



Houses of the  
**Oireachtas**  
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**An Coiste um Thithíocht agus Easpa Dídine**

Tuarascáil Eatramhach ón gCoiste um

Thithíocht agus Easpa Dídine

26 Aibreán 2016

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**Houses of the Oireachtas**

**Committee on Housing and Homelessness**

Interim Report of the Committee on

Housing and Homelessness

26 April 2016



# Oireachtas Committee on Housing and Homelessness

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## INTRODUCTION

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By Order of the Dáil on the 14<sup>th</sup> of April 2016, the Committee on Housing and Homelessness was established for the purpose of reviewing the implications of the problems of housing and homelessness, and making recommendations thereon. It was provided in the Order that the Committee shall, by the 28<sup>th</sup> of April 2016, provide an interim report containing its proposed work schedule for consideration by the Dáil. It is pursuant to this requirement that this Interim Report of the Committee has been prepared.

The first meeting of the Committee took place the 20<sup>th</sup> of April 2016. The Committee's fourteen members<sup>1</sup> voted to elect John Curran TD to serve as Chair.

The Committee is required to present a final report to the Dáil by the 17<sup>th</sup> of June 2016, whereupon the Committee shall stand dissolved.

At the first meeting of the Committee, a preliminary discussion took place amongst members as to how the Committee should go about its task and formulate a work schedule or programme. Speakers emphasised the very short timeframe of the Committee, and the need for its work to be very tightly focused. It is not the wish of the Committee to repeat the work of previous Oireachtas Committees or other bodies that have already addressed the issues of housing and homelessness (which are well documented and understood). Rather, it seeks to build upon this previous body of work and to focus its efforts on identifying the specific actions that need to be taken to achieve urgent implementation of measures to address the problems involved

It was agreed by Members that, given the volume of work to be undertaken in a very short timescale, the Committee should meet twice per week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Regarding its work schedule, a consensus emerged that sessions should be organised along the lines of a number of themes or key issues, which are outlined in the main body of this report.

It was also agreed that, in the first instance, the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government would be invited to address the Committee on the Government's approach to housing and homelessness.

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<sup>1</sup> A full list of the Committee's membership is contained in Appendix 2 to this report.

**PROPOSED COMMITTEE WORK SCHEDULE**

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The Committee has identified a number of key issues or strands of the housing and homelessness problem which it believes it necessary to address in the course of its work. This work schedule may be subject to change as other issues potentially emerge in the course of hearings. The order in which the Committee addresses these issues may also vary, subject to availability of witnesses and other factors. The list of potential witnesses is very much preliminary at this stage, and the Committee will identify more specific lists of stakeholders and potential witnesses as its work progresses.

**Key issues for the Committee**

	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Potential Witnesses</b>
1	The Government's overall strategy for housing and homelessness	Minister for the Environment, Community & Local Government
2	Social housing – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local authority-provided housing</li> <li>• Housing provided by other bodies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local authorities</li> <li>• Department of the Environment, Community &amp; Local Government</li> <li>• Other Housing Agencies</li> <li>• NGOs</li> </ul>
3	Private rented sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representatives of landlord organisations</li> <li>• Representatives of tenants</li> <li>• Department of Social Protection</li> </ul>
4	Private housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representatives of developers and/or the construction industry</li> <li>• Representatives of estate agents and/or mortgage brokers</li> </ul>
5	NAMA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NAMA</li> </ul>

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6	Homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Local Government bodies</li><li>• Bodies representing the interests of those affected by homelessness</li></ul>
7	Legal Issues (including compulsory purchase orders)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Legal experts</li></ul>
8	Mortgage difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Insolvency bodies</li><li>• Representatives of those experiencing mortgage difficulties.</li><li>• FLAC</li></ul>
9	Issues relating to social inclusion and special needs in housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Department of the Environment, Community &amp; Local Government</li><li>• Representative of the people affected</li></ul>
10	Housing Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Department of Public Expenditure</li></ul>

## OBJECTIVES OF THE COMMITTEE

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While there are several strands to the Committee's work, it has identified four main objectives, as follows:

**1. To find ways of increasing the overall supply of housing in Ireland.**

This objective includes key issues 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 (i.e. the Government's overall strategy for housing and homelessness, social housing, private housing, Nama, legal issues).

**2. To help prevent further homelessness.**

This objective includes key issues 3, 6, 7, 8 (i.e. private rented sector, homelessness, legal issues, mortgage difficulties).

**3. To find ways to transition homeless households into long-term, quality accommodation**

This objective includes key issues 1, 2, 3, 6 (i.e. Government's housing plan, social housing, private rented sector, homelessness).

**4. To ensure that people are in accommodation appropriate to their long-term needs.**

This objective includes issues 3, 8, 9 (i.e. private rented sector, mortgage difficulties, issues relating to social inclusion in housing).

## APPENDIX 1 – TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE

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### ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMITTEE

[ORDER OF THE DÁIL 14 APRIL 2016]

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“That-

- (a) A Special Committee, which shall be called the Committee on Housing and Homelessness, shall be established to review the implications of the problems of housing and homelessness, and make recommendations thereon;
- (b) The Committee shall be made up of fourteen members of the Dáil, of which three members will be appointed by Fine Gael, three members by Fianna Fáil, two members by Sinn Féin, one member by the Labour Party, and five members representing the independent deputies and members from other political parties, and four shall constitute a quorum; members shall be substituted as provided under Standing Order 95(2);
- (c) Notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Order 93, the Committee shall elect one of its members to be Chairman, who shall have only one vote;
- (d) The Ceann Comhairle shall announce the names of the members appointed under paragraph (b) for the information of the Dáil on the first sitting day following their appointment;
- (e) The Committee shall have the powers defined in Standing Order 85 (other than paragraphs (3), (4) and (6) thereof);
- (f) The Committee shall, by the 28<sup>th</sup> April, 2016, provide an interim report, containing its proposed work schedule for consideration by the Dáil; and
- (g) The Committee shall, by the 17<sup>th</sup> June, 2016, present a final report to the Dáil, whereupon the Committee shall stand dissolved.”

## APPENDIX 2 – MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

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Mr John Curran TD (Fianna Fáil) Cathaoirleach (Chair)

Ms Mary Butler TD (Fine Fáil)

Ms Catherine Byrne TD (Fine Gael)

Mr Sean Canney TD (Ind)

Ms Ruth Coppinger TD (AAA-PBP)

Mr Barry Cowen TD (Fianna Fáil)

Mr Bernard Durkan TD (Fine Gael)

Ms Kathleen Funchion TD (Sinn Féin)

Dr Michael Harty TD (Ind)

Mr Eoin Ó Broin TD (Sinn Féin)

Mr Fergus O'Dowd TD (Fine Gael)

Ms Maureen O'Sullivan TD (Ind)

Mr Brendan Ryan TD (Labour)

Mr Mick Wallace TD (IC)