

# Wexford County Council

## Housing for All Delivery Action Plan 2022-2026

The Housing for All Action Plan was published by Government on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2021. The programme commits to the delivery of 36,000 social and affordable units over the lifetime of the programme. As part of the delivery framework, each local authority is required to produce a detailed Housing Delivery Action Plan, as per Circular 32-2021: Housing for All Housing Delivery Action Plans.

Wexford County Council has developed a delivery action plan setting out details of social and affordable housing delivery for the County over the period 2022-2026. The plan provides details of “how, where and when” social housing construction projects and affordable housing, are to be delivered to meet the target contained in Housing for All for the County.

For County Wexford, a social housing target of 1,150 units was notified to the Chief Executive at the end of Q3 2021. Affordable housing delivery is outside this target and based on established demand as per the Housing Needs Demand Assessment tool.

Under Housing for All, Social Housing must be targeted to align, in as far as practicable, with social housing demand; both in terms of location and housing type. To draft the plan, the Council’s Housing function utilised the following information:

- County development plan housing strategy;
- Geographical analysis of social housing demand;
- Geographical analysis of all existing housing stock including existing mix of privately owned, private rental, social, leased and HAP properties;
- General availability of zoned/serviced land;
- Private sector development activity and projected / potential yield both in terms of potential turnkey development and part V yield;
- Projected output from the AHB’s operating within the County; and
- Availability of local authority owned suitable and serviced lands.

The process has involved:

- Housing team review of available data sources;
- Review of approved pipeline delivery vis a vis distributed demand as per SSHA 2021
- Engagement with Planning colleagues with regard to the County Development Plan requirements, including a review of available services
- Engagement with AHBs regarding current and future programme delivery projects
- Land Bank review – both in terms of LA delivery and future land requirements

- Engagement with SPC regarding principles of Housing for All 2022-2026 and process for drafting plan
- Consultation with Municipal Districts.

## Social Housing Overview

### Demand Figures and Profile

Current total social housing demand in Co. Wexford, as of December 2021 stands at 3,187. This includes a net unmet social housing demand of 1,444 and a transfer figure of 1,743 of households in HAP / LA housing. Factoring in the expected growth under the draft County Development Plan, it is anticipated that in addition to the current unmet need, a further 376 households will require social and affordable housing over the next 5 years.

### House Types

Wexford County Council current housing stock profile is outlined below:

No of Bedrooms:	Bungalows	Two and three storey dwellings	Apartments & Flats	Total
1	183	8	131	322
2	581	587	144	1312
3	552	2175	5	2732
4 or more	113	223	0	336
<b>Total</b>	<b>1429</b>	<b>2993</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>4702</b>

The profile of the unmet social housing demand is:

- 42% are approved for 1 bed;
- 30% approved 2 bed;
- 26% approved 3 bed and
- 2% for 4 or more beds.

### Specialist Provision

Of the unmet social housing need, approx. 81% do not have any specific accommodation requirements (Summary of Social Housing Needs Assessment 2020, Dept Housing). 12% have enduring physical, sensory, mental health or intellectual issues that may require specialist housing supports; a further 3% are Homeless; 2% identify as Travellers and 2% are aged 65 years or more.

The age profile of those seeking social housing in 2020 can be broken down as follows:

<b>Year</b>	<b>&lt;25</b>	<b>25-29</b>	<b>30-39</b>	<b>40-49</b>	<b>50-59</b>	<b>60-69</b>	<b>70+</b>
<b>2020</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>3%</b>

The draft County Development Plan provides for 20% of new units to be universally accessible. It is anticipated that with an increasingly aging population as well as more chronic medical conditions and a preference to reside at home for as long as possible, that the demand for more adaptable and accessible accommodation provision will increase to 15-20% in the coming years.

The current Traveller Accommodation Programme for County Wexford commits to the provision of 100 units for traveller households over the 2019-2024 plan period. Of these units, 96% of the families have expressed a preference for standard social housing, with 4% seeking a dedicated Traveller Group Housing Scheme in the Wexford District. Local Authority TAP's were due for mid-programme review by the end of 2021. The Department notified Local Authorities in early December 2021 that this process will be delayed, with Circular guidance due to be issued in 2022.

The Housing for All Action Plan for the County will need to prioritise and detail specialist delivery over the lifetime of the programme to meet the needs of the homeless. Wexford County Council is currently working with the Women's Refuge to deliver 12 new units. Over the life of the Plan, Wexford County Council will continue to focus on the provision of own door solutions to meet the needs of those who are homeless. We have also sought an extension of the Housing First Programme with a target of 26 no. 1 bed units over the period 2022 – 2026.

## **Section 1: Social Housing Delivery 2022-2026**

In terms of social housing delivery 2022-2026, the following outputs have been considered in terms of meeting the minimum provision of 1,150 units:

- Acquisition of additional suitable lands where existing landbanks are insufficient;
- Acquisition of existing derelict / vacant properties to provide a supply of homes under the buy and renew process;
- Liaison and agreement with AHB's regarding their delivery programmes;
- An Assessment of likely Part V delivery by private development sector and LDA projects where applicable; and
- Infrastructure requirements to service lands to be developed for social and/or affordable housing, e.g. water & wastewater network and treatment infrastructure, access roads, pedestrian connectivity etc.

The tables detailed in appendix 1 to 3 outline the main components of the Housing Delivery Action Plan for County Wexford for the next 5 years, outlining where and how the minimum social housing target of 1,150 will be delivered.

The table below provides an overview of the spatial demand by district, approved delivery and proposed delivery targets. Further district breakdowns are available in appendix 1.

**Table 1: Spatial demand by district, Co Wexford against targets (approved and proposed delivery)**

Municipal District	No. of Households on SSHA	Total No. of Households (incl transfers)	% of Demand by MD	2022-2026 Target Distributed by Total Demand	Approved Delivery	Outstanding Delivery per MD	Proposed Delivery by MD (incl approved)
Enniscorthy	357	702	22.03	253	86	167	230
Gorey Kilmuckridge	363	823	25.82	297	212	85	338
New Ross	175	465	14.59	168	86	82	162
Rosslare	111	265	8.32	96	52	44	122
Wexford	438	932	29.24	336	269	67	303
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1444</b>	<b>3187</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1150</b>	<b>705</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>1155</b>

The proportionate split of the 1,150 units delivery is 60% via LA delivery streams (683 units) and 40% AHB CALF/CAS, (467 units).

There are currently 705 units already approved for delivery, with a minimum of a further 445 units programmed over the next 5 years. These units are at various stages of planning and approval processes.

The categories of delivery are summarised in the table below, with further details across years provided for in appendix 2.

**Table 2: Summary of Housing for All Delivery Streams, County Wexford 2022-2026**

Estimated Part V (Private & LDA)	Existing LA Landbank	Future Land Purchases	LA Turnkey Development	LA Buy & Renew	AHB CALF	AHB CAS	Total Homes to be Delivered
120	272	23	201	15	460	64	1155

### **Housing Type and Specialist Housing Delivery**

➤ Of the 705 units currently approved, 8% are 1 beds, 41% are 2 beds, 48% are 3 beds and 3% are 4 beds.

➤ Of the additional 445 units to be delivered, it is proposed to target 1 and 2 bed units to meet the significant demand in this category. Our aim is that 60% of the units acquired will be 1 or 2 bed with the balance being 3 and 4 bed. This will present a significant challenge particularly in rural areas where developments tend to comprise of larger units. We will also be guided by the principles of community sustainability and have reference to existing social housing distributions.

We are actively engaging at the earliest possible juncture with developers through the pre-planning and Part V processes to ensure we can acquire the correct housing typology to meet the need of our housing applicants.

➤ There is a commitment to deliver a group housing scheme of at least 4 units in Wexford District, as provided for in the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024. This figure may increase following the mid-programme review. The overall programme commits to providing accommodation for 100 traveller households.

➤ We have applied for an extension of the Housing First Programme with a further 26 no. 1 bed units over the next 5 years, as part of the regional homeless programme of activity.

### **Future Land Purchases**

The current proportion of greenfield development stands at 90%; with 7% infill and 3% Brownfield projects identified/approved. It is likely that additional infill units, particularly through buy and renew may emerge over the lifetime of the programme, with an indicative target of 15 units identified.

The Housing Action Plan process has identified that there is insufficient land available to the local authority to fully deliver the social housing targets required. The current draft action plan indicates a land deficiency particularly in the Enniscorthy District. A further exercise is ongoing to determine the service issues for the current landbank.

### **Vacancy**

A key objective of Housing for All is to address vacancy and to ensure the efficient use of vacant stock. In preparing the Delivery Action Plan, Wexford County Council has been cognisant of this and proposes to address vacancy through the following measures:

- Wexford County Council will recruit and appoint a Vacant Homes Officer. The Vacant Homes Officer will work closely with our Planning Department to combat dereliction and return vacant properties to residential use through the various schemes available to us, such as Buy and Renew.
- Use CPOs to target vacant properties which can be refurbished and used for social housing or if deemed unsuitable for social housing, can be sold on.

- Use the Better Energy Homes Grant to support retrofit for vacant properties.
- Planned maintenance and management of existing Local Authority housing stock will also be key to addressing vacancy in social housing and improving re-let times.

## **Section 2: Affordable Housing 2022-2026**

Affordable housing is a significant focus under Housing for All. Several new delivery and support streams for Affordable housing have been introduced under the programme including:

- Enhanced Help to Buy Scheme: A Revenue based financial refund against income tax paid in the previous 4 years to help fund the purchase of a home for first time buyers;
- First Homes Scheme, due to be launched early in 2022 will support first-time buyers on moderate incomes to buy new homes at reduced prices. This shared equity scheme will be available nationwide. With this shared equity scheme the State and participating banks will pay up to 30% of the cost of the new home in return for a stake in that property. You can buy back the stake at any time, but this is not a requirement. A fresh start principle has also been encompassed in the scheme.
- Local Authority Home Loan, which will be available from January 2022. This home loan product replaces the Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan and will provide financial support to low- and middle-income earners seeking to purchase a property. A house purchase price ceiling of €250k for County Wexford has been applied by the Department, with a single applicant income limit of €50k and joint applicants at €75k.
- Local Authority Affordable Housing scheme and Affordable Housing Fund. This scheme is aimed at providing financial support to Local Authorities to develop affordable housing for purchase in areas where there is a demonstrated affordability issue. The affordability constraint is determined by the Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA).

Wexford County Council is currently approaching the final stage of adopting a new County Development Plan, 2021 to 2027. The process was significantly advanced when the Planning Regulator, in April 2021, notified local authorities of new updated guidance regarding utilisation of the Housing Needs Demand Assessment and densities when drafting Housing Strategies. While the principles of the HNDA were encompassed in the draft plan at a late stage, the calculations for future housing demand also rely heavily on the Louth model to determine the future housing needs of the County.

*Policy Objective 6 of the Housing Strategy, Draft County Development Plan 2021-2027, is:*

*“To provide social and affordable housing to meet forecast future housing need over the plan period as identified in the HNDA. The Council will endeavour to deliver a further **376 social and affordable housing units** over the plan period to meet the forecasted need during the plan period. This shall be delivered having regard to the local breakdown of forecast need detailed in the HNDA.”*

The Housing and Planning teams are currently working through the HNDA tool along with the current draft strategy to provide a more detailed breakdown of the future demand across social and affordable headings. County Wexford does not meet the threshold in terms of the affordability constraint at a County level; however there is strong expectation that a sub-County business case can be made for certain urban areas within the County and it is our intention to seek funding for all sub-County areas with an affordability constraint. With this in mind, an application under the Serviced Sites Fund has already been approved for the delivery of circa 20 affordable units in Ramsfort Gorey, with Part 8 planning complete.