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News

CABINET TENSION OVER TAX BREAKS FOR DEVELOPERS

John Lee

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Fianna Fáil ministers are opposed to cutting VAT for builders

EXCLUSIVE

'Nothing can be taken off the table. We have to throw the kitchen sink at housing to increase supply'

TENSIONS are growing in the Coalition over controversial proposed tax breaks for developers being used to fix the housing crisis.

Taoiseach Leo Varadkar favours tax breaks and other Fine Gael Cabinet ministers advocate absolving builders of VAT on materials.

Justice Minister Simon Harris says he is in favour of providing help to builders to confront 'viability' of building due rising costs of materials.

However, Fianna Fáil ministers and the Department of Finance, led by Fianna Fáil Minister Micheal McGrath, are opposed to tax breaks, VAT holidays or any such measures, it has been learned.

Fianna Fáil ministers, due to historic accusations of close relationships with the building sector, do not want to support such tax policies. The party is not against direct intervention in the Turn to Page 6

Continued from Page One property sector. Mr McGrath recently said he is in favour of purchasing entire apartment blocks that have stalled in construction because cuckoo funds have pulled out of financing them.

He also wants to continue to use the €500million Croi Cónaithe Cities fund, which helps developers building apartments for sale to owner-occupiers.

Mr Harris said: 'I think the Taoiseach was honest about this when he said that nothing can be taken off the table when it comes to housing, such as the scale of the challenge we face.'

'People try to say, "Is that a Fianna Fáil perspective? Is that a Green perspective?" It's just a Government perspective, that we have to throw the kitchen sink at housing to increase supply.'

There have been calls from the building sector to significantly reduce or abolish VAT on all materials to help them continue building. Already building is slowing down over the cost of materials.

The sector said that a significant cut in the 13.5% VAT rate would make building more 'viable'.

Mr Harris said: 'This is one for the Minister for Housing, the Minister for Finance, the Government as

whole, the Taoiseach to consider: the issue about viability. Is there is there actually a viability gap here still between the cost of building a home and the price that that home gets sold for?'

Sources in Fine Gael believe the quickest and easiest way to continue construction is to help builders with the rising cost of materials.

A Fine Gael Minister said: 'In most cases where this will be effective, the developers are already on site building or are just beginning. It is a whole lot more effective to allow them to buy the building materials and keep at the developments where the shovels are already in the ground than the more complex ones Fianna Fáil are pushing.

'Otherwise the developers just down tools on what they are already at and don't even start what they have planning for.'

There is opposition in Fianna Fáil to tax breaks for developers. Dublin FF TD Darragh O'Brien holds the Department of Housing portfolio through.

A Fianna Fáil Minister said: 'There is a small margin between an all of Government approach to something like housing and downright interference.

'We already have multiple schemes as part of Housing for All that are assisting building and Fine Gael are now coming up with all these bright ideas.

'However, they had the Department of Housing almost continually from 2011 to 2020 and didn't get much done then, did they?' Also Fianna Fáil is loath to get into giving tax breaks for developers. Historically the party has faced numerous tribunal cases where it was shown it was close to the building trade.

A number of Fianna Fáil public representatives were found to be corrupt by the Mahon Tribunal and Government minister Ray Burke was jailed.

A Fianna Fáil Minister said: 'It's just not an area we need to be connected to politically and we must be mindful that complex tax and other measures ultimately have unforeseen consequences in the property space, as we found to our cost in the crash.'

In an interview with the Irish Daily Mail last November, then tánaiste Mr Varadkar expanded on providing tax breaks for developers.

He said: 'I think the Department of Finance needs to have a more open mind on what we could do around tax to make housing developments more viable.'

When asked to expand on tax measures for developers, Mr Varadkar said: 'There's two areas that I think we need to give thought to. One is around viability. Developers [and] builders are saying to me, that's one of the reasons why there's now a slowdown in new home starting, is the increase in the cost of building materials. And that's made a lot of new developments unviable.

'So there are lots of ways we can help with that. But I don't think we should rule out tax measures that would help make the building of new homes more viable.'

Cabinet sources told the Mail that these tax breaks may extend to removing significant direct taxation on building materials, transport and other costs. In addition, they also speculated that there could also be tax breaks on losses incurred in building houses in the near future or on debts already incurred.

However, in another interview with the Irish Daily Mail, new Finance Minister Mr McGrath made it clear he was not in favour of tax breaks for developers while accepting that there were viability difficulties for them.

However, Mr McGrath, arguably the most powerful minister in Fianna Fáil, now sees the focus as being elsewhere.

He said: '[Tax breaks for developers] is a sensitive area and we shouldn't really be speculating on [it]. We've just had massive investment again and the Housing Finance Bill has just been completed and enacted.

'We are seeing the institutional investors take a step back for a whole variety of reasons: interest rate policy and returns that they can get elsewhere.'

' When asked what the Govern--ment will do to face the ever --accelerating housing crisis, Mr McGrath placed his focus on two schemes.

One is Croí Cónaithe - the scheme could see developers handed up to €144,000 for every apartment built.

Another is the far more substantive, and as --yet--under--utilised, plan to allow the **Land Development Agency** (LDA) to fund apartment blocks that have received planning permission but are unlikely to see deals completed by the institutional investors - some of which are called cuckoo funds - because of a changed financial climate.

Mr McGrath said: 'We do have the Croí Cónaithe fund and that is the vehicle really through which we need to try and deliver high--density schemes. LDA, who are now partnering with private sector developers who have planning permissions that they do not intend to activate themselves. So I think those are the two main streams that we should be seeking to bring about delivery of high --density homes at the moment.' Firmly slamming the door on Fianna Fáil's support for tax breaks for developers, he said: 'We have no plans to do to do anything further at this point.'

Asked whether the State intended to use the LDA to buy entire apartment blocks, Mr McGrath said: 'Yes, the State will be committing to the purchase of those units for social housing for cost --rental and possibly affordable housing.'

Also in his interview, Mr Harris said the Government is looking at housing completion targets.

Again this may cause tension with Fianna Fáil, as a modest target of 33,000 a year was set down by the Housing For All project only 18 months ago.

Asked whether he believed that housing completion targets are sufficient, Mr Harris said: 'I think ministers and Taoiseach [Varadkar] have been clear on this. That based on the latest census results in the CSO work, the targets will be revised dur --

ing the course of this year.

'The population in this country is growing. And it's growing for a whole variety of reasons. There are genuine upward pressures in terms of supply.'

news@dailymail.ie

'We shouldn't rule out tax measures'

Document IRDAIM0020230116ej1g00010

Chris Lowe

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@murraygroup.ie>
Sent: Sunday 1 January 2023 09:00
To: John Coleman; Barry O'Brien; John White
Cc: [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]
Subject: Business Post article

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi all,

Here is the Business Post article from today. There is nothing new in the story as such and the figures were supplied to Eoin O'Broin by us, but this is a quiet time of year and so the BP has made the decision to make this its main front page story.

The headline and the start of the story are based around a negative take on the figures with comments from O'Broin, but the second part of the article contains a decent amount, if not all, of the points made in the statement we supplied.

There is a mistake in one paragraph where [REDACTED] attributes a comment to a spokesman for the LDA which was not supplied by us and seems to be something he has inferred from our statement even though the statement clearly stated it was not referring to a specific project. He writes:

"Asked if the LDA would consider the 270 homes delivered in 2022 as turnkey homes, a spokesman said the organisation cannot comment on any specific developments due to commercial confidentiality requirements. He said that Project Tosaigh has had a "catalytic effect on development", **and these 270 homes would not have been built without the initiative.**

I've asked [REDACTED] to delete this bit in bold in the online version of the article as it wasn't said by us, but I not sure he will do so.

John - I'm on the mobile today if you need to get me.

Separately, O'Broin is interviewed in the Sunday Independent and I've added that to the bottom of the email.

Best regards, [REDACTED]

HOUSING

Government housing body has not built one house on state lands

All 270 homes delivered by the Land Development Agency to date have been bought from private developers. Sinn Féin's Eoin Ó Broin claims the agency is competing with first-time buyers and approved housing bodies for limited number of new builds

- [REDACTED]
- DECEMBER 31, 2022



The Land Development Agency was established in September 2018 with a €1.25 billion capital budget to expedite the construction of 150,000 homes over 20 years on state lands

The Land Development Agency (LDA), which was set up by the government four years ago to accelerate the construction of housing, has built no homes on state lands, new figures show. Previously unreleased details of the state agency's activity under Project Tosaigh, its flagship programme, show that it has delivered just 270 homes, all of which were acquired from some of the biggest developers in the country rather than built by the agency itself.

The LDA was established in September 2018 with a €1.25 billion capital budget to expedite the construction of 150,000 homes over 20 years on state lands. At the time, the government said sites had already been earmarked for 10,000 homes.

At the time, Leo Varadkar said the agency would be staffed by people with proven track records in the delivery of housing and would "hit the ground running". The Taoiseach described the LDA as "one of the most significant ever state interventions in the housing market", and said the decision to set it up would come to be seen as significant as the ones to establish the ESB, Aer Lingus or the IDA.

New data on the LDA's housing delivery programme which was released to Eoin Ó Broin, Sinn Féin's housing spokesperson, has shown that all of the 270 homes it has delivered to date were bought from private developers under Project Tosaigh, and not developed by the LDA on state land. The units were bought from Cairn Homes, the O'Flynn Group and Whitebox Group. Ó Broin described the rate of delivery by the LDA after four years in existence as "deeply disappointing".

"Last year when launching Project Tosaigh, the government had given a clear indication that the LDA would deliver up to 1,000 cost rental homes in 2022 under the scheme. Not only has the LDA fallen short of this, but the homes delivered have been purchased as turnkeys from mainstream residential developers," Ó Broin said.

Project Tosaigh was launched by the LDA in November 2021 to stimulate the construction of dormant private housing projects with full planning permission rather than to buy turnkey homes, which are units acquired by the state from private developers before they have been placed on the open market.

Asked if the LDA would consider the 270 homes delivered in 2022 as turnkey homes, a spokesman said the organisation cannot comment on any specific developments due to commercial confidentiality requirements. He said that Project Tosaigh has had a "catalytic effect on development", and these 270 homes would not have been built without the initiative.

Ó Broin said Project Tosaigh was meant to be about activating stock in urban centres that would not have otherwise come to market.



Eoin Ó Broin, Sinn Féin's spokesman on housing: 'All of the government's affordable housing delivery streams are way behind target this year.' Picture: Rollingnews

"Instead the LDA is now competing with first-time buyers and approved housing bodies (AHBs) for a limited number of suburban new builds," he said. "One also has to wonder what price the LDA paid for the small number of Project Tosaigh units delivered this year, and if its entry into the turnkey market has pushed property prices up even further."

When asked about Project Tosaigh targets, the LDA spokesman said the scheme is on track to achieve its 5,000 unit target by 2026. He said that the LDA had sourced almost 1,000 homes in 2022 from the first phase of Project Tosaigh through contracts and agreements with housebuilders which will be delivered by 2024.

"Approximately 270 have been delivered in 2022 with the remainder under construction currently," the spokesman said.

The LDA has plans to deliver housing under both the Project Tosaigh scheme and its own direct build programme. Including the 270 homes bought from developers, the spokesman said that 1,750 social and affordable homes have been delivered or are under construction by the agency. The LDA said it will add a further 1,500 homes to its pipeline in 2023.

Ó Broin said it will be 2024 at the earliest before the LDA has delivered any homes on state lands, six years after it was established.

"All of the government's affordable housing delivery streams are way behind target this year whether AHB, cost rental or council affordable purchase. No matter what way you look at it, the government's affordable housing figures for 2022 are in tatters," he said.

When the LDA was established, the government said it already had earmarked state land with capacity for 10,000 homes, with 3,000 of those homes due to be built on lands which had already been secured.

The spokesman for the LDA said the establishment and ramping up of a housing delivery entity such as the LDA from scratch "takes considerable time and effort".

"Notwithstanding this, a considerable amount has been achieved by the LDA since its inception four years ago. The agency has gone from a standing start of having no staff base and no sites with any design or planning history, to now having an organisation of around 80 skilled and experienced staff and projects for nearly 4,000 homes either under way or going through the planning approvals process. This is a significant achievement," the spokesman said.

He added that the LDA recently commenced construction on Ireland's largest direct build public housing project at Shanganagh in Shankill, Co Dublin, and another project in Cork city.

Last week, Leo Varadkar said that "a mixture of carrot and stick" should be used by the government to ensure developers with residential planning permissions actually build homes.

"We need to turn the corner on housing, it is an emergency, it's affecting people in so many different ways," the Taoiseach said. "It's holding us back as a country, and it's causing intergenerational division that I don't like to see."

Eoin Ó Broin, the man who plans to solve the housing crisis

The Sinn Féin TD is confident he can succeed where three housing ministers have tried and failed



Eoin Ó Broin, Sinn Féin's housing spokesman, outside the Custom House, Dublin.

Picture by Arthur Carron



[Hugh O'Connell](#)

January 01 2023 02:30 AM

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Eoin Ó Broin is, according to current polling, the country's preferred choice as housing minister — and the success of any [Sinn Féin](#) government is likely to hinge on whether the Blackrock College-educated TD for Dublin Mid-West can solve what often seems an intractable housing and homelessness crisis.

He is convinced he can do it and says Sinn Féin will “in absolute crystal clear clarity” outline how in advance of the next election, with existing policies likely to be revised and republished this year.

He is reluctant to offer too many hostages to fortune, learning perhaps from the experience of the last three housing ministers he has shadowed that much can and does go awry. Indeed, he says that if something does go wrong and his plan doesn't deliver, Sinn Féin will change tack.

“We'll be upfront. We'll be honest with people and we'll demonstrate that we're then going to intervene to move things in a different direction,” he says.

But being in opposition means you can still make a lofty pledge or two. For example, Ó Broin thinks he can, like in Finland, effectively end long-term homelessness within five years of taking office.

“You can't stop people becoming homeless, what you can do is you can ensure that nobody is homeless longer than a crisis; a crisis should only be a number of weeks,” he says.

Speaking to the *Sunday Independent*, Ó Broin says he believes he meets more people involved in the housing sector than anybody else bar current Housing Minister Darragh O'Brien, whose job he covets. “I spend lots of time on building sites and in architects studios, in local authorities, in with policy experts,” he says.

Over the last six years as Sinn Féin housing spokesperson he has firmly established himself as the foremost opposition critic of Government housing policy and, as his supporters like to note, he has even written the book on it, his 2019 volume called *Home: Why Public Housing is the Answer*.

Party leader [Mary Lou McDonald](#) recently proclaimed Sinn Féin will “move heaven and earth” to fix the housing crisis. In a rather unconvincing manner on *The Late Late Show* last month, she said: “We're Irish, Ryan, we build things.” She is happy to defer to Ó Broin, the man she calls “brainiac”, on the details of how both heaven and earth will be shifted.

Ó Broin relishes the opportunity to tell anyone who will listen why the Government is wrong and his policies are better.

Take, for example, the Coalition's claim it is investing a record amount of state money into housing. “The €4bn figure isn't a true figure, the €4bn is a 10-year average and they are not going to reach that €4bn under current projections until this government is out of office if it runs its full term,” he says, arguing that direct capital investment by the State is more likely between €2bn and €2.5bn a year — a figure he commits to doubling if in government.

The Economic and Social Research Institute ([ESRI](#)) effectively agreed with him in an economic assessment published in 2021.

In the never-ending housing debate it is easy to get sidetracked by big numbers, a plethora of schemes and targets. But one eye-catching figure — raised in McDonald's *Late Late Show* outing — is Sinn Féin's general election manifesto pledge to deliver 100,000 social and affordable homes in a full five-year term of government. How can it be done?

"If you have more money and higher targets, if you cut away the bureaucracy, and you have greater action on derelicts/vacants, greater use of new building technologies," Ó Broin says.

"Our view back in 2020 was it was 20,000 public homes [a year]... but that now needs to be revised in the context of unmet demand and I think that needs to be done objectively."

Ó Broin says the party will in the early part of this year begin revising, updating and republishing many aspects of its housing plan to take account of changes since the last election. Part of this will include new measures to tackle the rental crisis.

He says Sinn Féin's policy on landlords has shifted in the last 12 months and he has now come to the "considered view" that landlords who are intending to leave cannot be stopped from doing so.

He cites data from the Residential Tenancies Board in estimating as many as 25pc of existing landlords will exit.

"I think that then shifts the conversation to say: 'OK, so if people are leaving, what is the best way to ensure that as landlords leave, the minimum number of tenants are disrupted.'"

Ó Broin is arguing for a three-pronged approach. First, a ramping up of the "tenant in situ schemes" with a clear directive to local authorities to buy properties where tenants facing eviction are housed under HAP or the rental accommodation scheme.

O'Brien argues he has already been doing this, but Ó Broin says the lack of a formal Department of Housing circular means the policy is not being applied evenly across the country.

Secondly, he believes the Government should fund approved housing bodies (AHBs) to purchase properties on a cost-rental basis "subject to the condition of the property and the price", which would allow tenants to remain in situ "with some social rental development".

Thirdly, he says Sinn Féin is examining how other countries have handled problems in their rental market, including schemes that would support tenants to buy the properties "in a non-subsidised way".

"We're looking at schemes in a number of other jurisdictions where they've tried to do that, we're trying to see is that possible here," he explains.

"The idea would essentially be, as landlords are leaving, can you transfer those properties in a completely legal way from the private rental sector into three other sectors — the social-rental sector, the cost-rental sector, and the owner-occupation sector — and do that in a way that shifts the balance.

"So for example, in other jurisdictions, they have schemes where they have loan products that are specifically targeted towards tenants who want to purchase the properties, not unlike our local authority loan, for example.

"In other jurisdictions, they look at tax reliefs for landlords who sell to their tenants in terms of capital gains tax reductions. There are a series of ways of looking at the issue."



Eoin Ó Broin in Dublin at the Raise the Roof rally last November protesting against homelessness and the housing crisis. Picture by Fergal Phillips

He declines to go further, promising more detail early this year. Ó Broin says there needs to be a plan that would run over a five-year period that would readjust the size of the private rental sector in Ireland, reducing it substantially by phasing out the roughly one-third of private tenancies that are state subsidised.

“Gradually it will become smaller. It will also become higher quality, more professionalised both for people who want to be long-term renters, and people who are renting in between,” he says.

He is strongly opposed to mooted tax cuts for developers that the Coalition is mulling as part of changes to its Housing For All policy and he is unapologetic when it comes to one of the chief criticisms levelled at Sinn Féin over housing: that it objects to too many housing developments.

A Fine Gael dossier compiled in 2021 claimed Sinn Féin councillors have objected to the development of 6,000 homes across Dublin — a statistic repeated by Micheál Martin in Dáil clashes with McDonald over the last year. The claim is contentious and not the whole story, given that some objections have related to the zoning of land as opposed to specific housing developments.

But in a housing crisis where there is a chronic shortage of supply, it has traction. Ó Broin, however, is unapologetic and does not accept the argument that in a crisis, principled objections to land zoning or specific housing developments should be set aside, arguing “affordability is key”.

I asked him if it is not the case that the more homes there are the more affordable they become? “Absolutely not, and the really crucial thing is that the State has an ability to deliver homes at a more affordable cost because of how it can treat its own land in a way a private developer can’t.”

He insists it is “not about letting the perfect be the enemy of the good”, rather “it’s about properly using the scarce resource of public land to deliver genuinely affordable homes — €385,000 in Dublin might not be the upper end of the market. On the very edge of the suburbs, that is an exceptionally high price even for somebody or a couple on a decent job and that’s why I think actually the principle around public houses and public land is a sensible one”.

He does not think it’s a difficult argument to make, nor that the criticism Sinn Féin objects to housing registers with voters too much.

“When people listen to the answer to say it’s not a good use of public money to have houses for sale at €420,000, I don’t get any kickback from that from voters or more widely,” he says.

Ó Broin says he is prepared to work with anyone in government, name-checking Fine Gael’s Damien English, a former junior housing minister, as someone who he says he worked well with on the issue of Traveller accommodation in the last Dáil.

More recently, he was criticised in some quarters for saying he would sack the Department of Finance’s chief economist John McCarthy — a remark he later withdrew and he apologised personally to McCarthy.

That said, Ó Broin says the biggest challenge to implementing his proposed housing policy shift lies in “the policies that have become very entrenched in the Department of Finance and Department Public Expenditure and Reform, particularly in terms of the management of public finances”.

“Therefore, if we’re going to do what we’re saying we’re going to do, it’s a three-person job, it’s from the Taoiseach to the Minister of Finance, to myself,” he says. “You need a three-person approach.”

It is clear — though for some reason he won’t say it — his preference would be for McDonald to be Taoiseach and Pearse Doherty to occupy the finance brief.

“What Mary Lou has made very clear is this fundamental paradigm shift in housing policy that we’ve outlined, that will be one of the top priorities of our party, and from the Office of Taoiseach, to Minister for Finance to Department of Housing, if Sinn Féin are in those positions we’ll move heaven and earth to make that happen,” Ó Broin says.

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Chris Lowe

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@murraygroup.ie>
Sent: Sunday 8 January 2023 08:48
To: John Coleman; John White; Phelim O' Neill
Cc: [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]
Subject: Business Post

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Hi all,

Please find today's BP coverage - some very selective reporting in this (especially when it comes to the report and the conclusions chosen to focus on). Also some unbalanced interpretations of issues and events. Some of our responses have been used. It is worth noting that many of the assertions made by Killian in his questions have either been left out altogether or have been diluted after we engaged on them. I think he was going to write this regardless given he had the report and the board minutes etc, but I think it was worth challenging the assertions made in his questions.

Best regards, [REDACTED]

HOUSING

Internal report: LDA pays more to build affordable homes than EU neighbours

Confidential Land Development Agency comparison report seen by the Business Post

- [REDACTED]

- JANUARY 7, 2023

The state is paying up to €138,000 more to build a home than other European countries building similar affordable housing, a confidential Land Development Agency (LDA) report has shown. The 40-page research document obtained by the *Business Post*, which has not been shared with the Department of Housing, was labelled by the agency as "private & confidential – not to be shared outside LDA". It was completed in April 2021.

A spokesman for the Department of Housing said it was not aware of the report's existence. He said that the LDA and the department frequently share other information about increasing the delivery of cost-effective affordable housing.

The LDA, which has €3.5 billion in available capital, was established in September 2018 to expedite the construction of 150,000 homes on state lands over 20 years.

Four years ago, the government said sites had already been earmarked for 10,000 homes by the LDA. Late last year, it emerged that the agency will not deliver the first of these homes until at least 2024.

The confidential report compared how much the LDA will spend to build housing on a site in Naas with similar housing projects in comparable areas of France, Belgium and Germany. The report

found that the agency's construction and development costs are significantly higher than state builders in those countries.

"When looking at all-in development costs there is a range of differences from the LDA development being €274 (9.2 per cent) more expensive per square metre than the German maximum to €1,545 (90.3 per cent) more expensive than Brussels," it found.

The findings of the report suggest it would cost the LDA between €155,000 and €200,000 to build 70 and 90 square metre apartments on state lands in Naas, Co Kildare. The cost of the two-bed 90-square-metre apartment in Naas is between €42,000 and €81,000 more than the cost of units in similar public housing projects in comparable areas of France, Belgium and Germany.

The all-in development cost, which would include utilities, land work such as footpaths, local taxes and architect and designer fees, for a two-bed apartment in the Naas scheme would be €292,000. The results of the LDA's research showed this was between €23,000 and €138,000 more expensive per unit.

The report added that the cost of utilities in Ireland is broadly in line with Belgium, but almost double France's figures. In Ireland, land works such as footpaths and roads cost €438 per square metre compared to €33 to €101 per square metre in France and €68 per square metre in a Belgium scheme.

"Similar local taxes and fees for Ireland are more than double France. However, for professional fees, Ireland is one of the lowest," the private report said.

Further parts of the study examined if Irish taxes on construction are driving higher development costs.

"The evidence suggests that Vat is more than likely not the issue on any potential cost discrepancy with delivering apartments in Ireland compared to other EU countries. In fact, Ireland is lower than most member countries when it comes to Vat levied on the building sector," the LDA report said.

The government has considered cutting Vat in order to stimulate development but the LDA's internal report indicated the tax rate was not a factor in higher costs here compared to other EU countries.

The report added that hourly labour costs in Ireland, when compared to the other countries, are also not the main driver in the disparity in construction costs with Ireland having one of the lowest from surveyed countries.

"Of course, this is heavily contingent on the magnitude of people working on a development.

There is evidence in recent years the wage costs in the sector are growing at a faster rate than the comparator country average," it noted.

Sources with knowledge of the LDA said that no further analysis was conducted as to why the agency's costs are significantly higher or what could be done to reduce these costs.

The LDA's overview of building costs was completed six months before the Department of Housing commissioned its own research project into construction costs in September 2021.

A spokesman for the LDA, responding to queries from the Business Post, said the report was an exercise to gain greater insights into the costs of residential construction in Ireland as compared to other European jurisdictions.

"The LDA continually researches ways to reduce costs and to design its schemes to result in quality affordable homes and value for money for the state," the spokesman said.

The spokesman said the report was marked "not to be shared outside" as it contained potential pricing information regarding a specific project which is currently in a tender process. This may be deemed confidential, market sensitive information that may result in loss to the LDA if released and could not be released by law, he said.

The LDA spokesman said that report, which includes 40 pages of information and a complete set of conclusions, was a "draft".

HOUSING

Delays and debate: Inside the LDA's first four years

The Land Development Agency was launched in 2018 with the promise of becoming as significant a state body as the ESB or the IDA. Four years on, with no houses yet delivered on state land, what has the body achieved?

- [REDACTED]
- JANUARY 7, 2023



The Land Development Agency was meant to speed up housing delivery, but four years after its establishment, the body has not built any houses on state land

In September 2018, as the government revealed its latest plan to tackle the housing crisis, Leo Varadkar was adamant that this was a seismic shift that would benefit future generations. Speaking on a balcony on the top floor of Busáras, with its picturesque views over the Custom House and the Liffey, Varadkar and four of his most important cabinet ministers launched the Land Development Agency (LDA) with €1.25 billion in backing.

“The Land Development Agency is a government intervention that is 50 years overdue,” Varadkar said. In time, the Taoiseach said, its establishment “will be seen to be as significant as the decision to establish the ESB, Aer Lingus or the IDA”.



From front: Eoghan Murphy, then minister for housing, Taoiseach Leo Varadkar and Heather Humphreys, then minister for business, enterprise and innovation, at the launch of the Land Development Agency in 2018. Picture: Gareth Chaney/Collins

Most importantly, he said the LDA would result in quick action. Construction of homes on state lands would be expedited because the agency would be staffed by people with proven track records in delivering housing.

“It’s not about setting up a new agency for the sake of it, it’s about solving a real problem affecting our economy and society, driving supply in the housing market, of housing, apartments and homes people need to buy and rent,” he said.

Varadkar added that the LDA would “ensure that we lose no time” in delivering housing on “strategic land banks”, and that it would “hit the ground running”.

More than four years later, the LDA has not built any homes on state land. As revealed by this newspaper last week, the 270 homes it has delivered were bought directly from developers.

The *Business Post* has now obtained a confidential internal report which the LDA does not want shared outside the organisation. The 40-page document illustrates the challenges the agency has faced in delivering housing, and includes data that shows its cost of building is significantly out of line with European construction costs.

The report also includes information that would be valuable to the government in considering its policies, but it has never been shared with the Department of Housing.



In the final quarter of last year, early-stage construction work began on a site in Shanganagh in south Dublin. Picture: Gareth Chaney/Collins

Across a series of interviews, sources familiar with the work of the LDA have told this newspaper that the agency has siloed valuable research within the organisation by not sharing it with government, and has redacted information in board meeting minutes that shows targets on certain projects are not being met.

When the LDA was established, it had already earmarked state land with capacity for 10,000 homes, with 3,000 of those due to be built on lands which had already been secured.

In the final quarter of last year, early-stage construction work began on a site in Shanganagh in south Dublin and on the former St Kevin's Hospital site in Cork. A planning application for a site in Skerries in north Co Dublin was submitted in April 2022.

The LDA has said it expects to deliver its first home on state-owned lands in 2024. Why will it have taken it six years to reach this milestone?

Credibility and progress

The LDA was established in September 2018 with €1.25 billion in capital behind it, a sum which has since been boosted to €3.5 billion.

By the beginning of 2021, the LDA was a 40-person operation. In an interview with the Irish Times, John Coleman, its chief executive, said "we're ready to go", and that €2.5 billion of its total funding would be spent delivering houses by 2025.

The agency now has a team of 71 people overseeing the design and development of 5,200 homes. Several private developers in Ireland with a similar pipeline of housing projects have half to a third as many staff as the LDA.



John Coleman, chief executive, the Land Development Agency, said in an interview in 2021 that '€2.5 billion of the LDA's total funding would be spent delivering houses by 2025'

The most recent LDA annual report showed the total staff bill for the agency was €2.2 million and the average salary was more than €93,000. The chief executive's pay was listed as €200,000.

In 2019, after three staff from the National Asset Management Agency (Nama) had been drafted in to run the agency, Eoghan Murphy, the then housing minister, was in attendance when the LDA board met for the first time.

He gave the board and former Nama executives a brief pep talk about how the LDA would "relieve the current housing supply issues". Soon after his contribution, Murphy and state officials left the room, and the LDA's senior team and board moved on to discuss its overall strategy.

Coleman then talked about "the importance of setting challenging but realistic targets". The minutes of the meeting show that the LDA team and board also discussed the impact that a lack of progress on getting homes built and delays "would have on the LDA's credibility".

Credibility and progress were themes of the first several board meetings. A month later, in February, the board emphasised "the importance of demonstrating progress and delivery and in particular the requirement to deliver in short order on at least one scheme".

In April 2019, the board raised a need for the LDA to "deliver the first site in short order to demonstrate progress", and everyone agreed at the next meeting that two to three sites with accelerated targets would be presented to the board. "These sites would be LDA's immediate focus with the aim of being on-site by Q1, 2020," the minutes show.

In May 2019, Phelim O'Neill, formerly of Nama and now the LDA's head of property, proposed three projects – the sites in Skerries and Shanganagh, and the former St Kevin's Hospital site in Cork – as those which would be "expedited".

In late 2020 and early 2021, the LDA board was still pressuring the executive to commence a housing project. At the time, the agency was conducting other work. One of the research projects under way at the time resulted in a report called the European Apartment Construction Cost Comparison Study.

The report, which has been obtained by this newspaper, is marked "Private & Confidential: not to be shared outside LDA" and labelled "for internal circulation only". According to its findings, the agency's construction and development costs are significantly higher than those for similar housing projects on mainland Europe.

The in-depth report compared how much it was going to cost the LDA to build housing on a site in Naas in Co Kildare with like-for-like housing schemes in mainland Europe.

"From developments that formed part of the LDA survey, when looking at all-in development costs there is a range of differences from the LDA development being €274 (9.2 per cent) more expensive per square metre than the German maximum to €1,545 (90.3 per cent) more expensive than Brussels," it found.

"Cost of utilities in Ireland is broadly in line with Belgium, but almost double France's figures. Similar local taxes and fees for Ireland is more than double France. However, for professional fees, Ireland is one of the lowest."

These details from the April 2021 report suggested it would cost the LDA between €155,000 and €200,000 to build apartments in Naas. The construction costs alone for a two-bed 90 square metre apartment in Naas are €200,000, which is between €42,000 and €81,000 more than the cost noted for similar housing projects in comparable areas of France, Belgium and Germany. The all-in development cost, which would include utilities and land work such as footpaths and local taxes for a two-bed apartment in the Naas scheme would be €292,000. The results showed this was between €23,000 and €138,000 more expensive than in other parts of Europe.

"It is likely that any differences in the all-in-development costs are driven by large differences in construction costs or other subsidisation arrangements when compared to comparator countries," the report said.

Further parts of the study examined if tax on construction and labour costs are driving higher development costs, but found that "Ireland, at 13.5 per cent, has an attractive Vat rate for construction compared to other comparator countries with most other countries reaching over 17 per cent".



A proposed site at Naas in Co Kildare: an LDA report found that it could cost between €23,000 and €138,000 more to build a two-bed apartment than in other parts of Europe. It has since been reported that the government is considering lowering Vat on the building of new homes to stimulate private development. The LDA's report indicated that this was not a factor in Irish construction costs, but the report was never shared with the Department of Housing. The LDA's report also found that hourly labour costs in Ireland, when compared to comparator countries, "do not seem to be the main driver in the disparity in construction costs with Ireland having one of the lowest from surveyed countries. Of course, this is heavily contingent on the magnitude of people working on a development. There is evidence in recent years the wage costs in the sector are growing at a faster rate than the comparator country average". Overall the report found a number of areas where construction costs were higher for the LDA than they were for state builders in other countries, but there was no clear indication of what was driving this.

Sources with knowledge of the LDA and the report said that no further analysis was conducted as to why the agency's costs are significantly higher, or what could be done to reduce these costs. One source familiar with the LDA's building costs said that it was "all about delivery. No one appears to be feeling cost pressure. That will come later I suppose, at the end, once all the money is spent".

A spokesman for the LDA, responding to queries last week, said the draft report was an exercise to gain greater insights into the costs of residential construction in Ireland as compared to other European jurisdictions.

"The LDA continually researches ways to reduce costs and to design its schemes to result in quality affordable homes and value for money for the state," the spokesman said.

In September 2021, six months after the LDA's report was conducted, the Department of Housing commissioned its own comprehensive review of how much it costs to build housing in Ireland. A spokesman for the Department of Housing told this newspaper last week that it was not aware of the LDA's report. He added that the LDA and department did frequently share other information in the interest of finding ways to increase the delivery of affordable housing in as cost effective a manner as possible.

The LDA spokesman said the report was marked "not to be shared outside" as it contained potential pricing information regarding a specific project currently in a tender process. This might be deemed confidential, market sensitive information that may result in a loss to the LDA if released.

The spokesman said that the report, which is 40 pages long and includes a complete set of conclusions, was still considered to be a draft by the agency.

Filling in the blanks

A review of publicly available information from the LDA, such as board meeting minutes, has shown there is a trend of redacting information that obscures the agency's key delivery targets. A person who has routinely attended board meetings said that updates from senior LDA management, which are consistently redacted in the published minutes, regularly showed that housing delivery targets were being amended because the projects were not on time.

In July 2019, an update on the Shanganagh project was redacted from the minutes. In September 2019, another update on Shanganagh and the project at the former Saint Kevin's Hospital site were redacted. Between June and September 2020, large sections of the progress updates given to the board were also redacted upon publication.



Micheál Martin, the former taoiseach, and councillor Mary Hanafin, cathaoirleach DLR, at the sod turning for the LDA's Shanganagh Development. Picture: Orla Murray/Coalesce

The minutes do show that concerns were raised by the LDA board on many occasions at meetings in 2019 and 2020 that the agency would have little progress to point towards.

In May 2019, there was pressure on senior LDA staff to get at least one housing scheme under way so the agency could show some progress. Two months after O'Neill presented the board with some near-term options, he gave a more pessimistic update.

"The board were updated on the planning applications for the LDA priority sites. Procurement of the design teams took longer than expected due to a high volume of applications and queries. It is now anticipated that about half of the applications for planning permission which were due to be lodged in 2019, will instead be lodged in Q1 2020," the minutes from July 2019 show.

Those comments are a rare example of the LDA openly disclosing delays to previously set targets. In the following months, the board started to consistently ask Coleman, chief executive of the LDA, to explain delays.

"Slippage from previously stated milestone completion dates was highlighted by the board as an area of concern. A review of project timelines is under way which will lead to more credible and accurate timelines going forward," the minutes said.

The note then said that a discussion had taken place on "managing expectation and setting timelines" before the board members "emphasised the need to proceed with 2 or 3 initial priority sites with the expectation that there may be external delays to at least one of the initial sites".

In September 2019, the board was told that the LDA hoped to "break ground by the end of 2020" on the site in Skerries. That work did not happen. A planning application for the Skerries site was submitted in April 2022, and no decision has been made.

A similar discussion took place in October 2019 about the lack of progress on projects and "what can be realistically delivered, while at the same time, making sure that the effort put in by the LDA is recognised".

A year later, in October 2020, the lack of progress was again the topic of discussion. The board said the LDA needed to improve its project management and delivery capabilities to take "full account of elements beyond the LDA's control and being careful about timelines in order to avoid unrealistic expectations".

Two months on, in December 2020, the same issue was put to the LDA senior team by the board. "The board noted that a clearer indication of deadlines is needed in the property update so that the end-result for the year can be tracked."

John Moran: the former secretary general, Department of Finance resigned as chairman of the LDA in 2021. Picture: Oisín McHugh/True Media

Moran walks away

In 2021, the lack of progress at the LDA was made more publicly known after John Moran, the former secretary general of the Department of Finance, resigned from his role as chairman of the agency.

In the first two years of the LDA, Moran was put forward by the agency on many occasions to explain what it was going to achieve. He delivered talks at construction industry events nationwide. In December 2019, at the Property Summit in Croke Park, he said that the agency could break the boom-bust cycle of the Irish housing market.

He added that the LDA could also take a lead on innovative and imaginative means of building new types of housing. On many occasions, he said the LDA could prove there was a demand in Ireland for car-less developments.

A letter Moran sent to Darragh O'Brien, the Minister for Housing, when he was still chairman of the LDA in September 2020 raised concerns about the lack of direction from the Department of Housing in terms of guiding the LDA. Moran later told this newspaper that the government needed a more urgent approach to solving the housing affordability crisis.

A year and half after Moran resigned, limited information has so far been released by the LDA on how many homes it expects to deliver in 2023.

Based on information supplied by a spokesman for the agency, it has deals in place to buy around 700 homes from private developers, but as it stands, no homes will be delivered on state-owned lands until 2024.

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Declan Hayden

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@murraygroup.ie>
Sent: Tuesday 10 January 2023 13:02
To: Rebecca Quinn
Cc: Declan Hayden
Subject: RE: Invoices from Murray
Attachments: [REDACTED]

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Rebecca,

I hope you are well

Please see attached invoice [REDACTED] November 2022 for processing .

Kind regards
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday 26 July 2022 18:13
To: Rebecca Quinn <[REDACTED]@lda.ie>
Subject: RE: June Retainer/Projects

Hi Rebecca

I hope you are well

The invoice is being finalised but the value looks to be Net [REDACTED] excluding Vat @23%)

I will send on the invoice tomorrow when approved

Kind regards
[REDACTED]

From: Rebecca Quinn <[REDACTED]@lda.ie>
Sent: Wednesday 20 July 2022 10:49
To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@murraygroup.ie>
Subject: June Retainer/Projects

Hi [REDACTED]

Hope you are well!

If possible could we please have Junes fees confirmed?

Many thanks

Kind Regards

Rebecca Quinn

Administration Assistant

Land Development Agency, Second Floor, Ashford House, 18-23 Tara Street, Dublin 2, D02 VX67

Mob: +353 [REDACTED] | Email: [REDACTED]@lda.ie | Web: lda.ie



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Declan Hayden

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@murraygroup.ie>
Sent: Monday 9 January 2023 09:03
To: Declan Hayden
Cc: Richie Oakley; Andrew Smith
Subject: Catch-up chat

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Hi Declan,

Just wondering if you might be free for a chat early this week so we can catch up on what's forthcoming PR-wise? Any time today or tomorrow afternoon maybe?

All the best,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Associate Director, Public Affairs

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Declan Hayden

From: [REDACTED]@murraygroup.ie>
Sent: Thursday 12 January 2023 13:29
To: Declan Hayden; [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Short Update on PR

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Many thanks for this, Declan, and looking forward to discussing further. Ready to help on Kilbarry as soon as you need and happy to hop on a call whenever works. Clonmore key handover sounds like it should be a good one and could we have similar from the first round in Delgany soon enough too?

All the best,

[REDACTED]

From: Declan Hayden [REDACTED]@lda.ie>
Sent: Thursday 12 January 2023 11:21
To: [REDACTED]@murraygroup.ie>; [REDACTED]@murraygroup.ie>
Cc: [REDACTED]@murraygroup.ie>
Subject: Short Update on PR

Hi all

Just flagging a rough pipeline at the moment for a PR Update:

Happy to chat in more detail in due course

January - February :

Project Tosaigh:

LDA Affordable Homes - Affordable Purchase

- Kilbarry Waterford – Launch of LDA Affordable Purchase (*imminent*)
- Ongoing Clonmore PR – Key handover to new owners
- Academy Navan, Co. Meath – launch of Affordable Homes in Navan

LDA Affordable Homes - Cost Rental

- Archers Wood Delgany – Next round: 1 bed apts
- Parklands City West – Cost Rental launch
- Hollystown Clonsilla D15 – Cost Rental launch

Projects:

- Digital Hub – Consultation Report findings and steps forward
- Cromcastle – Consultation on Plans (*Late January*)
- Cherry Orchard – Consultation on Plans (*Early February*)
- Sandy Road – Consultation on Plans

Best Regards



Declan Hayden

Community Liason Coordinator

The Land Development Agency

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Declan Hayden

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@murraygroup.ie>
Sent: Wednesday 4 January 2023 18:53
To: Declan Hayden
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Irish Times article updated online

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Hi Declan,

Those amendments have been made online thanks to contact by [REDACTED] with the IT desk. We didn't receive a request for info on the overall pipeline so it looks like old information was copied and pasted from somewhere in the earlier version. Anyway, updated article at this link and below: <https://www.irishtimes.com/ireland/housing-planning/2023/01/04/land-development-agencys-first-cost-rental-offers-two-bed-homes-for-1455-per-month/>

Best,
[REDACTED]

First 'cost rental' homes under new agency include two-beds for €1,455 per month

The agency says the prices at the Archers' Wood development in Delgany are pitched at 30% below comparable open market prices

Project Tosaigh is a programme designed to help unlock planning-approved sites for delivery as affordable homes

Tim O'Brien

Wed Jan 4 2023 - 05:00

The initial phase of the Land Development Agency's first "cost rental" housing scheme, a development of 142 new homes at less than market rents, has been over subscribed within days of its launch.

Cost rental is a form of affordable housing that links rents to the cost of construction as opposed to the rent the new homes might attract if placed on the open market.

The first cost rental scheme to be offered by the agency is part of the Archers' Wood development in Delgany, Co Wicklow. In a deal with developers Cairn Homes, the agency is offering 48 two- and three-bedroom duplexes in the first phase with 94 one-bed apartments to follow early this year.

Rents for two-bedroom apartments start at €1,455 per month and three-bedroom apartments are to cost in the region of €1,600. The target market is middle-income households that have an income of less than €53,000 net but who do not qualify for social housing or any rental supports.

The agency said the prices were pitched at 30 per cent below comparable average open market prices in the area. It said the scheme was “a step forward” in its mission to help deliver affordable rents at scale, which is the start of a pipeline of 5,000 cost rental and affordable purchase homes to be delivered under the agency’s Project Tosaigh initiative.

Project Tosaigh is a programme designed to help unlock planning-approved sites for delivery as affordable homes. This will be supplemented by delivery on State lands, including a Shanganagh, Shankill, project for 597 homes that commenced recently.

Some 48 new homes opened for applications at Archers’ Wood in late November, and were oversubscribed with 150 applications received. A further 94 one-bedroom homes will be offered in early 2023.

Among its portfolio of projects Project Tosaigh aims to unlock land in private ownership that has planning permission but where delivery has stalled due to financing and other constraints. An expression of interest process was launched at the end of 2021, and the Land Development Agency now has a pipeline of projects anticipated to deliver some 1,000 affordable for sale and cost rental homes.

Project Tosaigh is being run in addition to about 5,000 to 6,000 homes that the Land Development Agency is advancing for delivery from its existing portfolio of State-sourced development sites. These schemes are at various stages of the development process, ranging from awaiting planning decision to being under construction now. In the medium to longer term capacity for a further 10,000 to 15,000 homes are anticipated from the transfer of additional State lands announced in the Government’s Housing For All strategy last September.

Further land development projects in the pipeline include:

- 597 social and affordable homes on the Land Development Agency’s project at Shanganagh, Co Dublin: planning permission has been approved and a contractor, Walls Construction, has been appointed. Construction has commenced with the first homes due to be completed this year;
- 944 homes at Dundrum central in south Dublin. Public consultation has been completed for the redevelopment of the Central Mental Hospital site;
- Cork City Docklands: A delivery office has been established for the redevelopment of Cork City Docklands in partnership with Cork City Council. The 146-hectare site is capable of accommodating about 25,000 people in what will be Ireland’s largest regeneration project;
- Colbert Station, Limerick. A design review has been completed to inform the regeneration of this 50-hectare site, which will deliver housing for about 5,000 people;
- Sandy Road, Galway. Plans for 1,000 new homes are in progress on an 8-hectare site in collaboration with a range of local stakeholders including Galway city and county councils, Galway Education and Training Board and Galway Bay FM;

- Donore Project, Dublin 8: The Land Development Agency and Dublin City Council have submitted a planning application to An Bord Pleanála to build 543 homes on the site of the former St Teresa's Gardens flat complex in Dublin 8;
- St Kevin's, Cork Planning permission approved for the construction of 265 homes, an enterprise centre and creche facilities at the former St Kevin's Hospital site in Shanakiel, Cork. Enabling works are due to be completed this month and a tender for phase 1 of the development has been released to a list of pre-qualified contractors.

John Coleman, the agency's chief executive, said it has been working "to create a pipeline of projects and to enable them for delivery by working on designs and planning consents.

"From a standing start our work to date has us well positioned to commence the delivery of big new homes projects," he said, adding that the agency intends "to build on our position as a key State entity driving affordable housing supply and strategic land management".

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Declan Hayden

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@murraygroup.ie>
Sent: Wednesday 4 January 2023 13:56
To: Declan Hayden; [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Broadcast Alert - Murrays - Land Development Agency

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Hi Declan,

Happy new year to you!

I wouldn't say it's too late to seek an update to the online version but I wouldn't be too inclined to seek a correction with [REDACTED] unless it was very necessary. He is positively disposed and produced a positive article, so he'll be a useful contact in general.

Would you maybe let us know what the tweaks are and we could see if we can seek updates through the news desk?

Thanks a mill,
[REDACTED]

From: Declan Hayden <[REDACTED]@lda.ie>
Sent: Wednesday 4 January 2023 13:04
To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@murraygroup.ie>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@murraygroup.ie>
Subject: FW: Broadcast Alert - Murrays - Land Development Agency

Hi Guys

Happy New Year,

There are a couple of inaccuracies in this article related to status of our projects:
<https://www.irishtimes.com/ireland/housing-planning/2023/01/04/land-development-agencys-first-cost-rental-offers-two-bed-homes-for-1455-per-month/>

Is it worth asking them to update the online version or is it too late now?

Thanks

Best Regards

Declan Hayden
Community Liaison Coordinator
Land Development Agency, Second Floor, Ashford House, 18-23 Tara Street, Dublin 2, D02 VX67
Tel: +353 [REDACTED] Mob: +353 [REDACTED] Email: [REDACTED]@lda.ie | Web: lda.ie

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Declan Hayden

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@murraygroup.ie>
Sent: Wednesday 4 January 2023 14:47
To: Declan Hayden
Subject: RE: Broadcast Alert - Murrays - Land Development Agency

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Thanks Declan – leave it with me.

Best,
[REDACTED]

From: Declan Hayden <[REDACTED]@lda.ie>
Sent: Wednesday 4 January 2023 14:43
To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@murraygroup.ie>
Subject: FW: Broadcast Alert - Murrays - Land Development Agency

Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for coming back to me. Corrections below:

Thanks

- 597 social and affordable homes on the Land Development Agency's project at Shanganagh, Co Dublin: planning permission has been approved and a tender process is in place to appoint a contractor for construction. The first homes are to be completed this year; *A contractor has already been appointed (Walls Construction) and construction has commenced.*
- 1,200 homes at Dundrum central in south Dublin. Public consultation has been completed for the redevelopment of the Central Mental Hospital site, with a planning application expected to be submitted in the coming months; *A SHD planning application for 944 homes was submitted in March 2022 and we await a decision from An Bord Pleanála.*
- Cork City Docklands: A delivery office has been established for the redevelopment of Cork City Docklands in partnership with Cork City Council. The 146-hectare site is capable of accommodating about 25,000 people in what will be Ireland's largest regeneration project;
- Colbert Station, Limerick. A design review has been completed to inform the regeneration of this 50-hectare site, which will deliver housing for about 5,000 people;
- Sandy Road, Galway. Plans for 1,000 new homes are in progress on an 8-hectare site in collaboration with a range of local stakeholders including Galway city and county councils, Galway Education and Training Board and Galway Bay FM;
- Donore Project, Dublin 8: The Land Development Agency and Dublin City Council plans to build around 600 social and affordable homes on the site of the former St Teresa's Gardens flat complex in Dublin 8; *A planning application for 543 homes was submitted to An Bord Pleanála in December.*
- St Kevin's, Cork: Planning permission approved for the construction of 266 ~~265~~ homes, an enterprise centre and creche facilities at the former St Kevin's Hospital site in Shanakiel, Cork. *Enabling works will commence in the coming months* are due to be completed this month and a tender for Phase 1 of the development has been released to a list of pre-qualified contractors

Best Regards

Declan

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Declan Hayden

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@murraygroup.ie>
Sent: Wednesday 18 January 2023 11:22
To: Declan Hayden; [REDACTED]
Subject: Murray/Planning Ahead

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Declan

Great to meet on Monday and looking forward to a busy year.

We were hoping to have a meeting this week to discuss the upcoming events you sent us and plan ahead – would Friday afternoon work? We know what is coming up, but we are not 100% sure on timings/detail and we were also considering if it would make sense to combine some of the releases for a bigger impact and perhaps an event/events involving JC and a minister/ministers etc. Have taken your guide below and just added some queries that we could chat through if you had a chance.

Best regards, [REDACTED]

Upcoming events:

On Project Tosaigh if we go with the breakdown into affordable housing and cost rental, we have a number of things coming up as you detailed.

On Affordable Homes we have:

- Kilbarry, Waterford - launch to be announced (what date can we go ahead with this?) - 92 affordable homes
- Clonmore, Mallow, Cork - key handover (what date do we think this will happen and can we get case studies?) - 95 affordable homes

For these three it could make sense to combine all three for national press and then do regional and local press for them separately with potentially a soundbite recorded for local and regional radio. If, for example, we could bring a minister to Clonmore for a key handover with a case study - we could potentially also announce Kilbarry and even Navan that day etc. This would create strong momentum and ensure greater interest in the story. We would then do targeted and local releases.

On Cost Rental we have:

- Archers Wood, Delgany - Next round of 1 bed apartments (what's the date on this?) and then are we still trying to get a case study on duplexes? - what stages are the 94 being delivered in?
- Parklands, City West - what date are we thinking on this? And how many units?

Again, it could work to combine these three and maybe do something with a minister etc - one of these is in the Taoiseach's constituency so there could be an opportunity there?

On the longer term projects - we just need to firm up the timing on these and the news lines and if there is any documents or images/CGIs we can see ahead of time. Once we have these we can work out the best approach together.

- Digital Hub, Dublin 8 -
- Cromcastle, Coolock:
- Cherry Orchard, Dublin -
- Sandy Road, Galway

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Declan Hayden

From: [REDACTED]@murraygroup.ie>
Sent: Monday 16 January 2023 14:32
To: John Coleman
Cc: Declan Hayden
Subject: suggested reply to Mail

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Michael Stone is a member of the board of the LDA. He was appointed to the position in December 2021. As is common with other state agencies, members of the LDA board can receive remuneration and can claim certain travel and subsistence expenses. Mr Stone has waived his remuneration fee and does not claim expenses.

Background: Members of the board of the LDA receive remuneration of €15,750. In line with the 'One Person One Salary' principle, no public servant is entitled to receive remuneration in the form of board fees, save for situations that are statutorily provided for e.g., Worker Directors. Travel and subsistence is payable at appropriate civil service rates. Michael Stone is entitled to receive remuneration but has chosen not to.

[REDACTED]
Director

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