent/final funding application rather than the agreed final accounts for projects, except where otherwise stated.

Figure 15.7 Case studies: summary overview

Project name	Housing scheme	Local authority	Project lead	Number of units	Total costs €m	Department capital funding €m	Cost per bedroom €000
Green Lane, Blackpool	CALF	Cork City	Clúid	112	38.7	9.6	207
Cherrywood Town Central	CALF	Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown	Clúid	141	49.8	9.5	185
Ballybanemor Road, Ballybrit	CALF	Galway City	Respond	101	30.5	7.6	150
Poulavone, Ballincollig	SHIP	Cork City	Council	64	24.2	23.4	153
Mount William, Williamstown	SHIP	Waterford City and County	Council	65	13.7	13.7	76
Barnwell Point, Hansfield	STAR	Fingal	LDA	247	93.4	31.6	220

Source: Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Analysis by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General.

Case studies 1 – 5: social housing

- 15.46** The social housing projects selected were delivered under two schemes — the Capital Advance Leasing Facility (CALF) and the Social Housing Investment Programme (SHIP). Figure 15.8 provides an overview of the two schemes.
- 15.47** The Department provides 100% of the funding for projects funded under the SHIP scheme. However, there is no separate subhead in the appropriation account disclosing the expenditure incurred on SHIP specifically.
- 15.48** The Department is not a party to the contracts for which it provides funding. In the cases of Green Lane and Ballybanemor Road, where costs increased after the project had been formally approved for departmental funding, the project lead had to submit a revised application to the Department to request higher funding.

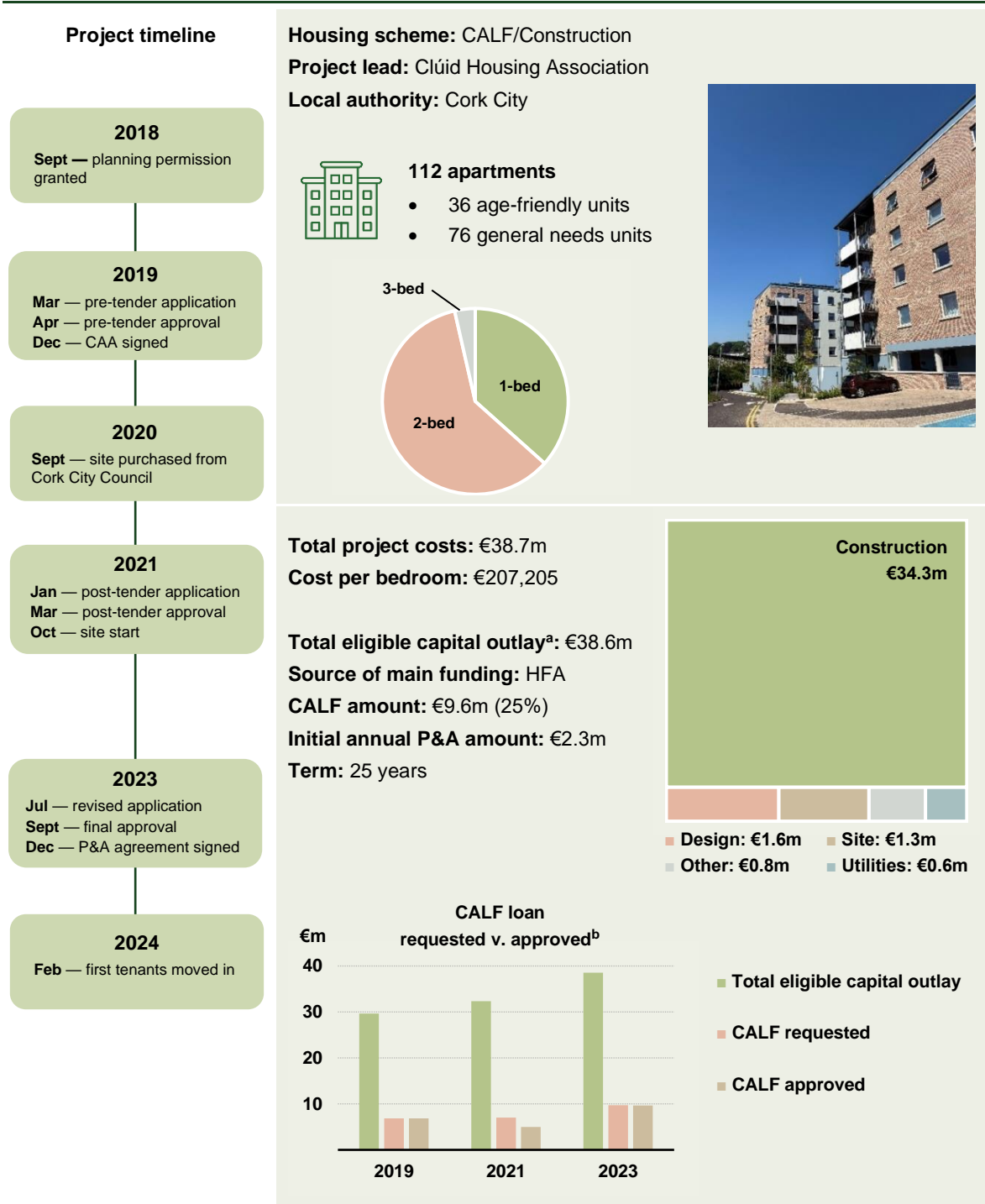
Figure 15.8 Overview of Capital Advance Leasing Facility and Social Housing Investment Programme

Key feature	Capital Advance Leasing Facility	Social Housing Investment Programme
Project lead	Approved Housing Body (AHB)	Local authority
Department funding	25-30% of eligible capital cost	100%
Funding mechanism	Loan at 2% per annum; repayable at end of agreement lifetime. The Housing Finance Agency may provide additional loan funding.	Grant
Term	Up to 30 years	N/A
Approval process	Application to the Department by the AHB, endorsed by the local authority.	Four-stage process (59-week target timeline); application to the Department by the local authority. ^a
Assessment of project	Financial appraisal by the Housing Agency.	Design and costs reviewed by the Department's architect and quantity surveyor advisors.
Agreement(s)	Capital advance agreement (CAA) between the AHB and the local authority — terms and conditions of the loan. Payment and availability (P&A) agreement between the AHB and the local authority — long-term leasing agreement signed on completion of the units. Continuation agreement between the AHB, local authority and private lender.	Approval letter issued by the Department to the local authority.

Source: Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Analysis by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General.

Note: a Smaller projects costing less than €8 million and meeting certain criteria are assessed through a single-stage process. In July 2025, the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage announced that a single-stage approval process would replace the current four-stage process.

Case study 1: Green Lane, Blackpool, Cork

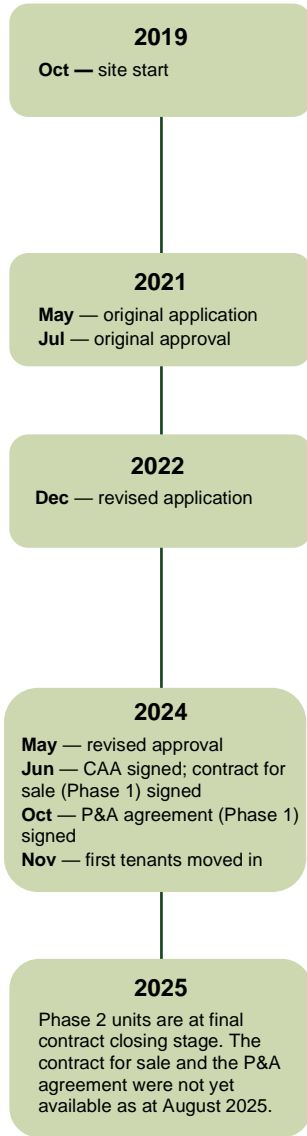


Source: Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage; Clúid Housing Association; Cork City Council. Analysis by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General.

- Notes:
- a The total eligible capital outlay excludes some legal and bridging finance costs as well as a portion of costs associated with the construction of communal facilities provided for tenants of the age-friendly apartments.
 - b In 2023, the total project cost was 30% more than in 2019, however the CALF funding approved increased by 41%.

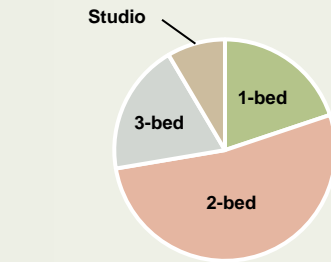
Case study 2: Cherrywood Town Centre, Dublin 18

Project timeline



Housing scheme: CALF/Turnkey/Part V
Project lead: Clúid Housing Association
Local authority: Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown

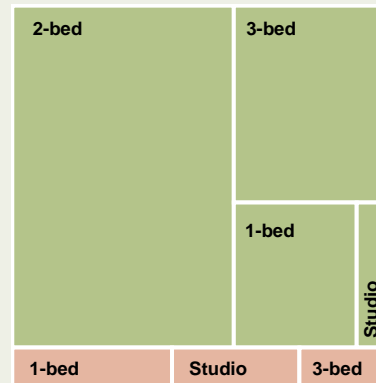
- 141 apartments**
- 127 Part V units
 - 14 turnkey units



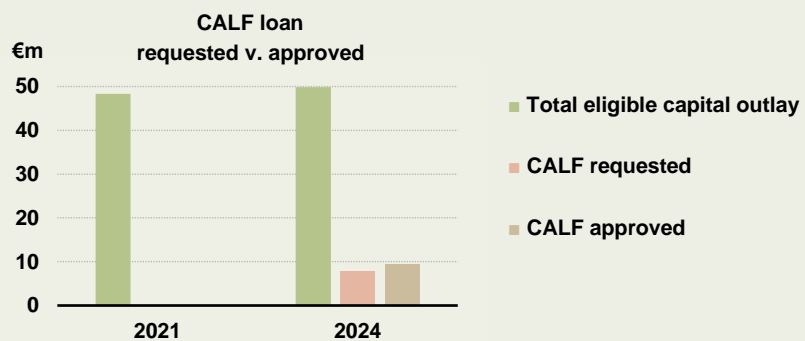
Phase 1: 80 units
Phase 2: 61 units

Total project costs^a: €49.8m
Cost per bedroom^b: €185,234

Total eligible capital outlay: €49.8m
Source of main funding: HFA
CALF amount: €9.5m (19%)
Initial annual P&A amount: €3.3m
Term: 30 years



■ Part V: €44.7m ■ Turnkey: €5.1m



Source: Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage; Clúid Housing Association; Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council. Analysis by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General.

- Notes:
- a The price of the Part V units is negotiated between the local authority and the developer.
 - b Studio apartments are counted as 1-bedroom units. Average cost of a bedroom delivered by turnkey and Part V is €284,889 and €178,088 respectively.

Case study 3: Ballybanemor Road, Ballybrit, Galway

Project timeline

2020
Apr — planning permission granted


2021
Apr — original application and approval; site start
Jul — site purchased; development agreement signed; CAA signed

2023
Sept — revised application
Oct — P&A agreement (Phase 1) signed; first tenants moved in
Nov — revised approval
Dec — P&A agreement (Phase 2) signed

2024
Apr — P&A agreement (Phase 3) signed

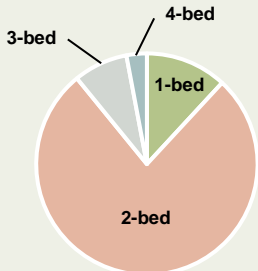
Housing scheme: CALF/Turnkey^a


Project lead: Respond
Local authority: Galway City



101 properties (incl. 10 Part V)

- 78 apartments
- 23 houses

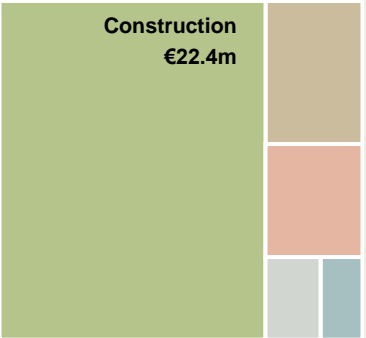




Phase 1: 28 units
Phase 2: 61 units
Phase 3: 12 units

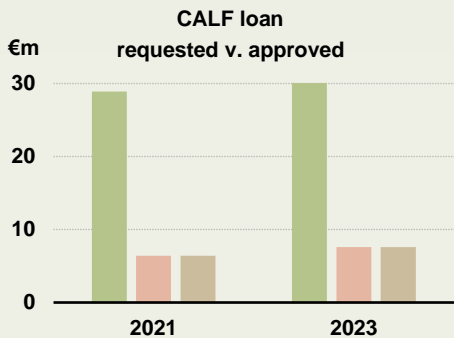
Total project costs: €30.5m
Cost per bedroom: €149,602

Total eligible capital outlay: €30.5m
Source of main funding: HFA
CALF amount: €7.6m (25%)
Initial annual P&A amount: €1.8m
Term: 30 years



■ **Site:** €3.4m ■ **Design:** €2.7m
■ **Misc.:** €1.1m^b ■ **Utilities:** €0.9m

CALF loan requested v. approved



Source: Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage; Respond; Galway City Council. Analysis by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General.

- Notes:
- a The project is categorised as CALF Turnkey by the Department. Respond referred to it as a 'stage-payment' turnkey in that it involved the AHB purchasing the site and tendering for the design, construction and completion of the units rather than simply buying the completed units from a developer.
 - b Includes €69,802 in capitalised project costs.

Case study 4: Poulavone, Ballincollig, Cork

Project timeline

2016
Jul — Stage 1 application
Sept — Stage 1 approval

2017
Jul — revised Stage 1 application (re-design)
Aug — revised Stage 1 approval

2019
May — Stage 2 application
Jul — Stage 2 approval

2020
Nov — Part 8 planning approval

2021
Apr — Stage 3 application
Jun — revised Stage 3 application
Sept — Stage 3 approval

2022
May — tender for construction
Sep — Stage 4 application and approval
Nov — contract awarded

2024
Nov — substantial completion
Dec — first tenants moved in

2025
Mar — final account
Apr — final account approval

Housing scheme: SHIP/Construction
Project lead^a: Cork County and City Councils
Local authority: Cork County/Cork City

64 properties

- 56 houses
- 8 apartments

Total project costs^b: €24.2m
Cost per bedroom: €153,437

Approved funding: €23.4m

The discrepancy between total costs and approved funding mainly relates to the cost of the site purchased in 2003. The final account submitted by Cork City Council includes site cost of €3.1 million. However, the Department determined at Stage 2 that only €2.3 million was eligible for funding under SHIP. The Council has challenged the final budget approved by the Department to request additional funding for site cost. No decision had been reached as at August 2025.

Application stages: planned no. of units and SHIP funding requested v. approved

Stage	Planned no. of units	Funding requested (€m)	Funding approved (€m)
Stage 1	67 units	~18	~15
Stage 1 revised	57 units	~17	~14
Stage 2	60 units	~17	~17
Stage 3	64 units	~20	~20
Stage 4	64 units	~24	~23
Final account	64 units	~24	~23

Source: Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage; Cork City Council. Analysis by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General.

Notes: a Ownership of the project transferred from Cork County Council to Cork City Council in 2019 following the extension of the Cork City boundary.

b The difference of €0.1 million between total project costs and the breakdown provided is due to rounding.

Case study 5: Mount William, Williamstown, Waterford

Project timeline

2019

May — planning permission granted
Jul — request for expressions of interest published (e-tenders)
Nov — SHIP application

2020

Jan — SHIP approval
Mar — contract for sale signed
Jun — site start
Dec — first phase completed

2021

Jan — first tenants moved in
Q2 — final phase completed

Housing scheme: SHIP/Turnkey (single-stage project)
Project lead: Waterford City and County Council
Local authority: Waterford City and County

65 houses

2-bed
3-bed

Total project costs: €13.7m
Cost per bedroom: €75,743

Approved funding: €13.7m

In July 2019, Waterford City & County Council issued a request for expressions of interest in the provision of turnkey social housing developments. The proposal to acquire 65 units at Mount William was assessed by the Council as meeting the required criteria. The units were acquired for a fixed price of €13.4m.

Units sale price
€13.4m

- **Legal fees (2%): €268,000**
- **Management fees: €40,000**

Source: Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage; Waterford City & County Council. Analysis by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General.

Case study 6: affordable housing

- 15.49** The examination team reviewed a cost rental housing project delivered by the LDA in Hansfield, Dublin 15. The project received Exchequer funding under the STAR investment scheme.
- 15.50** STAR is open to market operators who commit to make residential units available as cost rental housing.¹ Under the terms of the scheme, the State contributes the amount required to enable eligible housing projects to achieve target rents at least 25% below estimated market levels.
- 15.51** The maximum STAR investment is €175,000 per unit in Dublin, and €150,000 per unit in the rest of the country. An additional investment of €25,000 per unit is available subject to meeting certain sustainability criteria.
- 15.52** As at May 2025, the LDA is the only housing provider to have successfully qualified for STAR funding.

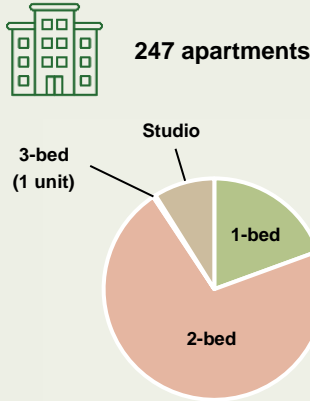
¹ STAR is administered by the Housing Agency. It opened on 1 August 2023 and will operate until 31 December 2027, subject to funding ceiling set by Government being reached or the Department announcing its closure.

Case study 6: Barnwell Point, Hansfield, Dublin 15

Project timeline



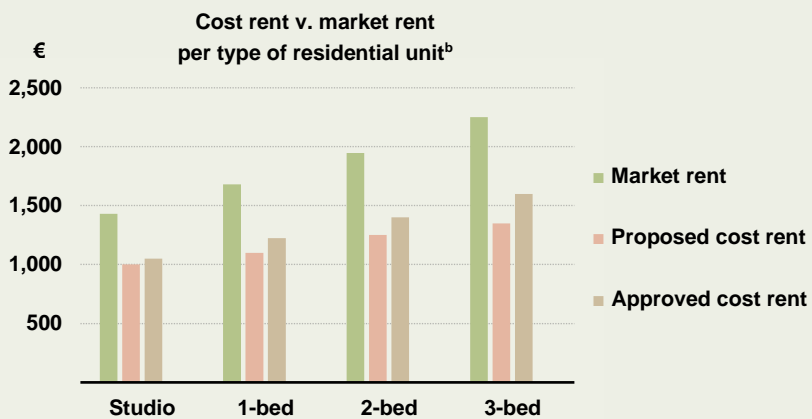
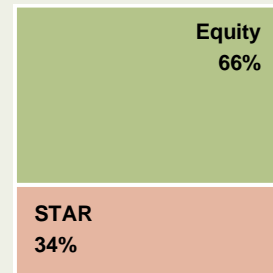
Housing scheme: STAR/Turnkey
Project lead: Land Development Agency
Local authority: Fingal



Phase 1: 93 units
Phase 2: 74 units
Phase 3: 80 units

Total project costs: €93.4m
Cost per bedroom^a: €219,840

Total STAR investment: €31.6m
STAR investment per unit: €128,000
Source of main funding: LDA equity
Cost rental designation: 50 years



Source: Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage; Housing Agency; Land Development Agency. Analysis by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General.

- Notes:
- a Studio apartments are counted as 1-bedroom units.
 - b Market rents are those provided by the LDA in the financial model submitted in October 2023. Approved cost rents are rents after adjustment by the Housing Agency when assessing the application. Those adjusted rents are used in calculating the level of STAR investment to be made available and correspond to the rents charged by the LDA to their cost rental tenants.

Conclusions

- 15.53** The Department is responsible for supporting the planning and building of housing in Ireland. In 2024, the Department spent €5.3 billion on its housing programme. In addition, €151 million was provided by ten local authorities from local property tax receipts.
- 15.54** The delivery streams of social housing and affordable housing account for approximately €4.3 billion (79%) of the expenditure. Social housing expenditure makes up the majority of this at €3.5 billion. The main expenditure items are the various housing funding schemes administered either directly by the Department, or by the Housing Agency on behalf of the Department. There were 11 affordable and social housing funding schemes in operation at the end of 2024.

Housing funding flows

- 15.55** Almost €4.8 billion (88%) of the expenditure on housing related to payments made to local authorities. Almost 23% (€1.1 billion) of the funding to local authorities was paid on to AHBs. AHBs received approximately €1.5 billion from the Department through local authorities and the Housing Agency.
- 15.56** In addition to Department funding, the HFA provided gross lending of €1.5 billion to local authorities and AHBs for the delivery of housing in 2024. (The HFA is not subject to audit by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General.)

Management information

- 15.57** There is no central database of housing projects delivered under the Department's housing programme. Relevant units within the Department's Social Housing and Affordable Housing Divisions maintain separate datasets to record key information and track spending on the capital projects that are delivered under the different housing funding schemes.
- 15.58** In September 2020, in response to a report of the Comptroller and Auditor General, the Department reported that it was developing an integrated system for the management of housing-related data and schemes. The business case for the project noted several challenges that impact the efficient and effective management of housing programmes. The challenges included
- non-standardised format of data with considerable time and effort to validate and verify the accuracy of information requiring manual intervention
 - no single point of data entry to maintain the integrity of data
 - production of timely and accurate reports is difficult
 - difficulty in monitoring progress on projects easily and accurately
 - difficulty in verifying the achievement of the Department's strategic goals and objectives.

- 15.59** The Department has stated that it commenced a project in 2023 to develop an IT system to improve and standardise work processes, improve data management and reporting, and ensure better information flows between the Department, local authorities and other key stakeholders involved in housing delivery. The development project is being implemented on a phased basis, with a target date for full implementation of the system in 2028.
- 15.60** The Department's estimate of the expected total cost of the system, including contracted post-implementation support, is €12.8 million.
- 15.61** The business case for the new information system noted a risk to the quality of information available to the Department. The rapid increase in the level of spending on schemes heightens the risks associated with inadequate information.

Assessing output

- 15.62** Of the €4.8 billion paid to the local authorities in 2024, two-fifths is categorised as capital funding for local authority housing. A key target set for this capital funding — the number of new-build and acquisition units delivered — was not met in 2024.
- 15.63** The majority of the funding to AHBs comes from three schemes — SHCEP, CALF and CREL. There are performance targets set for the three schemes. In 2024, the CREL exceeded its target by 52%. However, the SHCEP and the CALF scheme fell short of the target by 25% and 16% respectively.

Case studies

- 15.64** To facilitate a comparison of the output for the expenditure, an average cost per bedroom was calculated for six sample projects funded under the different schemes. The average cost per bedroom varied from €76,000 to €220,000. The highest bedroom cost related to the delivery of 247 units under the STAR investment scheme.
- 15.65** For the two projects delivered under the SHIP model, the average cost per bedroom of one project was double the cost of the other project. The higher-cost project was a construction project spanning nearly ten years, while the lower cost was for a turnkey project delivered over two years. Such comparative anomalies require formal retrospective analysis to learn lessons and to avoid cost-increasing factors in the future. Having good management data to facilitate identification of such outcomes is a precursor to such learning.

Annex 15A Challenges to the efficient and effective management of housing delivery programmes identified by the Department

Sources of information	Data is often captured from multiple sources and in non-standardised multiple formats. Considerable time and effort is required to validate and verify the accuracy of information from these sources.
Information and data sharing	Sharing of information and data is labour intensive requiring manual intervention to ensure accuracy and to avoid errors. Efficiencies could be achieved by introducing form level validation with business rules to ensure applications are error free. Paper submissions with multiple reviews necessitate considerable time being added to the process with no additional value being generated.
Business rules	Differing sets of business rules, and interpretation of business rules across stakeholders, can cause delays in processing claims and applications. Validation can be time-consuming and can result in non-value-added activities.
Real-time data capture	There is currently no single point of data entry across all stakeholders to maintain the integrity of the data. This leads to duplication of effort/repetition of tasks and requests as the information being submitted is missing details and this results in a delay in the processing of the claim.
Reporting and forecasting	Production of timely and accurate reports is difficult due to the various reporting formats and structures. This presents challenges collating, gathering and analysing information from these multiple sources and stakeholders.
Project status tracking	Tracking the status of proposed and active housing projects involves offline manual activities and research which make it difficult to monitor the project or different stages of the project easily and accurately. All stakeholders are therefore not able to see where a project is with regard to approval and payments.
Standard workflows/alerts	Without full clarity on the overall processes, a significant amount of time and effort is being invested in identifying, managing and controlling data ownership. Without standard workflows with alerts being automated, milestone dates can be surpassed and/or out of sequence, resulting in significant overhead required to validate the status of applications.
Real-time payments details	Considerable time is currently required to investigate and confirm payments information to support steps in the claims process. Real-time payment information is available from the Oracle Financial Management System but is not linked back to systems.
Unique identifier (Housing unit)	Without a unique identifier for each housing unit across all systems, considerable time and effort is being invested in linking cases and in reporting on back data/previous claims, and general validating of information and data. This may lead to a delay in the processing of claims.
Performance management	It is more difficult to verify the achievement of the Department's and Government's strategic goals and objectives, while non-standardised performance measurements are in place across Housing Programmes.

Source: Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage