

HOUSING STRATEGY

1. Introduction:

Need to Replace Current Strategy:

The Planning and Development Act, 2000, contained a significant policy instrument on housing. Part V of the 2000 Act, set out a series of provisions, which place certain supply routes of housing, in the context of strategic development planning.

These legislative provisions have become known as Part V housing and involve a number of supply options to provide an expansion of the methods to provide housing.

The existing Strategy was made in August 2001 and covers a 5-year period from 2001 to 2006.

The Strategy was reviewed in April 2004, in accordance with the legislative provision to do so, for the purpose of responding to the growth in demand for housing and the housing market conditions that had developed. The Review reaffirmed the general policy of a specified percentage (20%) of zoned housing land to be made available to the Local Authorities in the County.

The Housing Strategy must be included in any Development Plan and shall relate to the period of the Development Plan. As the County Development Plan is in the process of renewal, the Housing Strategy must be renewed also.

The purpose of the Housing Strategy is to ensure that the proper planning and sustainable development of the area of the Development Plan, provides for the housing of the existing and future population of the area.

A Housing Strategy may be prepared jointly by two or more Planning Authorities and the 2001 Strategy and its Review in 2004 was prepared on that basis. The four Planning and Housing Authorities agreed to have a joint Strategy and it is proposed that for the replacement of the 2001 Strategy, Wexford County Council, Wexford Borough Council, Enniscorthy Town Council and New Ross Town Council, make a Countywide Strategy in conjunction with the replacement of the County Development Plan.

Methodology Used:

The Planning and Development Acts, 2000 and 2002, set out certain matters that the Local Authorities must take into account and matters which must be regarded in the replacement of the Housing Strategy.

The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government has issued Regulations, Guidelines and models to give direction and assistance to Local Authorities in preparing and making the Strategy.

The methodology used to develop the new Housing Strategy is as follows:-

1. Analysis of the Legislative Background.
2. Study of Department Regulations, Guidelines and Models.
3. Review of National and Local Housing Policy.
4. Local Authority Housing Supply and Demand Analysis.
5. Review of Part V Agreements to date.
6. Update on Housing Services.
7. Analysis of Housing Market and Economics for first-time Buyers.
8. Forecast of Housing Needs
9. Measurement of Intervention Needed.
10. Part V Process Review.
11. Decision on Part V and general Policy.

Layout:

The layout of this Strategy is as follows:

Introduction:

- Need for new Strategy
- Methodology Used
- Layout
- Scope of Strategy

Policy Background:

- National Policy since 1991
- Local Policies

Legislative Context:

- Planning and Development Acts
- Housing Acts
- Affordable Priority Scheme

Demand Analysis:

- Range of Housing Solutions
- People's Choices
- Categorisation of Need
- Needs Assessments
- Social Housing Demand
- Forecast of Demand
- Affordable Housing Demand

Supply Analysis:

- Current Stock
- Landbank
- Supply Constraints
- Multi-Annual Supply Programmes
- Social Supply
- Affordable Supply
- Voluntary Supply
- Part V Supply and Results
- Special Needs Supply
- Options and Services

Market Analysis:

Forecast of Housing Needs

- Policy Instruments to Respond to Need:**
- Affordability
 - Range of Services
 - Spatial Spread
 - Lifetime of Supply

Intervention Measures:

- Bridging Affordability Gap
- Support for Special Needs
- Social Housing
- Subsidies/Supports

Part V System:

- Process Issues
- Options/Agreements
- Supply Opportunity/Role of Part V
- Part V Participation
- Review of Processes

Considerations / Conclusions

Countywide Strategy:

In August 2001, it was decided to develop and make a Countywide Strategy, i.e. that the same Strategy would apply to the County Council and the three Urban Authorities who are Housing Authorities.

In January 2006, it was decided that all Housing supply in the County and including Part V processes and Agreements would be managed by the Director of Service for Housing.

It is proposed that this arrangement would continue and the new Housing Strategy is on a countywide basis.

A Countywide Strategy with resultant arrangements offers a number of benefits to the Local Authorities to those in need of housing and to the construction industry.

These are:

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Consistency- | one set of rules, procedures and processes. |
| Opportunity - | for the Local Authorities to co-ordinate housing supply and Services. |
| Clarity | - for the applicants for housing and for private developers. |
| Priority
5-year | - for delivery of the range of housing services and reaching Plan targets. |
| Flexibility | - for making local decisions within a range of options and requirements. |

A number of Housing services are administered on a Countywide basis as follows:-

- Affordable Housing Supply
- Scheme of Letting Priorities for Affordable Housing
- Housing Social Worker Services
- Land Management Strategy
- Housing Supply and Construction
- Rental Accommodation Scheme
- Loans and Grants Schemes
- Voluntary Housing Schemes

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2.1 National Policy Background:

National Policy from 1991 has given direction to Local Authorities on the performance of the extensive Housing function. Objectives and initiatives have been developed and set to promote home ownership and manage, a broader and more diverse range of, housing options for households who need accommodation and housing supports.

A review of the most important policy initiatives will summarise the objectives set and initiatives taken, so as to demonstrate the evolution of housing policy, over time, and create awareness of the breath of housing solutions now available to households in need.

“A Plan for Social Housing” 1991, set a broad objective of ensuring that every household has a dwelling suitable to its needs, located in an acceptable environment, at a price or rent it can afford. This Strategy set out to promote owner occupation, respond to changing housing needs and mitigate social segregation in housing.

A range of new measures was introduced to address housing needs and to deliver benefits of:

- Improve access to and prospects of housing
- Creation of more choices in housing
- Prominence of housing in urban renewal
- Better use of resources

It was expected to produce suitable housing conditions for 5,000 households per year.

This Strategy brought significant change to the traditional role of the Local Authority in the social housing area.

“Social Housing – The Way Ahead” December 1995, reviewed the operation of the various Schemes introduced in 1991 to increase their effectiveness and improve their implementation. It maps out proposals for further policy development.

The principal proposals and initiatives were:

- expanded Housing Programme
- expanded Voluntary Sector

- changes to Improvements Works-in-Lieu Scheme
- changes to Affordable Sites Scheme
- programme on extensions to rented houses
- increased Tenant participation
- improved response to homelessness
- further responses to needs of Travellers
- improvements to House Loan Schemes

The overall aim of housing policy remains, from the 1991 policy, to “enable every household to have available an affordable dwelling of good quality, suited to its needs, in a good environment, and, as far as possible, at tenure of its choice”.

“Action on Housing” 2000, introduced a range of measures to address housing needs and requirements on a broad front.

Specific measures on social and affordable housing were:

- increased targets for number of new house starts by Local Authorities
- introduction of a four-year multi-annual programme on supply
- measures to facilitate land acquisition by Local Authorities
- improved lending functions for the Housing Finance Agency and roll up of interest for seven years on land acquisition
- improved affordable housing schemes
- more efficient utilisation of existing stock

These policies took into account the June 2000 report by Peter Bacon & Associates and the review of social and affordable housing needs by the DoEH&LG.

“Housing Policy Framework – Building Sustainable Communities” 2005, has a central focus on building sustainable, successful communities through the provision of quality housing.

Key elements of this policy are to:-

- build on progress in advancing housing supply and respond to new housing needs of our fast growing society.
- continue the strong pace of housing production and manage the expansion to ensure a quality living environment for householders and local communities.
- promote the conditions whereby the maximum number of people can access affordable accommodation.
- implement the Rental Accommodation Scheme.
- drive delivery of Local Authority housing through the five-year Housing Action Plans, 2004 to 2008.
- develop Active Land Management Strategies to support the Housing Programme.

- provide specific strategies to meet the housing of all those with special needs.
- review the Disabled Persons Grant Scheme and the Essential Repairs Grant Scheme.
- deliver high quality social housing by designing and planning new housing on quality principles including appropriate housing mix and necessary social infrastructure.
- intensify the rejuvenation of existing housing stock by regeneration programmes, installing central heating systems and remedial schemes.
- implement a programme of reforms by new legislation to involve improvements in provision of housing advice, new means of assessing need, implementing a fair rents policy and to improve the management and maintenance of housing stock.

- support access to housing for first-time buyers by:
 1. introducing a new Tenant Purchase Scheme from January 2007, to allow for the sale of Local Authority flats
 2. initiating a pilot project on a new tenant purchase scheme for some new voluntary housing units.
 3. delivering targeted support through affordable housing measures for lower income groups.
- Introduce a new simpler and streamlined affordable housing scheme.

A more comprehensive housing policy document is to be published and new legislation on housing is to be proposed.

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2.2. Local Policy:

Wexford Local Authorities have a proud history of providing housing solutions for the people of County Wexford over the past 130 years, by implementing diverse provisions of housing legislation and responding to Central Government policies and initiatives.

Through a broad range of supports and actions, the overall aim of the Wexford Local Authorities is a policy to enable every household to have available an affordable dwelling of good quality, suited to its needs, in a good environment, and as far as possible at a tenure of its choice.

Current policy and detailed plans and targets are set out in the “Action Plan for Social and Affordable Housing, 2004 to 2008” made by the Wexford Local Authorities in June 2004 and subsequently approved by the Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

In 2006, this five-year Plan was reviewed, at the request of the Minister, and the Review was completed and submitted to the DoEH&LG in July 2006.

The five-year Plan and its Review contain the essential local policies of the Housing Authorities which are summarised below.

Strategic Objectives 2004 to 2008:

1. Acquisition of land by agreement or compulsory purchase.
2. Acquisition of land, houses, sites or financial contributions through Part V.
3. Optimum utilisation of Local Authority lands for housing construction.
4. Provision of necessary infrastructure in towns and villages.
5. Development of Integrated Housing Projects in the four main towns.
6. Develop Affordable Housing to assist in bridging the affordability gap for house purchasers.
7. Provide quality housing that is comfortable and secure.
8. Bring all stock to modern standards by a programme of planned maintenance, estate regeneration and adaptations to meet special needs.
9. Respond to societal trends by providing house types that reflect family structures and the special needs of the elderly, single persons, the homeless and people with a disability.
10. Ensure a dispersed pattern of housing provision throughout the County, to maintain the rural and village settlement patterns.
11. Respond to demographic trends such as ageing population, inward migration, repatriation and family formations.

12. Provide coherent, co-ordinated responses across the range of housing services, to give housing solutions that reflect people's needs.
13. Support the home environment by creating a pleasant neighbourhood for residents that is sustainable in the long-term.
14. Housing Scheme Design layouts to achieve balanced development by integrating social facilities and recreation needs.
15. Categorise and prioritise housing needs to ensure an equitable allocation of resources.
16. Adapt housing services and systems to provide best quality services.
17. Avoid undue social segregation and reduce social exclusion.
18. Ensure an intercultural equality conscious approach in the provision of services.

Specific Policies 2004 to 2008:

1. Provide 1, 2, 3 and 4-bedroomed units to meet demand.
2. Provide units designed for people with special needs.
3. Support the Voluntary Housing Sector by providing land and financial supports and prioritise on needs of the elderly and those not capable of independent living.
4. Provide a supply of affordable houses and sites across the County, where an affordability gap arises for first time buyers and those on lower incomes.
5. Develop a programme of regeneration on older housing estates.
6. Bring long-term voids in current stock up to modern standards and relet.
7. Develop an estate management policy and provide practical support to residents associations.
8. Develop a social work strategy to assist households with a variety of issues and roll social worker services out to the urban housing authorities.
9. Survey all rented stock and implement a planned maintenance programme to bring every house to full compliance with modern regulations and standards.
10. Continue to implement a Countywide Differential Rents Scheme and ensure same is poverty and equity proofed.
11. Continue to provide housing by traditional contract with the building industry.
12. Ensure social integration is designed into all major housing schemes via a mix of house types and tenures.
13. Review the Schemes of Letting Priorities and develop a common, countywide scheme to assess housing applicants.
14. Prioritise provision of accommodation for homeless persons throughout the County.
15. Respond to anti-social behaviour from residents of Local Authority housing stock and take strict action when required.
16. Continuously monitor the demand for and resources allocated to the Disabled Persons Grant Scheme and Essential Repairs Grant

Scheme, to ensure both schemes are adapted to needs as they arise.

17. Implement the Traveller Accommodation Programme by supplying a stock of standard and group housing and halting site bays and allocate one new house in every ten constructed to Travellers approved for housing.

Since its adoption in June 2004, and review in July 2006, the Five-Year Housing Plan has set a series of targets and initiatives that the Local Authority must strive to meet. The Plan contains set targets for all the areas of housing products, and the Review in 2006 shows that, by and large, the targets have been reached and in some cases, surpassed.

To respond to the challenges and targets in the Five-Year Plan, the Wexford Local Authorities have also responded by (a) adopting and moving towards a series of consistent policies, (b) creating countywide management structures, and (c) following clear project management principles and practices.

(a) Countywide Consistent Policies:

In order to develop the range of housing functions in a consistent manner and provide a common approach to housing services, a series of policies areas were identified and actions initiated in 2005 and 2006. This process is ongoing.

The Policy areas involved are outlined above and the most significant actions are on the following:-

- Planned maintenance on a stock of approximately 3,500 social units.
- Prioritising new builds for those who have special needs.
- Social Work services extended to the Urban areas.
- Provision of Community buildings and facilities in the larger housing projects.
- Common Scheme of Letting Priorities.
- Sharing of land bank resources between the Local Authorities and Voluntary Housing Associations.
- Provision of Emergency Housing Accommodation in each of the four main towns.
- Provision of Affordable Housing.

(b) Countywide Management Structures:

To accommodate and respond to increased demand for housing services and faster delivery of housing supply, the Wexford Local Authorities have initiated a number of structural changes to the management of housing. These changes are designed to create more focus to meeting the housing needs of the County and to streamline the housing supply to satisfy those needs.

Each person who seeks assistance, from whatever housing programme or scheme, is presented with an individual housing solution. In all the Wexford Local Authorities can be expected to provide in the region of 800 housing solutions each year.

The structural changes are summarised as follows:-

1. One Director of Service is responsible for the supply of housing in all the Local Authorities.
2. Each year an extensive programme is developed and actioned, to supply the extensive range of housing services.
3. Performance of each year's programme is measured on a countywide basis.
4. Demand for housing is assessed and analysed on a countywide basis.
5. Housing supply methods are expanded to include direct contract, turnkey contract, direct purchase and licensed build contracts.

(c) Project Management:

In order to progress, measure and monitor the supply of housing solutions, in all the Local Authorities, a system has been devised along clear project management principles.

The system has the following elements:

1. Multi-Annual and Annual Works Programmes with targets, milestones and progress mapping on each project.
2. Local Authority resources are shared in a co-operative manner.
3. Special skills are acquired through outsourcing.
4. Infrastructure supply bottlenecks identified and resolved where possible.
5. Supply contracts are monitored and managed on a continuous basis.
6. Reserve projects are identified and proposed, where any programme project is delayed.

Part V Policies:

Overall policies around the application of Part V, is contained in the strategy of 2001 and the Review of 2004. These policies can be summarised as follows:-

- Housing demand did not match land availability, particularly in rural areas and the Local Authorities need to spread housing supply to satisfy such demand.
- Private housing developments would not necessarily occur in locations of need in terms of social housing and Local Authorities could not rely solely on Part V to satisfy such need.
- The Local Authorities should not become over reliant on one particular delivery mechanism in providing housing.
- In utilising Part V for housing supply, the Local Authorities would be conscious of issues such as design, density and social integration.
- A sustainable balance between private and social housing should be achieved.
- Home-ownership would be supported.
- There should be a spatial spread of housing projects throughout the County.
- Part V would be a mechanism to augment housing provision and would be considered in light of resources for the Housing Programme.
- Part V financial contributions would co-fund the Planned Maintenance Programmes.
- An increase in affordable housing output, through the use of Part V resources, would be required to keep pace with demand and address the growing affordability gap in the County.
- Housing land would be required on a dispersed basis throughout the County to address overall housing needs.
- Population increase would add increased demands for housing services.

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3. Legislative Context:

The Multi-Annual Housing Plan, Annual Housing Programmes, Housing Strategy, Part V Agreements and the diverse range of housing functions and schemes, all are based on a suite of legislative provisions and Ministerial Regulations and Guidelines.

It is appropriate therefore to present the main legislative provisions so as to put the Housing Strategy in context.

Planning and Development Acts 2000 and 2002

Part V of the 2000 Act and Section 3 of the 2002 Act contain the primary provisions that relate to the Housing Strategy. These are as follows:-

2000 Act

Section 93

- Compliance with Part V is a material consideration of any planning application or appeal.

Section 94:

- Any Development Plan shall include a Strategy for the housing of the existing and future population of the area.
- This Housing Strategy shall relate to the period of the Development Plan.
- The Housing Strategy may be prepared jointly by two or more Planning Authorities.
- The Housing Strategy shall have regard to the most recent housing assessments.
- The Housing Strategy shall take into account:
 - Existing and likely future need for housing.
 - Ensure housing is available for persons who have different levels of income.
 - Ensure a mix of house types and sizes to match requirements of different categories of households and the special requirements of the elderly and disabled.
 - Need to counteract undue segregation in housing between persons of different social backgrounds.
- The Housing Strategy shall include an estimate of the amount of:

- Housing for persons under Section 9(2) of the Housing Act, 1988, who are homeless, travellers, living in unfit or unsuitable or overcrowded accommodation, are sharing and need separate accommodation, young persons leaving institutional care or without family accommodation, need accommodation for medical or compassionate reasons, are elderly or disabled or handicapped, are unable to meet the cost of their accommodation or obtain suitable alternative accommodation.

➤ Affordable Housing required during the period of the Plan

The Housing Strategy shall provide as a general policy a specified percentage, not exceeding 20%, of the land zoned for residential use or a mix of residential or other uses, shall be reserved for housing of either or both as estimated and referred to above.

➤ For the estimate of Affordable Housing, regard shall be taken to:

- supply and demand for houses
- the price of houses
- the income of persons who require houses
- the rates of interest on mortgages for houses
- the affordability of houses

Section 95

The Planning Authority shall:

- ❖ Ensure that sufficient and suitable land is zoned for residential use, to meet requirements of the Housing Strategy.
- ❖ Ensure that a scarcity of such land does not occur during the period of the Development Plan.
- ❖ Include objectives in the Development plan to secure implementation of the Housing Strategy.
- ❖ County Manager's Report shall include review of progress in implementing the Housing Strategy.

Section 96

- The Planning Authority may require an applicant to enter an agreement on Part V, as a condition of a grant of planning permission.
- An Agreement may provide for:
 - transfer of ownership of land

- building and transfer of houses
 - transfer of sites.
- The houses, sites or land must be identified in the Agreement.
 - A planning application shall specify the manner proposed to comply with a Part V condition.
 - Where land is transferred, compensation shall be paid based on existing use at date of transfer to the Local Authority, assuming development would have been unlawful.
 - Agreement must be entered into before the expiration of eight weeks from the date of grant of permission.

Section 98

- ✦ Each Local Authority shall establish a Scheme which determines the order of priority to be accorded to eligible persons for Affordable Housing.

2002 Act

- Amends Section 96 of 2000 Act.

Section 3

- Instead of Transfer of Land, an Agreement may provide for:
 - building and transfer to the Local Authority or to nominated persons, of houses on the land.
 - transfer of sites to the Local Authority or to nominated persons.
 - transfer of other land within the functional area of the Local Authority.
 - building and transfer to the Local Authority or to nominated persons of houses, or transfer of sites on other lands.
 - payment of an amount as agreed.
 - a combination of two or more of above options.
- In considering an Agreement, the Local Authority shall consider:-
 - ❖ whether it contributes to achieving objectives of the Housing Strategy.
 - ❖ whether it is the best use of resources available, to ensure adequate supply of housing and any financial implications for the housing functions.
 - ❖ need to counteract undue social segregation in housing.
 - ❖ the time housing is likely to be provided as a consequence of the Agreement.
- An applicant shall, when making an application, specify the manner proposed to comply with a Part V condition.

HOUSING ACTS

Housing Act, 1966:

- Grants can be made for reconstruction of houses and essential repairs.
- Loans may be made for acquiring or construction of a house.
- A Housing Authority may erect, acquire, purchase, convert or reconstruct or otherwise provide dwellings.
- A Housing Authority may provide sites for building purposes.
- A Housing Authority shall make a Scheme of Priorities for letting of dwellings provided.

Housing Act, 1984:

- Local Authority may have regard to the prospective future demand of persons, residing outside its functional area, for housing in making an assessment of housing need.
- In making a Scheme of Priorities for letting of dwellings, the Local Authority shall consider the provision of housing of persons residing outside their functional area.

Housing Act, 1988:

- Subsidies may be made towards loan charges for the acquisition or construction of a house.
- Grants may be made on surrender of Local Authority houses, to persons who purchase/construct a house.
- Local Authority may assist another Housing Authority or a body approved by the Minister in respect of provision or management of housing accommodation.
- Local Authority shall from time to time make an estimate of existing and prospective housing requirements.
- Local Authority shall from time to time make an assessment of the need for housing and shall have regard to the needs for housing of the Homeless, Travellers, those in unfit/unsuitable/overcrowded accommodation, young persons leaving institutional care or without family accommodation, those in need for medical or compassionate reasons, the elderly, the disabled or handicapped and those unable to meet the cost of accommodation.
- Local Authority may make arrangements with other bodies for the provision of accommodation for homeless persons, may provide financial assistance to a homeless person, or rent accommodation or contribute to the cost of accommodation for a homeless person.

- Local Authority shall make a Scheme determining the order of priority to be accorded in the letting of dwellings and shall set aside a number or proportion of dwellings for categories of persons and shall make particular provision for persons who are in need arising from an emergency.
- Subsidies or grants may be made to Local Authorities for the provision of sites to erect a house.
- Local Authority shall have regard to the latest assessment of need and the need of applicants after the making of such assessment, in providing dwellings and shall seek to maintain a reasonable balance between the respective needs of the classes of persons above.
- An emergency situation exists where, in the opinion of the Manager, works are urgent and necessary to provide a reasonable standard of accommodation for a person having regard to personal health, public health and safety considerations.

Housing Act, 1992:


- Local Authority may grant a shared ownership lease on a house
- Local Authority may, with the consent of the owner carry out or arrange to carry out, works of improvement or adaptation to a house not owned by them, so as to render the house fit for habitation or relieve overcrowding or suitable for the occupants accommodation.
- Local Authority may assist another Local Authority or approved body in the provision or management of housing accommodation or other housing matters.
- Local Authority may make loans for acquisition or construction of houses, improvement works to houses, acquisition of buildings or land for housing.

Housing Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 2002:

- Local Authority may acquire, build or cause to be built affordable houses.
- Subsidies may be made towards loan charges on a loan for affordable houses.
- Local Authority shall establish a Scheme that determines order of priority of persons to whom affordable houses are made available for sale.

Schemes of Priorities:

In accordance with the legislative provisions above, the Wexford Local Authorities have, over time, adopted the required Schemes, which are the basis for allocating both social and affordable housing. Such Schemes have the practical purpose of deciding on applicants who have the greatest need.



Applicants for housing must firstly be accepted as in need of rehousing and then assessed under the Priority Scheme to determine who is in most need.

The Priority Scheme for Affordable Housing is common to all four Local Authorities in the County. The Scheme allocates priority across a range of criteria which assess the applicant's ability to raise the necessary Capital, make the required repayments and demonstrate evidence of a deposit on the purchase price. Also, criteria are used to give priority to Local Authority Tenants/Tenant purchasers who wish to move on to home ownership, for length of time waiting for housing and/or time resident in the area, for distance to place of work and/or for those returning to an area where they are native and finally for living conditions and/or medical circumstances. It is not proposed to alter this Scheme in the near future.

The Priority Scheme for social houses is unique to each of the four Local Authorities. Each Scheme allocates priority across a range of criteria which assess the applicants need for housing and determine who is in most need. Criteria are used to give priority to applicants on the basis of the accommodation they occupy, its cost, and whether it is overcrowded, on length of time waiting for housing, and on medical or compassionate grounds. It is intended to review the four Schemes with a view to bringing a consistent approach to the criteria, and the priorities allocated and also deal with other issues such as applicants persistently refusing adequate housing offers.

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4. Housing Demand:

The Wexford Local Authorities operate an extensive range of housing services which all have the common aim of supplying housing solutions to persons and households who have housing and accommodation needs.

Housing services are applied for by those in need and the Local Authorities assess the validity of that need and allocate priority to those in most need.

Housing Officers offer assistance to those in need by explaining the various housing services available and advising on which service best suits the individual needs of the household.

Accordingly, housing demand is primarily driven by people's choices to apply for housing services, and as such is difficult to predict or plan. Many complex factors affect the demand for housing, such as:-

- availability of existing housing in the County;
- standards of existing accommodation;
- location of existing housing;
- cost of acquiring housing;
- growth in population and inward migration;
- societal trends such as single parent families, marriage breakdowns and independence in housing arrangements;
- Government policies such as the move away from institutional care to community care;
- economic factors related to growth, employment levels, availability of finance and capital.

Therefore, housing demand is analysed by the numbers seeking housing services at a particular time and drawing conclusions from that analysis. Thus, demand management has developed around the generality of current applications for services, the analysis of need identified in such applications and the extrapolation of patterns and trends in the demand. The results serve to help focus on the needs of categories of persons, to inform the programmes that supply housing solutions, to identify changes in demand and to forecast future demand.

Depending on applications for services and applicants' choices brings the added difficulty that:

- not all expectations can be met;
- people's circumstances change;
- people change their choices.

The nature of housing construction is such that the housing solutions take time to be planned, approved, financed and constructed. Housing, unlike other services, can only be responsive to demand, when all the factors of production are in place, and even then, the time to delivery is determined by the physical construction process.

Therefore, responding to demand takes time, and the supply should be seen as housing infrastructural development, rather than an operational service.

Range of Housing Solutions:

Once a person seeks a housing service, and is approved for same, the Local Authorities make an offer of a housing solution that provides remedy to their accommodation needs.

Housing solutions are provided by a variety of schemes and fall into the following categories:

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| Social Houses or Flats | - rented from the Local Authority |
| Subsidised Private Rental | - rented from Private Landlord and subsidised by Local Authority |
| High Support Social Houses or Flats | - rented from Voluntary Housing Associations |
| Emergency Housing | - for the Homeless or persons whose accommodation is no longer available following fire etc. Solution could be guesthouse accommodation, hostel accommodation, private rented dwelling or temporary accommodation such as a mobile home |
| Special Needs Housing | - either social/affordable/high support or emergency housing, suitable to person's special needs. |
| Affordable Housing | - purchased from the Local Authority or subsidised sites to build on. |
| Improvements to Housing | - under Disabled Persons Grants Scheme for those with Special Needs, in private accommodation.
- under Essential Repairs Grants Scheme for those over 65 years, in private accommodation |

- extensions to Local Authority social houses for those with special needs, or where the house needs to be refurbished or enlarged.
- under the Planned Maintenance Programme or Response Maintenance Programme, to bring the house to current standards.
- under the Central Heating Programme to provide dual heating systems throughout the house.
- under the Reconstruction Loans Scheme to refurbish or upgrade private housing.
- under the Improvement Works-in-Lieu Scheme to provide major refurbishment to private house by way of subsidised mortgage.

Assistance to acquire Housing

- under the Tenant Purchase Scheme for Local Authority Houses.
- Loans to buy or build houses.

People's Choices:

Housing services depend to a large extent on the circumstances of the applicants and the choices they make from the range of options available. The Local Authorities strive, not only to meet the person's needs, but also to accommodate the choices they are satisfied with.

Many factors influence these choices, such as:

- ❖ Place of Employment
- ❖ Place of schooling
- ❖ Area of current residence
- ❖ Home community linkages
- ❖ Family responsibilities
- ❖ Location of support services
- ❖ Cost of housing
- ❖ Degree of current need
- ❖ Aspiration to home ownership
- ❖ Aspiration to independent living
- ❖ Alternative localities on offer
- ❖ Alternative tenures on offer
- ❖ Long term life choices.

Categorisation of Need.

In supplying the housing solution, that satisfies the persons need as far as possible, the Local Authorities categorise the generality of needs. This process serves a number of purposes, such as to ensure:

- fairness in allocating housing resources
- clear focus on those with special needs
- allocating supply to all sectors of society.

Housing demand is therefore categorised as following:

- Social Housing /Affordable Housing/Special Needs Housing
- Urban/Rural
- By Number of Bedrooms
- By House Style

Early analysis of housing demand and categorisation of need is critical in ensuring that the range of housing solutions on offer are contemporary to the patterns of need and also that housing supply programmes are designed with a clear brief on the needs of applicants.

Needs Assessments.

The overall purpose of housing assessments is to make an estimate of the existing and prospective housing requirements in the jurisdiction of the Local Authority.

The Local Authorities must ensure housing is available to persons who have different levels of income.

An estimate of housing requirements must include estimates of persons who are homeless, travellers, living in unfit or unsuitable or overcrowded accommodation, who are sharing and need separate accommodation, young persons leaving institutional care or without family accommodation, need accommodation for medical or compassionate reasons, are elderly or disabled or handicapped, are unable to meet the cost of their accommodation or obtain suitable alternative accommodation.

For an estimate of Affordable housing needs, the Local Authorities must have regard to the supply and demand for houses, the price of houses, the income of persons who require houses, house mortgage interest rates and the affordability of houses.

Social housing needs assessments, at the strategic level, must follow the above requirements, and serve to forecast future demand. Each Local Authority carries out its own assessment in accordance with local practice and usually to align with the delivery of new house units. In Wexford County Council, these assessments are carried out on a continuous basis, which serves to keep the

demand statistics up to date. The Town Authorities carry out assessments by batch on a periodic basis which serves to adopt an approved housing waiting list. National assessments are carried out every two years, the last being in March 2005.

Accordingly, over the passage of time, a history of assessments has been created, which allows a table to be created showing the general demand over a number of years. The product of the assessments serves to satisfy the legislative requirements, guide the supply of housing solutions and act as a baseline to forecast or predict future demand.

Affordable housing needs assessments, at the strategic level, must follow the requirements above and serve to forecast future demand. These assessments are carried out on a Countywide basis and usually align with the delivery of large affordable housing schemes. They are also used to assess the need for and assist in the allocation of affordable sites, sale of longterm voids, allocation of houses acquired under the Part V process and assist in decisions on further supply.

Since the Affordable Housing Schemes are relatively new, in comparison to Social Housing, the history of assessments is not as extensive. However, the resultant tables are of use in showing general demand and to satisfy legislative requirements, as a guide to supply and act as a baseline to forecast or predict future demand.

For the purposes of this strategy, the following tables are the results of the analysis and assessments outlined above.

Social Housing Demand:

The following Table shows the total number of social housing applicants, by Local Authority, at September 2006.

Table 1 - Gross Countywide Social Housing Demand - September 2006

Wexford County Council	1927
Wexford Borough Council	824
New Ross Town Council	314
Enniscorthy Town Council	529
Countywide Total	3594

Note:- No. 1 - Applicants who have applied to more than one Local Authority would be double-counted.

No. 2 – Transfer applicants, from existing Local Authority stock, are also included.

This gross current demand can be further categorised by County Council District and Urban Authority, as follows:-

Table 2

Gross Demand County Council District and Urban Area

Area	Demand	Urban	Demand	Total
Wexford District	679	Wexford Borough Council	824	1503
New Ross District	253	New Ross Town Council	314	567
Enniscorthy District	417	Enniscorthy Town Council	529	946
Gorey District	578			578
Total	1927		1667	3594

The Housing Strategy must take into account the requirements by analysing need by house type and size, and must include estimates of persons who have special needs (as outlined above) and the current circumstances of applicants.

The following tables show the results of this analysis.

Table 3 - Countywide Analysis of Need by House Type and Size

	Elderly (> 60)	Non Elderly (< 60)	Special Needs	Total
1 Bed	195	1084	122	1401
2 Bed	50	1190	50	1290
3 Bed	3	787	22	812
4 Bed +	1	78	12	91
Total	249	3139	206	3594

Table 4 - Countywide – Analysis of Special Needs Category

Wheelchair User	20
Mobility Impaired	40
Mental Health	67
High Support	79
Total	206

Table 5 - Countywide - Analysis by Current Circumstances

Socio-Economic Situation of Applicants – Assessment of Needs 2005

Percentage on Income of €15,000 or Less	84%
--	------------

Percentage Employed	25%
Percentage Unemployed	44%
Percentage on Lone Parent Support Only	21%
Percentage on Old Age Pension	10%
Total	100%

Forecast of Demand:

To forecast demand, the starting point is to show the general pattern over a number of years and the formal assessments carried out as part of the National Assessments.

Table 6 - Assessments of Demand

	1996	1999	2002	2004	2005	2006
Wexford County Council	543	699	992	1748	1350	1927
Wexford Borough Council	319	337	433	448	468	824
New Ross Town Council	116	133	376	395	199	314
Enniscorthy Town Council	164	223	267	267	284	529
Total	1142	1392	2068	2858	2301	3594
% Increase		21.89%	48.56%	38.20%	-19.49%	54.06%
% Increase Cumulative		21.89%	81.08%	150.26%	101.48%	210.42%

A number of interrelated and complex factors affect housing demand such as population changes, number of new houses constructed, changes in household formation and sizes, cost of housing and availability of public housing services.

Table 7 – Population of County Wexford

	1986	1991	1996	2002	2006	2011(E)	2016(E)
	102,552	102,069	104,371	116,596	131,615	146,410	162,240
%Inc.	---	- 0.5%	+ 2%	+ 12%	+13%	+11%	+11%
%Inc Cumul.	---	-0.5%	+1.5%	+14%	+28%	+43%	+58%

Table 8 - New House Completions

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006 (Projected)
*Private & Public	1,955	2,342	2,743	3,043	3,180	3,264
Total Public	259	239	237	245	382	294
Percentage	13.24%	10.2%	8.6%	8%	12%	9%

* Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government Figures – ESB Connections.

Table 9 - Average Household Size

1986	1991	1996	2002	2006(E)	2011(E)	2016(E)
3.70	3.49	3.28	3.01	2.88	2.72	2.55

Table 10 - Household Structure 2002

	County Wexford
Single	7,564 (20%)
Single with Others &/or Children	6,196 (16%)
Couples	6,944 (18%)
Couples with Others &/or Children	17,307 (46%)
Total	38,011 (100%)

Table 10 A - Estimations of Housing Need 2006, 2011, 2016

Co. Wexford	Population	Household Size	Households	Additional Households required (projected)
2002	116,596	3.01	37,415	
2006	131,615	2.88	45,700 (projected)	
2011	146,410 (projected)	2.72	53,827 (projected)	8127
2016	162,240 (projected)	2.55	63,623 (projected)	9796

Based on the above statistics and forecasts, some general assumptions and predictions can be made.

1. Based on projected population growth and the pattern of household sizes, there is a projection of 8,127 additional houses required in the period from 2006 to 2011 for the general population in the whole county.
2. There is a correlation between population growth, the reduction in household size, the changes in household structure, the cost and affordability of housing in the market, with the demand for Local Authority housing services.
3. There is considerable evidence that the general housing demand tends to reduce with formal housing assessments. There is a recognised pattern of refusals of adequate accommodation, by applicants, when housing supply materialises. These patterns are generally attributed to the practice of applying for Local Authority housing so as to avail of HSE rent supplements and to the choices people make, subsequent to applying to the Local Authority e.g. opting for house purchase.
4. General housing demand tends to mask occurrences of existing tenants seeking transfers, applications to two or more Authorities and migration patterns.

Accordingly, the following conclusions are warranted:

1. The targets contained in the five-year Social and Affordable Housing Action Plan, 2004 to 2008 are still valid and the housing services to be supplied are required.
2. The Rental Accommodation Scheme, currently being implemented by the Wexford Local Authorities, has a potential of 1,100 existing private rented dwellings in receipt of State subsidies, of which 25% are occupied by persons who have also applied for Local Authority housing.
3. The current housing demand contains existing Local Authority tenants seeking transfers and persons applying to two or more Local Authorities. It is estimated that this represents 189 of applications.
4. A variety of housing options are available to those who apply for social housing and experience has shown that 60 of applicants will follow this route.
5. In light of the above issues, the gross current demand for social housing should be reduced to calculate the estimated net current demand on which future projections can be made.

Gross Demand – September 2006	3594
Less	
*Double Applicants	385
RAS Potential	250
Transfer Applicants	189
Other Housing Options	60
Net Housing Demand	2710

*Double Applicants – Wexford Borough Council – 150
 Enniscorthy Town Council – 115
 New Ross Town Council - 120

6. To forecast future Nett Current Demand, it would be prudent to expect the growth in demand to continue in the next five years.

Table 11 - Forecast of Nett Growth Potential Social Housing Demand (New Applicants) 2006 to 2012

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Growth Projection %	---	6.4%	6.7%	7.1%	7.5%	7.8%	8.2%	8.6%
Growth Projection	---	175	185	195	205	215	225	236

Affordable Housing Demand:

Table 12
Affordable Housing Demand

	AHI	99	Sale of Voids	Sale of Sites	Total
Wexford County Council	60	449	0	0	509
Wexford Borough Council	0	0	0	10	10
New Ross Town Council	0	0	2	0	2
Enniscorthy Town Council	0	2	0	0	2
Total	60	451	2	10	523

Note:-

1. The Affordable Housing Programme is managed on a Countywide basis, but the Urban Authorities are managing a number of specific initiatives that are shown for completeness.
2. There is some relationship between the demand for social housing and the demand for Affordable Housing, though this is not as significant as has been expected.
3. Demand for Affordable Housing is more directly related to the supply of units and accordingly the demand in some areas has not been expressed where no supply of units is programmed.

This current demand can be further categorised by County Council District and Urban Authorities as follows:-

Table 13
Current Demand Affordable
CoCo District and Urban Area

Wexford County Council Area	Demand	Urban Area	Demand	Total
Wexford District	254	Wexford Borough Council	10	264
New Ross District	23	New Ross Town Council	2	25
Enniscorthy District	89	Enniscorthy Town Council	2	91
Gorey District	143			143
Total	509	Total	18	523

The Local Authorities, in estimating the need for Affordable Housing, are required to have regard to the supply and demand for houses, the price of houses, the income of those who need houses, rates of mortgage interest and the affordability of houses.

Accordingly, analysis has been carried out on the housing market in County Wexford and on the income of recent successful affordable housing Applicants and the affordability of housing to suit their needs.

Obviously, the housing market in County Wexford displays strong demand features in recent years and is by its nature segmented by the range of property on offer and the different classes of persons engaged in the demand.

For the purposes of this Strategy, the focus is on persons who do not have the means to engage in the housing market and satisfy their housing need.

Two categories of such persons exist:-

- Social Housing Applicants, who don't have the means to acquire houses, and
- Affordable Housing Applicants, who don't have the means to acquire houses without support.

It is the needs of latter category, that are now being addressed.

The approach used is as follows:-

1. Analysis of the current market conditions, with the calculation of an average market price for small and medium housing units.
2. Analysis of recent affordable housing allocations with the calculation of average incomes for single persons and couples.
3. Calculation of maximum finance available to such applicants.
4. Assessment of the affordability gap i.e. difference between average market price and average loan finance available to the average applicant.

The result of this analysis shows the following:

1. Average house prices in County Wexford is as follows:-

GOREY DISTRICT

	4 bed detached (max. 140 sq.m.)	3 bed semi detached (max.120 sq.m.)	2/3 bed terrace (to 85 sq.m.)	Apartment (60 to 85 sq.m.)
GOREY TOWN	€390,000	€325,000	€295,000	€240,000
Ballycanew	€340,000	€295,000	€245,000	**
COURTOWN	€360,000	€300,000	€270,000	**

ENNISCORTHY DISTRICT

ENNISCORTHY TOWN	€310,000	€235,000	€185,000	€175,000
Ferns	€305,000	€265,000	€220,000	**
Bunclody	€315,000	€260,000	€240,000	€250,000 part of hotel complex
Blackwater	€315,000	**	€280,000	**

Oilgate	€350,000 for 185 sq m	**	**	**
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NEW ROSS DISTRICT

NEW ROSS	€280,000	€260,000	€240,000	€165,000
ARTHURSTWN /DUNCANNON	€360,000	€290,000	€250,000	**
Fethard	€290,000	€260,000	**	**
Ballycullane	€275,000	€240,000	€230,000	**
Wellingtonbridge	€275,000	€225,000	€170,000	**

WEXFORD DISTRICT

WEXFORD TOWN	€380,000	€230,000 to €270,000	€200,000 to €240,000	€190,000 to €260,000
MURNTOWN/ PIERCESTOWN	€310,000	**	**	**
Rosslare Area	€330,000	€290,000	€270,000	€230,000
Kilmore Quay	**	€300,000	**	**
Taghmon	**	**	€175,000	**
Castlebridge/ Curracloe	€380,000	€270,000	€225,000	**

2. Average affordability gap is €115,000.00.

Based on this result, the following conclusions can be made:

1. The average house price in the County is stretching beyond the means of a segment of the population, and the gap is widening. The demand for affordable houses will rise and forecasts must accommodate same.
2. Those who are unable to acquire houses but have a desire for home ownership, require support and subsidy from their Housing Authorities and this requirement will continue into the future.
3. This analysis is based on averages and a Countywide focus, but the demand is more localised inside the County with particular towns and districts experiencing greater need than others.
4. There are a range of housing solutions available to meet the demand.

Table 14 - Forecast of Affordable Housing Demand 2006 to 2011

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2013
Growth % Projection	-	19%	24%	29%	34%	38%	42%
Growth Projection	-	100	125	150	175	200	225

HOUSING STRATEGY

5. Housing Supply:

Previous chapters of this Strategy have set out the legislative requirements, national and local housing policy and the demand for Local Authority housing supports in the County.

It is important to deal with the supply of housing to Local Authority applicants and also to the conditions that apply to the process of assisting those with a housing need.

In general, housing supply should be responsive to housing demand by:

1. Strategic and General Responses, by developing a range of Schemes, programmes and projects which satisfy the need.
2. Specific and Individual Responses, by developing individual housing solutions and focusing on the particular needs of particular groups such as the Elderly and the Disabled.

Housing supply is primarily driven by the availability of resources and as such is difficult to predict or plan. Many complex factors affect the supply of housing, such as:

- Current Local Authority rented stock and its condition;
- Current Local Authority landbank and land availability in the market;
- Supply of necessary infrastructure to develop housing land;
- Diversity of needs e.g. range of house types and special needs;
- Availability of Central Government Funding;
- Availability of local staffing resources and expertise;
- Regulatory processes e.g. Department Approvals and Part VIII.

Therefore, housing supply has developed to respond to housing needs within an environment of competition for resources and by managing various constraints on delivery.

Depending on availability of resources and focusing on suitable sites, brings the added difficulty that:

- not all housing needs can be met on an equal opportunity basis;
- supply lead time means supply follows behind the existence of need;
- demand conditions can change before supply materialises.

Thus, in the area of housing services, like many other services, supply requires careful and constant management to ensure it provides the best possible solutions.

Current Local Authority Housing Stock:

The current stock and assets of the Housing Authorities are considerable and their levels and condition represent an opportunity to demonstrate the success of housing processes over the passage of time.

While the emphasis and intent of policy and programmes is seen in terms of new units of housing being provided, the importance of current stock can be overlooked. The initial solution to housing demand is in the delivery of new units and construction services but the housing needs continue into the longterm. People's needs evolve with life experiences and housing services often follow on from the initial solution e.g. providing extensions of existing stock to accommodate increased household numbers.

Vacancies arise from time to time in stock, which offer opportunity to rehouse applicants, and stock turnover is an important part of housing supply. Some housing services, such as affordable housing, offer better terms to existing tenants who surrender their rented units to avail of ownership of an affordable unit, and these arrangements create increased vacancies in stock.

Existing stock requires repair and maintenance, and the Local Authorities manage this need by two main approaches:-

- Planned Maintenance Programme - for major upgrades
- Response Maintenance Programme - for minor repairs

The Planned Maintenance Programme, established in each of the Housing Authorities has the objective to bring all stock up to modern standards over a number of years. The overall cost for all the Local Authorities will be in excess of €10m and accordingly required a finance plan to fund same. The primary source of the Capital required was identified as the Part V fund, resourced from financial contributions agreed and paid on developments to which Part V applied. The sanction of the DoEH&LG has been received to using €1.194m of Part V funds on the Planned Maintenance Programmes to date and sanction has been sought for the same use for €3.402m committed to the initial phases of the programmes and estimated of future phases.

The Response Maintenance Programmes of the four Housing Authorities are funded primarily from annual revenue budget provisions.

Some grants are available for planned improvements to Local Authority stock, in particular the Long Term Voids Scheme and Remedial Works Scheme. The former offers support to upgrade units vacant for over six months due to the

need for extensive repairs. The latter offers support to upgrade blocks of units and their surrounding area in a systematic manner. The result of the above programmes is that vacancies can be relet quicker and the general stock kept in good structural condition and standard, thus making the units on offer to housing applicants, more desirable and therefore reducing housing demand.

The current stock levels are as follows:-

Table 15

LA Rented	1 Bed	2	3	4	Others*	Mobiles	Total
Wexford County Council	72	384	1354	69	91	30	2000
Wexford Borough Council	98	267	363	12	-	-	740
New Ross Town Council	41	120	246	20	-	-	427
Enniscorthy Town Council	25	85	251	9	-	-	370
Sub Total	236	856	2214	110	91	30	3537
Voluntary Housing	117	108	191	16	101	-	533
Total Stock	353	964	2405	126	192	30	4070

Others* includes 5 Bed, 6 bed and Repairs in Lieu of Rehousing where the client is still making repayments.

It is the clear objective to bring all Local Authority stock in the County to a high level of standard and facility and the following Schemes are designed to achieve same. It is planned to improve the stock health over time by the following Schemes:-

- Planned Maintenance Programme
- Response Maintenance Programme
- Central Heating Programme
- Longterm Voids Programme
- Remedial Schemes Programme
- Estate Enhancement Programme
- Extensions to Houses Programme
- Special Needs Enhancement Programme

Landbank:

The supply of housing and communal facilities depends on a number of resources being available and fit for purpose, at the right time.

The most basic resource required for the construction of houses and communal facilities is land and its services. Accordingly, Local Authorities have traditionally acquired and maintained a landbank or a reserve of land for future housing. However, with the growth in housing production in the County in recent years, Local Authorities have experienced increased competition in securing new additional holdings to augment the landbanks. This has occurred also during a major escalation in the supply of public housing and an expansion in the range of housing services and housing solutions on offer.

The result has been a dwindling in landbanks and their near exhaustion, in particular, in the Urban Authorities.

To respond to these developments, the Wexford Local Authorities have adapted by sharing land resources, negotiating house supply under turnkey contracts where the Contractor supplies the land, and using the Part V negotiations to secure zoned housing land that has come through the planning process.

When Local Authorities do contract to acquire land for housing, it has become more difficult to offer a fair and reasonable price based on value, as the market for housing land has experienced an extraordinary level of activity in recent years and competition has been fierce. It should be borne in mind that Local Authorities must seek Value for Money, justify the land price to the DoEH&LG, stay within set price ceilings, and also strive to keep the sale price of affordable units and sites at prices that suit the finances of applicants

The current landbank available for Housing is as follows:-

Table 16 -Land Bank of Wexford Local Authorities September 2006

Area	Hectares	Potential No. of Units
Wexford County Council Total	<u>81.61</u>	<u>1067</u>
Wexford Borough Council	0.2	5
Enniscorthy Town Council	7.08	170
New Ross Town Council	4.5	120
Part V Lands to be Acquired	9	225
Total	102.39	1587

It should be noted that:-

1. Locations of available land do not necessarily match the location of housing needs
2. Land can only be used when necessary services are available or in progress i.e.
 - Roads
 - Water Services
 - Power Services
3. Not all land can yield the same amount of units per hectare due to its topology, location and layout.

The Wexford Local Authorities also support and encourage the Voluntary Housing Sector in providing housing, with a strategy of focusing on the needs of the Elderly, the Disabled and the Homeless. In recent years, a number of worthwhile voluntary housing projects have experienced land availability issues that have been an obstacle to progress. To overcome this difficulty, the Local Authorities have responded by making land and sites available to the Voluntary Sector so as to bring projects to fruition, e.g. Oylegate, Coolcotts and Hewittsland. This worthwhile approach does create added pressure on the Local Authorities' resources.

Current best practice in public housing requires that estates and layouts should contain social and communal elements such as community centres, playgrounds and/or sport facilities, open spaces and arts features. All these facilities are worthwhile and should be encouraged, however land is required and this adds to the pressure on the landbank.

Supply Constraints:

The Housing Programme of the four Housing Authorities is planned to meet the housing needs as far as possible. Each year an extensive programme is developed and submitted for approval to the DoE&HLG, which is generally supported by capital resources. A process of design, budgeting and approvals follow with the clear expectation that the construction contracts commence in that year. This is usually achieved and units subsequently constructed.

With the increase in housing productivity and general increase in the construction industry, competition arises for resources. The ability of the Local Authorities to reach targets on new house starts and completions has been strained by supply constraints. The most critical constraints are:-

1. Availability of Land
2. Infrastructural Services (Roads, Water, Sewers, Power)
3. Suitable and Competent Contractors
4. Human Resource

It is important to acknowledge the existence of supply constraints and manage to overcome them. However, some supply constraints become obstacles to housing supply, with the result that housing solutions are not available to alleviate housing needs. In practice, some areas of the County have housing projects delayed due to the time required for services to materialise. Specific services such as housing grants are experiencing delays due to some of the above constraints.

To overcome this problem, a number of actions have been taken:-

1. Use of Part V to secure land and/or units.
2. Housing Projects incorporate service provision in the construction contracts.
3. Expanding the range of Contractors.
4. Outsourcing of specialist tasks and using Design and Build Contracts.

Multi-Annual Programming:

A Five-Year Action Plan for Social and Affordable Housing was made by the four Housing Authorities in June 2004. A mid-term review of the Plan was carried out in July 2006. Both the Five-Year Plan and the mid-term review were approved by the Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

The Five-Year Plan contains the following:-

- Assessment of Social and Affordable Housing Need.
- Strategic Housing Objectives.
- Range of Local Housing Policies.
- Actions to improve Social Inclusion.
- Land Availability and Infrastructure.
- Provision of:
 - Social Houses and Services
 - Housing & Services for the Elderly, the Disabled, Homeless & Travellers
 - Affordable Housing

The Plan estimates the overall housing need and a series of annual targets to meet that need, as follows:

Table 17 – Five Year Plan, 2004 – 2008, Overall Housing Demand and Supply

Housing Demand				Housing Supply					
	Socials	Affordables	Total	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total
Wexford Co.	1,884	312	2,196	348	413	590	529	551	2,431
Wexford Borough	433	-	433	37	70	60	134	128	429
New Ross T.C.	205	-	205	48	68	65	66	66	313
E'corthy T.C.	270	-	270	31	35	40	67	53	226
Totals	2,792	312	3,104	464	586	755	796	798	3,399

The Plan therefore set out to satisfy the housing demand, and above it, in the five years. These supply figures only refer to new units and casual vacancies in stock and do not account for a range of other housing solutions that also satisfy part of the housing need e.g. extensions, repairs-in-lieu of housing, and loans and grants.

The review of the Five-Year Plan, carried out in July 2006, assessed the County's performance compared to what had been planned. The overall result was that the Plan set out to deliver 2,537 housing solutions to 31.12.2006 and the actual performance, by 31.12.2006, is expected to be 2,218 or 88% across thirteen housing services. The most significant deviation was on Voluntary Housing, where a shortfall of 203 units has arisen, which accounts for 8% of the overall target. The remaining shortfall of 4% of target is accounted for in applications for loans, and grants being less than expected.

Table 18
Performance –v- Target 2004 to 2006

		Target 2004 - 2006	Achieved/Planned 2004 - 2006
New House Starts	Socials	800	810
	Affordables	286	283
	Voluntaries	27	94
Other Housing Functions	Extensions	45	35
	Repairs in Lieu	31	31
	Sale of Sites	37	36
	Casual Vacancies	376	353
	RAS Transfers	125	125
	Shared Ownership	45	31
	DPG	255	224
	ERG	139	115
	Travellers	67	59
	Homeless	34	22
Total		2,537	2,218

The review also advised on the progress and contribution Part V has had in housing, the introduction and progress of the Rental Accommodation Scheme and the dependence on services and the constraints due to service bottlenecks.

Both the Plan and its review address the landbank and the need for suitable land for housing. The DoEH&LG has in 2006, requested Local Authorities to develop a Land Management Strategy and to report on serviced land availability. In overall terms, there is 41.5 hectares of housing land serviced at July 2006, which would accommodate 761 housing units. In general terms, the targets in the Five-Year Plan could be met but these lands would not deliver units where they were needed. The advice on developing the Land Management Strategy also states that Local Authorities should acquire housing land before it is zoned in Development Plans.

Social Housing:

Social housing refers to the provision of Local Authority units on weekly tenancies to applicants and their households.

Local Authorities have been providing rented housing since the 1880s. Currently, the Local Authorities offer a range of house types for rent:-

- Detached dwellings
- Semi-detached dwellings
- Terraced dwellings
- Duplex dwellings
- Apartments
- Mobile homes

The range of housing projects varies greatly, from one-off rural housing to large urban schemes. The units vary in design, size and functionality, from 1 bed to 4 + beds, single-storey to multi-storey, standard accommodation to special needs accommodation to sheltered housing.

With strong demand for housing services, and the dispersed nature of the demand, it can be said with certainty that the Wexford Local Authorities will continue to deliver social housing into the future.

Affordable Housing:

Affordable housing refers to the provision of housing by supply and sale of units to applicants and their households. Local Authorities have provided units and sites for sale since the 1930s. Currently, the Local Authorities operate through three main Schemes:-

- Subsidised Site Scheme
- 1999 Affordable Housing Scheme
- Affordable Housing Initiative

These Schemes serve to deliver on the policy to promote owner occupation and to respond to the pressure on persons of lower incomes to meet the cost of houses in the market, especially first-time buyers. In recent years, there has been a growing demand to offer houses to people who can afford to buy houses and pay mortgages but at prices below the market prices.

The Schemes deliver a range of housing solutions, as follows:-

- ❖ Houses
- ❖ Serviced Housing Sites
- ❖ Subsidised House Loans
- ❖ Subsidies on site costs.

A range of house types and sites are available:-

- Sites for detached houses
- Rural sites
- Detached and semi-detached houses

Finance and loan subsidies are available to those who choose to use the Local Authority Loans & Grants services.

The capital subsidy, which acts as a discount from the market price, is a charge on the property and is subject to certain time limits and terms.

The revenue or loan repayment subsidy, acts as a direct support to low income earners, to help make the repayments, and is subject to time limits and terms.

Voluntary Housing:

Voluntary Housing refers to the provision of housing by the Voluntary or Community Sector for persons who have applied for Local Authority housing and persons in need but not necessarily Local Authority Applicants.

The Voluntary Housing Associations, local or national, must be recognised and approved by the DoEH&LG. They must offer tenancies to Local Authority Applicants, of 75% of the units, and the balance to their Applicants, of 25% of the units. All tenants must be certified as being in need of housing.

If the Local Authority agrees, the Voluntary Housing Association, may allocate up to 25% of the units to Irish Nationals who live abroad and wish to return home to reside here. If this option is agreed, the Local Authority allocation reduces to 50% of the units. The Safe Home Initiative assists with the demand and assessment of ex-patriots who wish to apply for housing from abroad.

The current stock of Voluntary Housing Schemes in County Wexford is shown on the following Table:

Table 18 A

Current Voluntary Housing Stock in County Wexford.

Voluntary Housing Association	Housing Authority Area	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	Special Needs	Total
Cluid	New Ross	-	-	24	-	-	120
	Gorey	14	13	10	-	-	
	Enniscorthy	-	-	6	6	-	
	Ferns	-	-	8	10	-	
	Faythe, Wexford	-	4	25	-	-	
Respond	Ferns	-	-	8	-	-	251
	Enniscorthy	10	12	65	10	8	
	New Ross	18	-	28	6	-	
	Wexford.	20	22	19	-	25	
St. Vincent de Paul	Gorey	7	13	-	-	-	52
	Wexford	21	11	-	-	-	

Tagoat Community	Tagoat Tagoat	- 10	2 -	8 -	- -	- -	20
Community Workshop	Enniscorthy	-	-	-	-	20	20
Community Workshop	New Ross	3	-	-	-	6	9
St. Aidans	Gorey	-	-	-	-	18	18
New Dawn Crossabeg	Wexford	-	-	-	-	9	9
Irish Society for Autism, Kilmore	Wexford	-	-	-	-	7	7
Camphill Communities, Ballymoney	Gorey	-	-	-	-	13	13
Womens' Refuge	Wexford	-	-	-	-	4	4
Ramsgrange Senior Citizens Concern Ltd.	New Ross	8	2	-	-	-	10
Grantstown	New Ross	-	24	-	-	-	24
Enniscorthy Community Housing Ltd.	Enniscorthy	16	9	-	-	-	25
Totals		127	112	201	32	110	582

Currently, the Local Authorities operate two main Schemes:

- Loan Subsidy Scheme
- Capital Assistance Scheme

The Loan Subsidy Scheme is operated by Wexford County Council and Wexford Borough Council. The Scheme allows the Voluntary Housing Associations to propose to provide rented housing units, usually standard housing. The State provides 100% funding by way of loan, the repayment of which is fully subsidised by the DoEH&LG to the Local Authority, for as long as the houses are continued to be rented to those in need of housing. Such proposals must be assessed and approved by the Local Authority prior to the submission to the Department.

The Capital Assistance Scheme is operated by Wexford County Council and Wexford Borough Council. The Scheme allows the Voluntary Housing Association to propose to provide housing units for persons with special needs such as the Disabled, the Elderly and the Homeless.

The State provides 95% funding by way of grant, charged on the property, which is not repayable, for as long as the units are continued to be rented to those in need of housing.

These Schemes deliver a range of housing solutions, as follows:-

- Standard Housing Units
- Hostel-Type Units
- High Support Units
- Sheltered Housing Units

These solutions are specifically designed to suit the identified needs and the differences between them can be described as units where the applicant is capable of independent living and units where the Applicant requires support for dealing with disabilities, medical conditions and personal capabilities. The differences in the definitions tend to be blurred.

To bring clarity to the arrangements with the Voluntary Sector, Wexford County Council decided in July 2003 to prioritise Voluntary Housing Schemes to ensure people in greatest need are adequately accommodated. Accordingly, a policy is in place that gives priority to the special needs of the Elderly, the Homeless and the Disabled.

Other Housing Solutions:

While the provision of social, affordable and voluntary housing constitutes the greatest part of new accommodation provision, a range of other housing solutions are available to those in need. The solutions offer more tailored solutions to individual or special needs. In assessing needs, the Local Authorities are mindful of which solutions solve the housing need better and accordingly use a variety of approaches.

Housing Grants:

Two Schemes are available where the Local Authorities provide support and funding by way of grant. Applicants who do not necessarily require full housing accommodation from the Local Authority, can own their property and can propose a wide range of adaptations/extensions to their homes. Both Schemes were reviewed in 2003.

The Disabled Persons Grant Scheme is administered on a Countywide basis by Wexford County Council. The general terms of the Scheme are as follows:-

- Available to persons who are physically or mentally handicapped.
- Works must be for applicant's proper accommodation or treatment.
- Regard is taken of means

The funding of this Scheme is shared between the DoEH&LG and the Local Authorities on a 66% / 34% basis. The DoEH&LG provide an allocation of capital each year which determines the total fund available.

Demand for this Scheme has varied substantially since 2001 and the County Council has responded by increasing the annual budget, prioritising on those with the greatest need and adapting changes to the administration of applications. These responses have allowed the County Council the opportunity to respond to increased demand, expand the range of applicants who can apply and continue to offer the service at all times since 2001.

The following table shows the level of activity 2001 to 2006:

Table 19 – Disabled Persons Grants

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
No. of Approvals	18	12	37	58	96	88
Annual Budget	€200,000	€500,000	€650,000	€750,000	€750,000	€750,000
Average Grant	€11,047	€11,716	€10,756	€8,590	€7,926	€10,741

The Essential Repairs Grant Scheme is administered on a Countywide basis by Wexford County Council. The general terms of the Scheme are as follows:-

- Available to persons over 65 years of age
- Works must prolong the useful life of the house
- Regard is taken of means

The funding of this Scheme is shared between the DoEH&LG and the Local Authorities on a 66% / 34% basis. The DoEH&LG provides an annual allocation of capital which determines the total fund available.

Works under this Scheme must be essential and must include work to roofs, walls and chimneys. Each application is assessed to ensure works prolong the useful life of the dwelling and provision of facilities is also encouraged.

The following Table shows the level of activity 2001 to 2006.

Table 20 - Essential Repairs Grants

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
No. of Approvals	10	5	24	30	40	52
Annual Budget	€100,000	€100,000	€200,000	€293,000	€293,000	€300,000
Average Grant	€9,523	€6,158	€8,330	€7,970	€8,640	€7,500

Both Schemes are expected to continue into the future. The DoEH&LG have initiated a national review of the DPG Scheme and this is expected to bring some changes in the focus and approach. The HSE operate the “Housing Aid for the Elderly” Scheme and consideration is being given to transferring this Scheme to the Local Authorities in the foreseeable future.

Improvement Works in Lieu of Housing:

This Scheme is administered by the Housing Authorities in the County. The Scheme is available to housing applicants to render their current accommodation fit for habitation, thus removing their need for rehousing.

The general terms of the Scheme are:-

- Maximum funding of €75K.
- Dwelling must be owned by the applicant or their family.
- A mortgage is made with modest repayments over 15 years.

The Scheme is funded by the DoEH&LG as part of the Housing Construction Programme.

Works under this Scheme can be varied but must bring the current accommodation up to standard and improve the dwelling at reasonable expense.

The following Table shows the level of activity 2001 to 2006.

Table 21 - Improvement Works In Lieu

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
No. of Approvals	9	7	10	6	8	1
Annual Budget	€124,942	€173,400	€128,400	€291,900	€389,123	€389,000
Average Grant	€26,540	€26,733	€12,489	€32,893	€55,888	€33,212

Improvements to Local Authority Social Housing Stock.

A number of Schemes are available to assist existing tenants, whose circumstances have changed, and where a new housing need emerges over time. These Schemes offer the flexibility to improve current accommodation

and respond to current needs, thus offering a solution at the current accommodation without resorting to rehousing in other locations.

The Schemes are as follows:-

House Extensions Programme:

This Programme provides necessary extensions to rented houses to accommodate a variety of needs. The most common needs are:-

- ❖ Increased family size
- ❖ Moral overcrowding, i.e. adolescents and adults of opposite sex sharing bedrooms.
- ❖ Carers who accommodate relatives in their home.
- ❖ Facilities for family members who have special needs.
- ❖ Modern standards required to the accommodation.

The Programme is funded by the DoEH&LG as part of the Housing Construction Programme, and is administered by each of the Housing Authorities. The following Table shows the level of activity 2001 to 2006.

Table 22 - Extensions

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
No. of Approvals	12	10	8	6	13	4
Annual Budget	€468,914	€513,400	€465,600	€519,582	€511,200	€720,000
Average Grant	€45,139	€63,223	€65,670	€66,670	€54,538	€48,800

Central Heating Programme:

This Programme provides dual heating systems to rented houses to provide modern convenience in the home. The Programme is administered by each of the Housing Authorities.

The overall aim of this Programme is to have installed dual heating systems in all units by the end of 2008. The Programme was initiated in 2004.

Funding for this Programme is available from the DoEH&LG by grant, up to €5,600 per unit or 80% of the cost, whichever is the lesser. The balance of 20% or more, is made up from the Local Authorities revenue resources.

The following Table shows the level of activity 2004 to 2006.

Table 23 - Central Heating

	2004	2005	2006	Total
Wexford County Council	40	80	160	280
Wexford Borough Council	8	40	100	148
New Ross Town Council	25	44	50	119
Enniscorthy Town Council	0	6	80	86
	73	170	390	633

The installations under this Programme involve a number of related works as follows:-

- Attic and Wall Insulation
- Draught Proofing
- Smoke Detectors & Electrical Inspection
- Dual Fired Heating System

It is anticipated that the Programme will continue into 2007 and 2008, with all units having the installations complete by the end of 2008.

Planned Maintenance Programme

This Programme provides major refurbishment and repairs to rented houses to bring all stock up to modern standards and to respond to a historic backlog of major repairs requests. The Programme follows a systematic and planned response to upgrade all stock.

The Programme is administered in each of the Housing Authorities. The steps to delivering the Programme are as follows:-

- Detailed Inspection and Audit of all rented units;
- Specification of works required;
- Estimation of Cost
- Phasing of Works and Annual Programme.

Emergency Housing:

A range of responses are available to assist persons who are in emergency situations and are administered by each of the Housing Authorities.

Emergency needs arise from a range of situations:

- House Fires
- Medical Circumstances
- Family disputes
- Evictions

The range of responses are as follows:-

- ❖ Provision of mobile homes
- ❖ Private Rented Dwellings
- ❖ Rehousing in other stock
- ❖ B&Bs/Guesthouses
- ❖ Hostels/Sheltered Housing
- ❖ Priority Refurbishment/ Rebuild/ Extensions

The demand for emergency housing is difficult to forecast and each person's situation and need is unique. Accordingly, the Local Authorities prepare by keeping all the various housing schemes and programmes flexible and in a state of preparation so as to deliver immediate support, followed by more permanent solutions.

Homeless Need:

A range of responses are available to assist persons who are homeless and are administered by each of the Housing Authorities.

People find themselves homeless for a variety of reasons:-

- Family Breakup
- High Rents
- Addictions
- Mental Health

The range of responses are as follows:-

- Hostels / Sheltered Housing
- B&Bs/Guesthouses
- Private Rented Dwellings
- Health Institutions

The demand for services for homeless persons is difficult to forecast and each person's need and situation is unique. However, recent analysis of the number of persons who presented as homeless and sought assistance, is as follows:-

Table 24 - Homeless Persons April 2005 to March 2006

District	Number of Individuals in Need
Wexford	96
Enniscorthy	46
New Ross	5
Gorey	6
Total	153

Currently the supply of accommodation for homeless persons is focused primarily on Voluntary Housing Schemes, where both accommodation and support is provided. The HSE are involved in supporting such accommodation with resources and services.

Table 25 - Current and Proposed Accommodation for Homeless Persons

	District	Agent	No. of Units
Current Schemes	Wexford	St. Vincent de Paul	32
		Paul	4
		Women's Refuge	3
		St. Vincent de Paul	
Schemes in Progress	Gorey	St. Vincent de Paul	6
Schemes in Planning	New Ross	Focus Ireland & Cluid	11

The current local Strategy is embodied in "An Integrated Strategy for Homelessness in County Wexford – 20001 to 2004". A national review of the Implementation of Homeless Strategies was carried out by the DoEH&LG and published in February 2006. A SouthEast Regional Strategy was concluded in March 2006.

To respond to both the national review and the regional strategy, a report was presented to the County Wexford Homeless Forum in May 2006. A range of issues were considered and a series of recommendations made, to bring clarity and direction to the issue and response to Homelessness in the County.

Traveller Accommodation:

Each of the four Housing Authorities provides housing to members of the Traveller Community who have a housing need. County Wexford Local Authorities have been responding to this need over a long number of years.

Specific attention and resources are given to the housing of Travellers who are in need. Local Authorities are required to assess this specific need and adopt a Traveller Accommodation Programme which sets out the detailed proposals on housing.

The County Wexford Traveller Accommodation Programme 2005 to 2008, was adopted in April 2005 and contains the following main provisions:-

- The Programme is Countywide and is agreed by the two Local Authorities involved, Wexford County Council and Wexford Borough Council.
- Housing need, at September 2005, was established at 111 households or 26% of the Traveller population in the County.
- Census of Traveller families in County Wexford and their accommodation.
- Proposals to provide accommodation for those in need, i.e. 111 households.
- Details of current accommodation available from Local Authorities for Travellers.
- Standard Local Authority social housing would accommodate most of the need.

Since the adoption of the Programme in 2005, the results have shown that:

12 households have been rehoused.

9 new units are in construction, specifically for Travellers.

6 existing units are being refurbished.

It can be anticipated that with the success of the Traveller Accommodation Programmes and the clear choice of the majority of Travellers to seek standard housing, that the current Programme serves the needs of Travellers in County Wexford.

HOUSING STRATEGY

6. Market Analysis:

To understand and respond to current housing need in the County and to develop meaningful forecasts of such need into the future, it is important to form some opinion on the housing market in the County.

The housing market can be segmented into two main areas, the rental market and the house sale market. While the houses are generally produced as units for sale, they may be used by Owner-occupiers or rented by the Owners to Tenants. It has become a pattern in housing supply over recent years that a proportion of new houses are offered to the rental market. Another pattern in housing supply has been the new houses offered to the holiday home market.

Analysis of house completions and planning permissions granted in County Wexford, shows a significant increase in supply since 2001. However, the units supplied are allocated to a variety of users, as follows:-

- Owner- Occupier
- Tenant – Occupier
- Holiday-Home

Accordingly, the overall housing supply does not necessarily satisfy the local demand for housing and a significant sector of the population is unable to avail of the offers present in the market.

Analysis of Census data on household types in the County, shows that 93% of all households occupy terraced, semi-detached or detached units (2002 Census). This analysis shows that the demand for housing continues to follow traditional patterns, and Local Authority housing supply mirrors those patterns, in that Local Authorities predominately supply houses similar to those findings.

To analyse, forecast and plan the delivery of Local Authority housing, it is required that this Strategy consider the following:-

- Availability of housing that is affordable
- Social and affordable housing needs
- Housing of people with special needs
- Support access to housing by first-time buyers and lower income groups
- Counteract undue social segregation in housing

The principal issues for the Local Authorities are the availability and affordability of housing. Persons who are unable to obtain or acquire housing suitable to

their needs and at a price they can afford, are entitled to seek support from their Local Authority.

The availability of suitable housing in County Wexford is problematic for lower income groups, first-time buyers and those with special needs. The housing market has delivered significant increased productivity over the past decade but responds to demand conditions, and not necessarily the needs for housing that the Local Authorities are obliged to respond to. In a general sense, housing is available but not necessarily in the locations required by the Applicants for Local Authority housing. Also, in recent years the quality of housing has improved and the issues housing Applicants face are of affordability, location and special needs facilities, rather than issues of quality, fitness and size of houses which were principal issues in the past. Accordingly, it is assumed that housing is available in County Wexford but not always in the right location and at an affordable price to Applicants for Local Authority services.

The affordability of suitable housing in County Wexford has become the principal issue for lower income groups, first-time buyers and those with special needs. Analysis of the rental and sale market in County Wexford has been conducted to inform this Strategy and assist in determining housing plans for the future.

In the rental market in County Wexford, analysis shows that in 2002, there were 3,070 private rented dwellings in the County, of which 63% had a weekly rent greater than €100. As the 2006 census data is not yet available, it is not yet possible to determine the current market data. However, data on the Rental Subsidy Scheme (administered by the HSE) and on the Rental Accommodation Scheme (administered by the County Council) show that in total 2,050 private rented dwellings are covered by the two Schemes and the average rent of the region is €150 per week.

Further analysis of disposable incomes in County Wexford shows that the average disposal income per person is behind the national average. For low income groups and persons setting up a home for the first time, the cost of rental accommodation would be more difficult than what would be expected accordingly.

It can be stated that in the rental market in the County, there is an affordability issue. For persons in low income groups, persons forming households for the first time and for persons with special needs, the rental affordability gap is significant. Accordingly, such persons are allocated rent supports under the RSS and RAS. Such supports are subsidies which act to bridge the affordability gap between the market price and what rent the Tenant can afford.

In the house sale market in County Wexford, analysis shows that 82% of all dwellings in 2002 were owner occupier and that 28% of all dwellings were built from 1991 to 2002. As the 2006 Census data is not yet available, it is not possible to determine the current market data. However, it is estimated that in

2006 there are 45,700 dwellings in the County, an increase of 8,285 or 22% between 2002 and 2006. House completions data shows that in 2005 - 3,180 dwellings were completed or 7.5% increase each year in the County in the overall housing stock.

It can be stated in general that the availability of houses on the sale market is not a major issue as the data shows new houses are being built to respond to demand. This is not to say that there are no constraints to supply, as it is well accepted that the availability of serviced zoned housing land, and how and when it is being released, is an issue. However, these issues are beyond the scope of this Housing Strategy.

It is the availability of suitable housing for persons establishing homes for the first time and in particular for those in the lower income groups and those with special needs which is problematic. Therefore, the focus for the Housing Authorities is directed towards a segment of the market where housing is required to satisfy assessed needs, in locations close to where the need arises and to a standard that provides the convenience required.

To respond to the issue of the availability gap, the Housing Authorities promote Programmes that provide social and affordable housing, designed to accommodate the assessed need, with a spatial spread across the County, and to a standard that meets the needs as far as is possible.

It is the affordability of housing that is the main issue for first-time buyers and low-income groups and for those with special needs. It must be accepted that for many persons in these groups, the prospect of acquiring the necessary capital and financing the subsequent repayments, is beyond their current means and accordingly, they should be directed towards other housing options of which social housing would be the most suitable solution. However, for many persons in these groups, housing solutions can be made available and these are generally known as affordable housing.

To assess the affordability of housing in the market, this Strategy focuses on the circumstances faced by those persons in the groups outlined above, who in general have the motivation to achieve home-ownership but whose resources can not reach the prices of houses in the market.

Many factors influence the supply and demand for housing for first-time buyers in County Wexford.

On the demand side, the most important influences are:-

- Location** - Where people want to and need to live
- Demographics** - Increased population in the County
 - Increased migration into the County
- Land Supply** - Where houses can be built

What makes housing rather unique in economic terms are:

- Houses vary in age, size, location and quality
- Houses are used for investment, holidays and homes
- House prices are a large multiple of personal income
- Houses take time to construct

On the supply side, the most important influences are:-

- Availability of Land
- Amount of housing offered for sale

In the 2004 review of the current Housing Strategy, an informal market analysis was undertaken. In 2003, the analysis showed that the average price of a 3 x bed, semi-detached house in County Wexford was €170,000. For the persons who the Local Authorities aim to support, in 2004, the affordability gap for the average single income applicant was estimated at €55,000. It was also noted that from 1996 to 2003, house prices had increased in County Wexford by 168% and that it was expected prices would continue to rise in 2004 and 2005. Accordingly, it was decided that affordable housing output was required to keep pace with the established and projected demand.

The affordability gap is the real issue for first-time buyers and as a consequence for the Housing Authorities. It is based on the maximum Local Authority loan available to the average Applicant on average income, and at the average house price. In simple terms, it is the gap between the average price and the average loan available. The gap is significant as it cannot be bridged without supply or subsidy.

In 2003, it was expected that prices would rise by 5% to 8% in 2004 and 2005. The actual national price, 2004 to 2006 was 38%. Today, the average price of a house, outside Dublin, is €262,000. The recent market analysis, based on an informal house price survey, can be compared to the 2003 survey. The results are shown on the following Table:-

Table 26 - House Price Survey, by District, 2004 and 2006.

District	3 x Bedroomed Semi-Detached		2 / 3 x Bedroomed Terraced	
	Price %Increase	2006	Price %Increase	2006
Gorey	€325,000	+ 58%	€295,000	+ 58%
Enniscorthy	€325,000	+ 47%	€185,000	+ 30%
New Ross	€260,000	+ 63%	€240,000	+ 89%

Wexford	€270,000	+ 49%	€240,000	+ 48%
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This analysis estimates the affordability gap for first-time buyers, based on a random sample of fifty Applicants, is €80,000 for a 2 x bedroomed and €150,000 for a 3 x bedroomed. To respond to the need for Affordable Houses, the Wexford Local Authorities must create mechanisms to bridge the affordability gap.

HOUSING STRATEGY

7. Forecasts of Housing Needs:

This Strategy is required to look at both current and likely future needs and in particular, specified special needs. It is the needs that are required during the period of the County Development Plan that are to be considered.

In previous chapters, the following have been provided:

- **Housing Demand Analysis:**

Outline of the drivers of need, the range of housing services available, choices available to Applicants, categorisation of need, Needs Assessments, Social Housing Demand, Affordable Housing Demand.

- **Housing Supply Analysis:**

Outline of the drivers of supply, current housing stock, Local Authority Landbank, Supply Constraints, Multi-Annual Programming, Social Housing Supply, Affordable Housing Supply, Voluntary Housing Supply, other Housing Solutions, Emergency Housing, Traveller Accommodation.

- **Housing Market Analysis:**

Market Segments, Availability of Housing, Affordability of Housing, Rental Market, Sale Market, Comparisons to 2003 Analysis, Affordability Gap.

This chapter brings the results outlined above together, so as to make forecasts of Needs and Supply of Local Authority housing solutions, in the period 2007 to 2013 i.e. the period of the Development Plan.

Social Housing Forecasts:

Chapter 4 outlines the gross demand for social housing and the factors which affect it.

Table 6 shows the growth of gross demand since 1996.

Table 6 - Assessments of Demand

	1996	1999	2002	2004	2005	2006
Wex County Council	543	699	992	1748	1350	1927
Wexford Borough Council	319	337	433	448	468	824
New Ross Town Council	116	133	376	395	199	314
Enniscorthy Town Council	164	223	267	267	284	529
Total	1142	1392	2068	2858	2301	3594
% Increase		21.89%	48.56%	38.20%	-19.49%	54.06%
% Increase Cumulative		21.89%	81.08%	150.26%	101.48%	210.42%

Table 7 shows the growth in population since 1986 and forecasts growth to 2016.

	1986	1991	1996	2002	2006	2011(E)	2016(E)
	102,552	102,069	104,371	116,596	131,615	146,410	162,240
%Inc.	---	- 0.5%	+ 2%	+ 12%	+13%	+11%	+11%
%Inc Cumul.	---	-0.5%	+1.5%	+14%	+28%	+43%	+58%

Table 9 shows the change in household size since 1986 and forecasts the decline to 2016.

1986	1991	1996	2002	2006(E)	2011(E)	2016(E)
3.70	3.49	3.28	3.01	2.88	2.72	2.55

As stated in chapter 4, the gross current demand for social housing should be reduced to calculate the estimated net current demand on which future projections can be made. The result is that while the gross demand is shown in Table 6, at 3594, the net demand is estimated at 2710.

Table 11 shows the forecasted net demand, by applying a growth factor. The growth factor is based on the experienced growth since 1996 (**Table 6**), the decline in household sizes since 1986 (**Table 9**), the growth in population since 1986 (**Table 7**) and the cost of housing.

The demand for social housing is a reflection of applications for housing services and a range of solutions can be applied once detailed individual assessments are completed. Therefore, it must be noted that not all social housing demand will result in the provision of social housing units though the majority of Applicants will be offered rented Local Authority units or tenancies in private dwellings under the Rental Accommodation Scheme.

Table 11 - Forecast of Nett Social Housing Demand 2006 to 2011

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Growth Projection %	---	6.4%	6.7%	7.1%	7.5%	7.8%	8.2%
Growth Projection	---	175	185	195	205	215	225

Analysis of the average waiting time for social housing, shows the average for all Applicants to be 24.63 months, a marked reduction from previous years.

Table 27 Average Waiting Time by Electoral Area

Electoral Areas	Urbans – To be completed
Wexford Area – 19.48 months	
Gorey Area – 22.19 months	***
New Ross – 21.65 months	New Ross - 26.3 months
Enniscorthy – 33.56 months	

Based on the National Needs Assessment in March 2005, and experience in recent years, it can be anticipated that housing solutions will likely develop as per the Action Plan for Social and Affordable Housing 2004 – 2008.

Table 28 Housing Supply 2006 to 2008

	2006	2007	2008	Total
Socials	418	513	501	1,432
Voluntary	150	180	195	525
Affordable	184	98	100	382
DPG/ERG	134	144	149	427
Loans	15	15	15	45
Total	901	950	960	2,811

The planned outputs for Social, Voluntary and Affordable Housing, are based on estimates for direct build, vacancies and units provided under Part V.

Affordable Housing Forecasts:

Chapter 4 outlines the current demand for affordable housing and the factors which affect it.

Table 12 - Affordable Housing Demand

	AHI	99	Sale of Voids	Sale of Sites	Total
Wexford County Council	60	449	0	0	509
Wexford Borough Council	0	0	0	10	10
New Ross Town Council	0	0	2	0	2

Enniscorthy TownCouncil	0	2	0	0	2
Total	60	449	2	10	523

Table 14 - Forecast of Affordable Housing Demand 2006 to 2011

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Growth % Projection	-	19%	24%	29%	34%	38%
Growth Projection	-	100	125	150	175	200

The growth in population, change in household size and the many factors affecting the availability and affordability of houses in the market, will affect the demand for affordable housing.

Table 28 above sets out the likely development of affordable housing from 2006 to 2008. These estimates include units provided directly by the Local Authorities and those provided under Part V.

In chapter 6, the analysis of the housing market is outlined, which concludes that the affordability gap for first-time buyers is rising and is likely to continue to rise in the term of this Housing Strategy

Forecasts of other Housing Services:

As outlined in chapter 4, there are a range of options available to housing applicants, apart from social and affordability housing.

The most significant of these are:

- Rental Accommodation Scheme
- Disabled Persons Grants / Essential Repairs Grants
- Improvement Works in Lieu of Housing
- Improvement to Local Authority Housing Stock

Chapter 4 outlines the current demand for other housing services and the factors which affect it.

Enniscorthy Town Council	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	11
Total	11	11	10	13	13	14	16	88

Forecasts for Extensions to Local Authority houses are contained in the Five-Year Housing Action Plan and can be predicted beyond 2008 in light of experience.

Table 32 Forecasts of Extensions to Local Authority Houses 2006 to 2012

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Total
Wexford County Council	12	12	12	10	10	10	10	76
Wexford Borough Council	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	14
New Ross Town Council	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
Enniscorthy Town Council	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	4
Total	15	15	15	14	14	14	14	101

HOUSING STRATEGY

8. Policy Instruments to Respond to Need:

In previous chapters, the demand for housing services has been analysed and forecasts made of demand in the term of the County Development Plan. This analysis includes a commentary on the diverse range of factors which influence this demand and the socio-economic environment from which it arises. The Local Authorities are required to respond to housing need and in previous chapters the supply of housing services have been outlined and what is planned has been set out. This includes a commentary on the diverse range of factors which influence supply and the constraints faced by the Local Authorities in doing so.

It is important that Local Authority housing programmes and plans are seen as policy instruments that are designed to satisfy the need for services and show how the Local Authorities implement legislative and national policy obligations.

To assist in setting long-term objectives that arise from policy decisions, and indeed to develop local policy that directs housing activity, it is necessary to focus on a range of key issues that are fundamental to service delivery.

It is also necessary to reflect on the reality of long-term housing solutions being assumed as satisfying long-term needs and not just current needs.

Key Issues in Housing

As outlined in previous chapters, analysis of the environment in which housing demand and housing supply arise, lead to identifying and focusing on a number of key issues.

These are:-

Countywide Strategies:

Offer housing Applicants and the construction industry a number of benefits:

- Consistency of Approach
- Opportunity to satisfy needs and co-ordinate services
- Clarity for Applicants and Developers
- Priority in delivery of services and reaching supply targets
- Flexibility in making decisions

Affordability:

- Cost of housing, whether rented or purchased, must relate to the person's means.

If the market provides housing that meets people's needs and at a price they can afford, then the State, via the Local Authorities, may not need to intervene.

For persons in low-income groups, persons forming households for the first time and for persons with special needs, there is a significant affordability gap and supports are required to bridge the gap. These supports can be by short-term rent supplements or by Local Authority rents based on income or by long-term capital supports to help buy houses.

- It is contended that the affordability gap is widening and will continue to do so in the medium-term.


Range of Services:

- ❖ In line with legislation and national policy, Local Authorities offer a range of housing services with the overall aim of enabling every household to have available a dwelling of good quality, that suits its needs, in a good environment and at a tenure of its choice.
- ❖ Local Authorities offer housing solutions that provide remedy to applicant's housing needs.

It is critical that the range of housing solutions on offer are contemporary to the patterns of need that arise and that housing programmes are designed with a clear brief on the Applicant's needs.

Spatial Spread:

This Strategy is developed on a countywide basis, so as to manage the range of services in a consistent manner. National policy since 1991 has set broad objectives on housing that includes every household having a dwelling located in an acceptable environment. Local policy, contained in the Five-Year Housing Action Plan, has an objective of ensuring a dispersed pattern of housing provision throughout the County, so as to maintain rural and village settlement patterns. The 2001 Housing Strategy and its Review in 2004, contained a policy that as demand did not make match land availability, particularly in rural areas, the Local Authorities needed to spread housing supply to satisfy such demand as Part V, by its nature, could not be relied upon solely to satisfy local needs.



To satisfy need, regard must be had to people's location and where they choose and need to live. Accordingly, housing supply programmes are designed with a clear brief on the needs of the Applicants.

It is critical that housing supply has a spatial spread, throughout the County, so as to allow people live as close as possible to their location of choice and need.

Lifetime of Supply:

In assessing the housing needs of the range of groups and persons who seek assistance, it is required that accommodation offered is suitable to their needs. The Housing Authorities must also respond to changing housing needs and mitigate social segregation in housing. The latest National Policy statement of December 2005 has a central focus on building sustainable successful communities with key elements on increased housing supply, promotion of affordable accommodation, implementation of the Rental Accommodation Scheme, implementation of a programme of reforms by new legislation to involve new means of assessing need.

As stated in chapter 4, in accessing need for housing, it must be noted that people's circumstances change over time and while current circumstances are assessed, the housing solutions will continue well beyond individual's current needs.

It is also clearly evident that many people apply for long-term housing solutions so as to avail of short-term housing supports i.e. rent subsidies. This practice causes an over-demand for permanent social housing and the response is to introduce, under the Rental Accommodation Scheme, adequate medium-term housing.

In a general sense, housing supply should be responsive to housing demand conditions. However, long-term housing supply requires large investment and Local Authorities must be satisfied that they are solving the actual needs.

It is critical that the Housing Authorities view current housing needs in terms of the length of time the supply is designed for. It is appropriate to see housing supply as delivering short-term, medium-term and long-term solutions. By adopting such an approach, applicants' current circumstances would be considered and the housing solution provided would be tailored accordingly.

Term	Scheme	Solutions
Short-term Housing	Emergency Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mobile Homes - Guesthouses/B&Bs - Hostels - Priority DPGs/ERGs - Priority Repairs & Improvements - Priority Extensions & Special Needs Facilities.
	Temporary Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Private Rented - Casual Vacancies - Rent Subsidies (R.S.S.)
Medium-term Housing	Housing Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Disabled Persons Grants - Essential Repairs Grants
	Housing Loans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improvement Works-in-Lieu of Housing - Reconstruction Loans
	Social Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extensions to Houses - Sheltered Housing - High Support Housing - Rental Accommodation Scheme - Planned Maintenance Programmes - Housing Transfers
Long-term Housing	Housing Loans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - House Purchase Loans - House Erection Loans - Shared-Ownership Loans
	Social Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New House Construction - Voluntary Housing - Casual Vacancies
	Affordable Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - House Sales - Tenant Purchase Scheme - Loan Subsidies - Private Sites - Site Subsidies

It is critical that each of the above Schemes and housing solutions be seen as adequate housing accommodation based on person's needs.

HOUSING STRATEGY

9. Intervention Measures:

Having analysed the housing needs and the range of housing solutions and options available, it is proposed that certain key issues exist in the management of housing services, which require policy responses.

It can be presumed that the housing market, if left to its own devices, will not deliver the range of accommodation required to meet the County's requirements, without certain interventions that are designed to overcome the shortfalls.

The Housing Authorities are authorised and obliged to develop measures and programmes to assist the needs of low-income groups, first-time buyers and those with special needs.

Affordability Gap

As outlined in chapter 6, the key issue for the above groups, is the affordability of housing, whether in the rental market or in the Sale Market. It is clear that many people in County Wexford are unable to acquire housing suitable to their needs and at a price they can afford.

In the rental market, average rents of €150 per week are not affordable to many households. Intervention is required to subsidise these rents to make them affordable.

The Rental Subsidy Scheme, administered by the HSE, offers relief to reduce the market rents substantially for up to eighteen months.

The Rental Accommodation Scheme, administered by the Local Authorities, offers relief to reduce the market rents substantially for periods beyond eighteen months.

Both measures offer housing that satisfies housing needs in the short-term and medium-term. It is fair to say that households availing of either scheme, are adequately housed and would not need further accommodation unless they have an escalation of need that is long-term and require support to longer tenures i.e. Local Authority tenancy or home ownership.

The affordability gap in the rental market is bridged by rent subsidies in the short-term and medium-term.

In the house sale market, analysis has shown that house prices have increased significantly since 2003 and are likely to continue to rise into the future. Current prices for a 3xbed semi-detached dwelling can range from €235K in the Enniscorthy District to €325K in the Gorey District. The affordability gap for first-time buyers and low-income groups is now estimated at €80K. for a 2xbed unit and €150 for a 3xbed unit.

Intervention measures are required to subsidise these house prices to make them more affordable. The affordability gap in the house sale market is bridged by the supply of houses and the availability of various subsidies.

Affordable housing units are provided in areas where the affordability gap is highest and are offered to first-time buyers and other persons, at affordable prices. The prices are set with regard to the borrowing power of the applicants and to the costs of construction and provision of units and ancillary services. Units can be provided by Licensed build agreements with Contractors, acquired by the Local Authorities in the market or acquired through Part V Agreements.

The price of the unit is subsidised either by grants from the DoEH&LG, or by Local Authority lands being used at low values or by mortgage subsidies to reduce loan repayments.

Affordable housing sites are provided in areas where the affordability gap is highest and as an integral part of housing projects throughout the County and are offered to first-time buyers and other persons, at affordable prices. The site price is set with regard to the borrowing power of the applicants and to the cost of providing the site and its market value. The units are designed by the applicants who then construct their houses by a variety of contract methods. The price of the site is subsidised either by grant from the DoEH&LG, or by the Local Authority lands being used at low values.

Part V agreements can be used to procure lands or units or finances to support the Local Authority's measures aimed at bridging the affordability gap. While special needs applicants face the affordability issue experienced by all other applicants, they have the added issue of availability of suitable accommodation.

Special Needs:

As outlined in previous chapters, persons who have special needs are a specific element of demand that Local Authorities are required to support in their housing accommodation.

By their nature, special needs applicants will require supports over and above general needs. It is clear that many people in County Wexford with special needs are unable to acquire suitable housing at a price they can afford.

All the various housing schemes and facilities are available to those with special needs. It is critical that Local Authorities intervene to ensure that

housing is available with specific adaptations that not only solve their housing accommodation needs but also allow them the dignity of independence as far as possible. Local Authorities are required to also avoid undue social segregation and plan for special needs applicants in all schemes and programmes.

Accordingly, once the needs are identified, social and affordable housing and various supports are available to special needs applicants.

While special needs applicants face the affordability issue, experienced by all other applicants, they have the added issue of availability of suitable accommodation.

Part V Agreements can be used to procure lands, or specially adapted units or finances to support Local Authority measures aimed to bridge the availability and affordability gap.

Social Integration

As outlined in previous chapters, Local Authorities are required to mitigate social segregation in housing and must aim to improve access to housing. National policy, set out in December 2005, has a central focus on building sustainable, successful communities. A key element of this policy is to plan for an appropriate housing mix. One of the strategic objectives of the Five-Year Housing Action Plan 2004 to 2008 for County Wexford, is to avoid undue social segregation and reduce social exclusion. The Five-Year Plan also has a specific policy to ensure social integration is designed into all major housing schemes via a mix of house types and tenures.

The existing Housing Strategy sets out Part V policy which states that in utilising Part V for housing supply, the Local Authorities would be conscious of issues such as design, density and social integration. It also states that a sustainable balance between private and social housing should be achieved. The 2000 Act requires the Housing Strategy to take into account the need to counteract undue segregation in housing between persons of different social backgrounds.

The Housing Authorities have been preparing and delivering the policies by planning housing schemes with a variety of tenures and types, by acquiring private housing by purchase or through Part V and by focusing on special needs applicants.

However, further efforts are required to mainstream these social integration principles into all Local Authority housing developments.

As regards using Part V Agreements, to achieve more balance and social integration, some successes have been realised.

It is critical that the Local Authorities take the issue of social integration further and that future Local Authority housing development and Part V Agreements deliver greater mix of tenures and house types, so as to respond to the National Policy aims.

10. PART V

As outlined previously, various legislative provisions have set obligations and requirements on Local Authorities to make this Housing Strategy, to ensure the planning and development of the County provides for housing of the existing and future population of the area.

The development of National and Local Housing Policy has been outlined with particular emphasis on the range of extensive functions in housing and the many options available to support the accommodation needs of persons entitled to seek supports.

County Wexford Local Authorities have responded by the making of a comprehensive 5 Year Action Plan, 2004 to 2008, which contains the essential local policies, strategic objectives, output targets and programmes in Housing. This Strategy has set out the legislative framework for the Local Authority housing functions and in particular, the Part V of the Planning & Development Acts, which introduced a new housing supply route.

The 5 Year Housing Action Plan has a strategic objective to use Part V to acquire land, houses, sites, or financial contributions as a major element in housing supply. This chapter outlines the process required to bring Part V into effect and deliver the housing required and the issues associated with the use of Part V.

Process Issues.

The implementation of Part V obviously requires clear procedures and processes to deal with developments on zoned housing lands and to negotiate and complete binding agreements between the developers and the Local Authorities.

Since 2000, it is an obligation on developers to submit their proposals to satisfy Part V agreements with applications for planning.

It is required that the Local Authorities facilitate such proposals so as to reach binding agreements and the negotiations that lead up to them.

It must be accepted that developers are entitled to make proposals and the Local Authorities are entitled to set out their requirements. Therefore, a process of negotiation is involved, which, when completed would conclude with an agreement. Any Part V agreement will result in legal documentation that cover the terms of the agreement and both parties then proceed to fulfill the arrangements with resources transferred that augment the Local Authorities housing supply.

As outlined in this strategy, Part V agreements result in housing supply through a number of agreement options. The supply from Part V must relate to the identified housing needs as analyzed by the Local Authorities and form part of the 5 Year Housing Action Plans and the range of housing programmes and housing solutions managed by the Local Authorities.

The Local Authority process on reaching Part V agreement is as follows:

- Analyze current housing need
- Forecast housing need
- Consider - Local Authority Land bank
 - Local Authority Housing Construction Programme
 - Local Authority stock and casual vacancies.
- Relate Local Authority demand and supply conditions to developer's proposals.

To facilitate negotiations, developer's proposals are analysed and the Local Authorities requirements are explained. Where developers are in agreement, the Part V negotiations can be concluded and legal arrangements put in place.

Part V Options and Agreements.

As outlined in Chapter 3, the legislation requires the developer to make a proposal on Part V, and the Local Authority to make agreement on the Part V requirements of a development. A Part V agreement can be made with a range of supply options, which are:

- Transfer of ownership of land
- Building and transfer of houses
- Transfer of sites
- Transfer of other land within the functional area
- Building and transfer of houses or transfer of sites on other lands
- Payment of an amount as agreed

- A combination of two or more of the above options.

The core principle on the Part V agreements, and whichever option is agreed, is the land value based on existing use at date of transfer to the Local Authority, assuming development would have been unlawful. This principle means that the value of the Part V agreement is the difference in value of the lands, after planning is granted, and the original use value prior to planning being granted. The formula is:

(Value with Planning) - (Original Use Value) X 20% = Part V Contribution

When negotiating the Part V agreements, valuations are offered by the developer and the Local Authorities, and the options chosen are based on the calculated and agreed Part V contribution.

In default of agreement, arbitration may be initiated by either side.

In considering an agreement, the Local Authority is required to consider:

- How it achieves the objectives of the Housing Strategy
- The best use of the resource, to ensure adequate supply of housing
- The need to counteract undue social segregation in housing
- The time housing is likely to be provided as a consequence of the agreement.

Part V Results to date.

With the introduction of Part V, and the emergence of developments to which it applied, and the granting of planning permissions affected by Part V, the supply options opened up to the Co. Wexford Local Authorities.

The Part V processes and procedures were installed to facilitate developers who now had an obligation to make Part V agreements.

The Housing Authorities have and continue to negotiate and conclude Part V agreements, in line with the agreement options available.

The results to date for Part V developments are shown on the following table:

Table 33 - Part V Results, by options, for each Housing Authority.

Completed Files

<u>Housing Authority</u>	<u>No. of Files</u>	<u>Delivered</u>	<u>Equivalent Monetary Value</u>
Wexford County Council	35 Completed	33 Units 1.73 Ha of Land €2,947,677.00 Financial Contributions	€4,388,671.75
	11 Agreed	11 Units 9 Ha of Land €150,000 Financial Contributions	€6,537,490.00
	75 At Negotiation		
New Ross Town Council	3 Completed	€463,352 Financial Contributions	€463,352
	2 Agreed	€166,000 Financial Contributions	€166,000
	1 under Negotiation		
Enniscorthy Town Council	1 Completed	2 Units	€120,000
	1 At Negotiation		
Wexford Borough Council	1 Completed	€144,000	€144,000
	5 Under Negotiation		

Part V Supply Opportunity and Role of Part V.

In the 2001 Strategy and the 2004 Review, it was recognised that the private sector has an important contribution to make in housing provision and that achieving a sustainable balance between private and public housing is a strong aspiration of the strategy. Part V was seen as a mechanism to augment the housing provision of Local Authorities. It was stated that the Housing Authorities must use the full range of initiatives open to them, to deliver the solutions needed for the people of the County.

It was accepted that Private Sector housing developments have a valuable part to play in the development of acceptable solutions for the welfare of society. The role of Part V is to assist in meeting the housing requirements of the County by placing certain supply routes and opportunities open to Housing Authorities. It has expanded the methods of supplying housing. The purpose is to ensure that the proper planning and sustainable development of the County as in the County Development Plan, provides for the housing of the existing and future population.

In previous chapters, the objectives and initiatives that have developed from National and Local Housing Policy have been outlined and explored.

Part V and agreements made there under, must be viewed in the context of the broader role of the Housing Authorities and the expanding range of housing functions and the solutions needed to accommodate housing applicants.

Part V offers a considerable opportunity to both the Housing Authorities and private sector developers to develop much needed housing solutions for those who need accommodation in the County of Wexford.

For the Housing Authorities, the opportunities are:

- Access to zoned housing lands
- Options of land, sites, houses and finances to support Housing programmes
- Faster delivery of housing services
- Better social integration
- Avoidance of social segregation

For the private developers, the opportunities are:

- Permission to develop zoned housing lands
- Links to Local Authority housing strategies
- Sale of a large portion of the development
- Bankability of a portion of development
- Guaranteed profit margin
- To demonstrate social responsibility.

Part V Participation.

It is a clear obligation on developers, when preparing development proposals on zoned housing land, to reserve part of the site for a Part V agreement with the Housing Authority.

A range of options are available to developers which can be proposed and subject to agreement with the Housing Authority, can be used instead of the default of providing a portion of the site.

Table 33 shows the results to date of the process of implementing Part V. It is clearly evident that in many cases, the developers have participated and the

agreements made have contributed to the Housing Authorities delivery of much needed housing solutions.

However, Table 33 also shows that a number of developments have not contributed and developers have not participated in the process. This is despite the opportunity represented and the facility of negotiation being available.

A number of cases have arisen where avoidance of Part V has become an issue.

To respond to the delays experienced in completing agreements a new set of Part V procedures will be put in place to avoid some situations.

Review of Part V Process.

It can be fairly said that Part V, as a supply route for housing, has been mainstreamed into the local Authority annual and 5 Year Housing programmes. For developers of zoned lands, Part V proposals and agreements are a clear requirement of their planning applications and subsequent developments. As has been outlined in this strategy, Part V can represent an opportunity to both the Local Authority and the developers, to deliver the required housing that is a substantial investment in social Capital.

Traditionally, Local Authorities engaged with contractors to build Local Authority housing. The new environment for housing, created by the legislative and policy changes outlined in this strategy, offer a range of contract arrangements to contractors and developers.

These are:

- Traditional Construction Contracts
- Turnkey Contracts
- Licences Build Contracts
- Design and Build Contracts
- Part V Contracts

Many of the Part V agreements made to date, have been negotiated to the point of the developer constructing social and affordable units for the Local Authority. These arrangements are considered worthwhile and will continue to be on offer from the Local Authorities.

It can also be expected, as the second Housing Strategy is put in place, that the number of developments to which Part V applies, will rise in line with the growth of development.

Accordingly, some modification to the Part V processes and procedures are required, so as not to cause undue delays for developers and the Local Authorities. With the adoption of this Housing Strategy, the following arrangements will apply for development proposals to which Part V applies:

Part V Proposals	<p>Developers should formulate their proposals to comply with Part V as early as possible in designing and creating their development plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local Authorities will be available to advise, prior to proposal formation, on the options that can be explored and the Local Authority requirements in a general sense.
Pre-Planning	<p>Developers should bring a clear outline of their Part V proposals to any Pre-Planning meetings they request.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Housing staff will be available to attend such meetings and give opinions on the Part V proposals.
Planning	<p>Developers are required to submit their proposals to comply with Part V, with their planning applications. Such proposals must be complete and adequate to show how the subject site has been designed to accommodate Part V.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Housing staff will report on Part V proposals, which would become conditions of any permission granted.
Post-Planning	<p>Developers are required to complete the Part V agreements and willingly enter negotiations with the Housing Authorities. Arrangements should be put in place to complete the necessary legal transactions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Housing staff will respond to the Part V proposals and planning granted and completes the negotiations at the earliest possible time to allow the development to proceed.

It is the intent of the above process, and indeed the legislation and national policy, that both the Local Authorities and the developers will negotiate and make agreements.

However, in the event of dispute on the terms of the Part V agreements, arbitration may be initiated though the subsequent delays may not be in the best interest of the Local Authorities, whose housing plans are affected, or of the developers whose developments are not fully authorised.

In the event of developers avoiding or evading their Part V obligations, it should be clearly understood that such practices will not be allowed, and enforcement, or other legal remedies, will be initiated.

11. CONCLUSIONS AND GENERAL PART V POLICY

There are a number of primary issues which must be considered in developing this Housing Strategy:

The total land available for the Housing programmes in the County is 102 acres. Based on the recent assessments of need throughout the County, more lands are required to address the overall housing needs.

Agreements on Part V, in particular the reserving of sites or the transfer of units, should be based on the assumption that the locations would be consistent with the need for Local Authority housing, now or in the future. To match housing supply with the location of housing needs, a flexible approach is required, rather than relying on one particular delivery mechanism. In agreeing Part V arrangements, the Local Authorities must be conscious of issues such as design, scheme layouts, density and cost.

Social integration is a primary objective for the Local Authorities and Part V agreements should avoid undue social segregation. The processes used by the Local Authorities in discussing, negotiating and making Part V agreements should be updated to allow for speedier and more effective solutions to support the Local Authorities in managing housing needs.

Part V Policy – Section 94 of Planning & Development Act 2000

It is a requirement of this strategy that housing needs be taken into account. The particular needs of first – time buyers, persons in lower income groups, and those considered with special needs, are also required to be considered. This strategy must provide, as a general policy, a specified percentage of zoned housing lands, be reserved for Local Authority housing.

The current number of housing applicants and the forecasted Social and Affordable housing units required during the 6 years of this strategy amount to 5221. The current Housing Strategy made in **July 2001** and reviewed and reaffirmed in **April 2004**, provided for a uniform **20%** of land zoned for residential use or a mix of residential and other uses, be reserved for housing throughout the County of Wexford.

As set out in this strategy, the housing needs of the County continue to grow and housing supply must respond.

The general policy of this Housing Strategy is that a uniform 20% of land zoned for residential use or a mix of residential and other uses, throughout County Wexford, be reserved for Social and Affordable housing.

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