



**Tithe an
Oireachtais
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Oireachtas**

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An Comhchoiste um Thithíocht, Pleanáil agus Rialtas Áitiúil

Roghanna Tithíochta do Dhaoine Scothaosta

Meitheamh 2018

HOUSES OF THE OIREACHTAS

Joint Committee on Housing, Planning & Local Government

Housing Options for Older People

June 2018

32/HPLG/11



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CONTENTS

CHAIR’S PREFACE	1
INTRODUCTION	3
ISSUES FACING OLDER PEOPLE	5
EXPLORING HOUSING OPTIONS	6
Adapting a Home	7
Universal Design and Technology	9
Downsizing	13
Community Supports & Sheltered Housing	13
FUTURE NEEDS	14
RECOMMENDATIONS	17
APPENDIX 1 – ORDERS OF REFERENCE	18
APPENDIX 2 – MEMBERSHIP.....	23
APPENDIX 3 – LIST OF WITNESSES	24
APPENDIX 4 – LINKS TO MEETING TRANSCRIPTS	25
APPENDIX 5 – LINKS TO SUBMISSIONS & OPENING STATEMENTS	25

CHAIR'S PREFACE



A life spent happy, healthy and long into old age is a goal shared by many across our society. It is a desire that we can each appreciate and strive towards. It is therefore easily understood why planning for comfortable, pleasant and secure later years is so important. For any society there are many benefits to ensuring our older people have a suitable home with appropriate care as they age. Empowering people to meet their housing needs as they age is a societal responsibility.

Demographic projections indicate that the number of older people in Ireland is increasing. People are living longer than ever before and this should be celebrated. Research indicates that older people wish to stay in their own home and community for as long as possible. However, over time older people may require more care and support and their homes may become unsuitable. Current alternative housing options for older people are limited and this lack of choice can result in unnecessary admissions to long-term care settings (nursing home), with its associated costs. Developing options for older peoples' supported housing can provide a viable alternative in many cases. The topic of housing for older people is seldom discussed and if Ireland is to be prepared for the growth in the number of older people then we must address this issue now. We must begin the conversation about the changes in our society today so the future doesn't surprise us.

Housing options for older people was a topic identified by the Committee as warranting careful consideration. The Committee held several meetings with invited stakeholders and experts from a range of perspectives and also sought written submissions. On behalf of the Joint Committee, I would like to thank the organisations that came before the Joint Committee to give evidence as well as the organisations who submitted written submissions. The Joint Committee gained valuable insights from all those who had an input into the preparation of the report.

The Joint Committee have made a number of recommendations and in consultation with the relevant Ministers, Departments, State Agencies and stakeholders is fully committed to monitoring the progress being made on the on-going implementation of the recommendations contained in this report as well as other policy initiatives.



Maria Bailey TD
Chair of the Joint Committee
28 June 2018

INTRODUCTION

Demographic projections indicate that the number of older people in Ireland is growing. According to Census 2016 *'Ireland's population has been getting steadily older since the 1980's. In Census 2016, 37.2% were aged 45 and over, compared with 34.4% in 2011 and 27.6% in 1986. Almost a third of the population 33.2% was less than 25 years old, while 29.5% were in the 25-44 age group'*. There are currently 638,000 people aged over 65 years of age in Ireland and this figure is expected to grow to 855,000 by 2026 and to near 1.4 million by 2046¹. The ESRI² projects that the population of Ireland will increase by around one million people or by 20% over 2016 levels, to almost 5.7 million people by 2040. The population aged over 65 will more than double to 1.3 million, or to 23% of the total, whilst those aged under 15 will decrease by around 10%. Therefore planning for later years is vital.

Clúid, in their submission to the Committee stated that;

"Furthermore the dependency ratio, that is the population aged 65 years and over expressed as a percentage of the population aged 15-64, is projected to increase from 20% in 2016 to between 37% and 50% by 2046".

Officials from the Department of Health noted that;

"People are living longer than ever before. Success in improved health and extended life expectancy has been achieved in recent decades and should be acknowledged and celebrated. Life expectancy for a woman aged 65 years in 2015 is estimated at 21 years, up 22% from life expectancy for a woman aged 65 years in 1995. For men, the figure is 18.4 years, a rise of 36%. However, as well as opportunities, the ageing population poses significant challenges that need to be recognised and addressed across a wide range of areas. Every year there is an increase of 20,000 in the over-65 population".

Ireland as we know it is changing, we as a nation are growing older and living longer. This is something which the Committee wish to acknowledge and celebrate. However, as Ireland's population of older people is increasing, Ireland will have to adapt its current housing policy to facilitate this change in demographics. As with any significant change, comes significant challenges for society and whilst this report focuses on housing for older people, it is impossible to view the topic in isolation. Consideration must also be given to health, social

¹https://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/population/2013/poplabfor2016_2046.pdf

² Prospects for Irish Regions and Counties: Scenarios and Implications, Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), December 2017.

and economic needs of older people as an older person's health or social situation can feed into their housing need and vice versa. All these considerations are interlinked and as stated by officials from the Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government (the Department);

"...it is important to acknowledge that housing policy on older people is broader and more complex than the mere provision of housing".

As is clear from the evidence and projections for an ageing population, Ireland must plan accordingly with steps needed now in order to prepare for the future. However, it must be recognised that it is not just about planning for the inevitable population rise it is a two pronged challenge. In tandem with dealing with the inevitable population rise, there is also the challenge of catering for the older people of today. The older persons of today are also facing challenges and need the right supports and systems in place to ensure their quality of life is upheld to the highest standards possible.

It is important to have an understanding of what older people want and need in order to cater for them. The Committee heard from Age Friendly Ireland who have consulted with approximately 20,000 older people over the past nine years. They have developed what they term their national baseline and this baseline helped the Committee in understanding what older people want. Age Friendly Ireland outlined to the Committee how;

"...older people want to remain living in their own homes and as part of their communities, but not necessarily in their current housing conditions. That could be because they can no longer get up the stairs or there might be obstacles to that. The top thing they do not want to do is transition into residential care or even to move in with family. They want to retain their independence for as long as possible. They would like financial help with their bills. Some older people were not able to keep their house warm in the past 12 months and some of them had to go without heating. They would be people who are living in three or four bedroom houses. They need to live in appropriate accommodation that is warm".

The National Positive Ageing Strategy³, published in 2013, set out Ireland's high-level vision for ageing and older people, and the national goals and objectives to promote positive ageing in Ireland. Within this strategy the objective for housing is set out in the third national goal;

'Enable people to age with confidence, security and dignity in their own homes and communities for as long as possible'

³ https://health.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/National_Positive_Ageing_Strategy_English.pdf

Government policy emanating from the National Positive Ageing Strategy has been focused on supporting older people to live in their homes for as long as possible. The Committee heard how the Government is attempting to achieve this goal and from the evidence presented to the Committee a number of trends and themes emerged.

The primary focus of the Committee when hearing evidence from witnesses was to examine the supports currently available to older persons and also seek to determine whether the policy structures currently in place are adequate to meet the housing needs and wants of older persons in Ireland now and into the future. The information garnered from the Committee meetings and submissions received are contained in the following chapters with the Committee providing constructive recommendations.

ISSUES FACING OLDER PEOPLE

The Committee heard about numerous issues facing older people such as isolation, energy and general security, transport and healthcare concerns. These issues are all interlinked with housing for older people with one in five older people needing support to age at home, regardless of home ownership or house type. Public services have been designed with an average younger age cohort in mind. As Ireland's population ages, the proportion of older people using public services will increase. Ireland's public services will need to adapt to this change in service user. ALONE noted that;

“Housing is vital to meet the need of people to remain independent. We believe that all models will need some support structures and technology to enable people to age at home. Housing linked to community support is absolutely vital to reduce the pressure on residential nursing home care and acute hospital care and to allow older people to remain at home, where they want to be”.

At present, with few housing options available for older people and with a home not built to fit their needs, many are forced into living in residential care facilities such as nursing homes. Access to residential care is an issue with costs in nursing homes high and rooms hard to come by with those waiting on home care packages often having to wait significant amounts of time. These delays can be witnessed in the health sector where some older people are restricted in leaving hospital due to a lack of residential care facilities. The Department of Health noted that;

“With regard to delayed discharges, the biggest category we would typically see tends to be people who are going into and who have a need for residential nursing home care. This would be the biggest cohort of people who make up delayed discharges because they are waiting for a placement and going through the fair deal or home care packages application process. The number awaiting the housing adaption grant is generally quite small”.

The issue of homelessness has also become more prevalent amongst older people. It was noted to the Committee of an increasing number of older people facing the prospect of homelessness. ALONE outlined that;

“At present, 90% of all the older people in our housing are coming from homeless services which traditionally was not the situation. There are approximately 35 older people for each house and 35 people over 70 years all trying to get into one house is not a good queue to be facing. When they try to obtain private rented accommodation in their 70s, they turn up, usually on their own and perhaps try to pay the rent with housing assistance payment, HAP. They are just not attractive to the private sector”.

Older people face many issues and challenges in meeting their housing needs both now and into the future and it is clear that the issues outlined above need to be urgently addressed.

EXPLORING HOUSING OPTIONS

In examining the issue of housing for older people, it was clear that the different housing options available to older people are limited. While Government policy provides that people will be supported to live with dignity and independence in their own homes, the reality is that options are generally inadequate.

It is important from the outset that in examining the housing options, that older persons are not categorised into one homogenous group. There are vast and stark differences amongst older persons and grouping them together is not only a disservice to older people but is also unhelpful in addressing their needs and challenges. As outlined by Age Friendly Ireland;

“Older people are not a homogenous group. Not all 70 year olds are able to walk 5 km or whatever the case may be. Some have chronic conditions, dementia or suffer from rural isolation while others are active. There are affluent older people and others in poverty. We have tried to collectively get what the key issues are”.

Taking this into account and echoing the evidence presented to the Committee it is important to acknowledge that there is no one size fits all housing option or solution for older people, therefore it is imperative that there are a number of adequate housing options. This is noted by Cluid when they state that;

‘policy in relation to housing for older people needs to be guided by the principle of supporting ‘ageing in place’.

It is widely acknowledged that housing for older people should be delivered using a multi-faceted approach. Housing for older people is closely connected with other elements and its

approach should be integrated with healthcare and community support structures. As evidenced in the baseline and amongst other evidence presented to the Committee it is clear that a significant amount of older people want to live independently for as long as possible in their own homes. The reality however often means that as people age their home no longer meets their needs with obstacles such as climbing the stairs to access a bedroom or bathroom no longer being feasible. The following paragraphs explore the various options available.

ADAPTING A HOME

There are a number of grants and schemes to assist older people who wish to remain in their homes for longer, for example *The Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability*, *Housing Aid for Older People Scheme* and *the Mobility Aids Grant Scheme*. All three schemes provide assistance to older people in adapting their home to make living at home more practical, comfortable and achievable.

Retrofitting a home enables an older person live independently in their home for longer. In the past Ireland's housing stock was not built with the needs of an older person in mind, so adapting an existing home to facilitate an older person living independently for longer makes sense and the Committee are fully supportive of the various schemes that deliver this. However, it is clear from evidence presented to the Committee that funding and the application process are in urgent need of review. The Committee heard from several witnesses who identified problems with the grants scheme. ALONE highlighted to the Committee how;

“the housing adaptation grant, HAG, is run differently in every county, is complex and is not funded to meet demand”.

Nationwide consistency in any scheme is desirable so that one group of citizens is not disadvantaged solely on account of their postcode. Problems with how complex and cumbersome the actual application form is were also expressed to the Committee. The Department acknowledged to the Committee that there are issues with the form and that they are currently being reviewed in order to simplify the process;

“The grants are also being made more accessible with a new single application form to be issued soon, with an easy to read guide to filling in the form....We have issued guidelines on it and more streamlined, single forms will be issued shortly...we recognise that forms can be very difficult at the best of times but for people in their later years, they can be especially daunting”.

Another matter which was brought to the attention of the Committee concerned the reduction in funding to the grants during the recessionary years. The Committee

acknowledge that some funding has been restored to the scheme however it also heard additional concerns in terms of the size of the grant and number of recipients, Age Action noted that;

“Between 2010 and 2013, funding for the scheme fell sharply, as did the number of grants. At the start of 2014, a number of changes were introduced to the eligibility criteria for the scheme. These included a reduction in the size of the maximum grant available, changes in the income bands and an increase in the age for eligibility from 60 to 66 years”.

Age Action further went on to say that the recessionary economic climate that brought on cuts to the budget for the scheme no longer exists and, whilst noting that funding did increase again in 2014 the number of grants awarded increased by more than 100%. This increase in grants translates into funding being spread more thinly amongst recipients.

Additionally, Age Friendly Ireland noted how the scheme transferred from the Health Service Executive to local authorities a number of years ago and that some local authorities are having issues with the need to match funding. Addressing the matched funding issue the Department explained to the Committee that;

“At the moment, the Department provides 80% of the funding and the local authorities provide the remaining 20%”.

The Department also stated that;

“Our finding is that local authorities do not have too much difficulty in providing the funding. The 20% requirement is important from the point of view of additionality. We can give an amount but it is important for local authorities to recognise that they need to put something back into communities as well. It is the additionality that is important with the 20%”.

The Committee also has some concerns about how local authorities which may be facing competing demands or under financial strain, deal with the issue of matched funding. They also highlighted practical difficulties in applying for the grant. In particular they noted that;

“Generally, a critical incident occurs and then a fast-track application must become priority one. It is rushed through and then priorities two and three, that is, the people who are trying to plan for ageing, have to wait until they have a bad fall before something happens”.

The Committee acknowledges the need to address priority incidents as and when they occur, however a system must be in place to meet the needs of those older persons that are attempting to plan and remedy existing or non-emergency issues with their home. The

Department noted however that local authorities should in fact be using a level of discretion when operating the schemes;

“Regarding prioritisation of grants and meeting the needs of those who need the grants most, we are very flexible with local authorities. They have discretion in respect of the particular cases that arise... We are very flexible with local authorities in these circumstances. They should be doing it, where possible”.

The Committee acknowledges that there appears to be a level of discretion and flexibility within the system however are concerned that this practice may not be reflected nationwide throughout the various local authorities. Age Action noted how;

“The current policy of prioritising the provision of housing adaption grants to facilitate discharge from hospitals on an emergency basis means that older people in hospital can access them more easily than those living in the community. This makes it harder for older people in the community – such as those with non-emergency needs – to have their care needs met. Enabling older people to remain at home for longer through investment in these schemes can deliver savings by ensuring that fewer older people require preventable hospitalisation and, if deemed suitable, provide an alternative to nursing homes admittances for those already in hospital and awaiting discharge”.

Adaption grants can have a transformational impact upon people’s lives and can ultimately fulfil the goal of ageing in place.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Retrofitting allows the adapting of homes and can assist with the ultimate goal of ageing in place. However, if a house is built to a universal design standard in the first place then the problem of adaption does not arise. This chapter explores the potential of universal design and technology and their role in building for the future needs of housing for older people.

Universal Design is defined in legislation in Ireland in the Disability Act 2005⁴ as follows;

‘universal design’—

(a) means the design and composition of an environment so that it may be accessed, understood and used—

(i) to the greatest practicable extent,

(ii) in the most independent and natural manner possible,

⁴ <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2005/act/14/section/52/enacted/en/html>

(iii) in the widest possible range of situations, and

(iv) without the need for adaptation, modification, assistive devices or specialised solutions,

by persons of any age or size or having any particular physical, sensory, mental health or intellectual ability or disability,

and

(b) means, in relation to electronic systems, any electronics-based process of creating products, services or systems so that they may be used by any person.

The Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (CEUD) was established by the National Disability Authority (NDA) in January 2007 under the Disability Act 2005. The CEUD consider universal design as;

Universal Design is the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability. An environment (or any building, product, or service in that environment) should be designed to meet the needs of all people who wish to use it. This is not a special requirement, for the benefit of only a minority of the population. It is a fundamental condition of good design. If an environment is accessible, usable, convenient and a pleasure to use, everyone benefits. By considering the diverse needs and abilities of all throughout the design process, universal design creates products, services and environments that meet peoples' needs. Simply put, universal design is good design⁵.

The Committee heard the benefits of universal design or age friendly design. In particular Age Friendly Ireland noted that;

“The age friendly principle is based on the fact that if one designs for the young, one excludes the old, and if one designs for the old, one includes everybody. Sustainable and inclusive communities and housing options are key to building a sustainable, age friendly country”.

Designing a home to cater for the needs of all ages and abilities will benefit everyone and will meet the housing needs of persons as they age. Well designed universal, adaptable housing stock fit for all empowers people to live independently.

Currently the Building Regulations 2010 Technical Guidance Document M provides the

⁵ <http://universaldesign.ie/What-is-Universal-Design/>

relevant guidance in relation to the design of buildings for older persons. Part M aims to foster an inclusive approach to the design and construction of the built environment. The requirements of Part M (M1 - M4) aim to ensure that regardless of age, size or disability:

- (a) new buildings other than dwellings are accessible and usable;*
- (b) extensions to existing buildings other than dwellings are where practicable, accessible and useable;*
- (c) material alterations to existing buildings other than dwellings increase the accessibility and usability of existing buildings where practicable;*
- (d) certain changes of use to existing buildings other than dwellings increase the accessibility and usability of existing buildings where practicable; and*
- (e) new dwellings are visitable.*

By introducing design standards so that people are not faced with a situation where their homes are no longer suitable for their purposes solves the problem of homes needing to be retrofitted and future proofs the housing stock. ALONE noted that;

“we need to develop models that are transferable, scalable, can work in both urban and rural settings and are designed to age-friendly principles”.

There is concern that creating additional design requirements into the construction of housing may translate into additional build costs. Age Friendly Ireland noted that;

“It will cost more to build one’s house in an age friendly way if one wants it to be sustainable, but it does not have to be so much that it would deter people. It is certainly more costly not to do it”.

The Committee heard much discussion relating to the additional cost of designing in an age friendly manner. Alone stated that;

“...my understanding is that one is looking at an additional cost of approximately 3%. Because the structures are well built, my understanding is that over the lifetime of the building, which is around 40 years, one recoups that money on the basis that adaptations or changes do not have to be made during the person’s lifetime”.

Age Friendly Ireland highlighted that;

“On the age-friendly issue, money is always an issue but when we break it down by average build cost, it is probably €7,000 per unit”.

It is clear that there are numerous benefits to designing homes to a universal design and future proofing homes to cater for all ages seems logical. The Committee is pragmatic however, and recognises that introducing additional requirements and thus additional costs to building a housing unit, particularly in the current climate of a lack of a supply, is not ideal in this present climate. Therefore there is a need to examine the exact costs per unit, the exact longer term savings from reduced reliance on health care and adaption grants amongst others, and that a full and thorough cost benefit analysis be carried out.

In addition to implementing universal design, interesting trends have developed within the housing industry with the integration of smart technology into everyday homes and its application in assisting older people in living independently. There is great potential for the integration of technology into our national housing stock and the Committee heard numerous examples where this has occurred. The Department, in conjunction with the National Disability Authority's Centre of Excellence in Universal Design, ran a competition recently to promote Smart Ageing⁶. The aim of the competition was to stimulate and encourage the design, construction and technology industries to be innovative in designing and delivering solutions for older people.

The winning entry developed an innovative new model to support older homeowners to reconfigure their family-sized homes by creating an independent living area suitable for the older homeowner, eliminating the need to use the stairs; and creating an affordable one-bedroomed rental accommodation upstairs. The project utilised a Universal Design approach, promoting an efficient way to use Ireland's existing housing stock by carving much needed new one-bedroomed rental capacity from existing housing stock in mature urban areas, allowing the homeowner to live securely and independently downstairs, whilst promoting interaction with the person living upstairs, thereby reducing isolation.

The Committee also heard directly from NETWELL/CASALA on their involvement in the Great Northern Haven in Dundalk, Co. Louth. The Great Northern Haven is a purpose-built development of sixteen 'smart' apartments built to enable independent living and enhance quality of life. The apartments are strategically located beside numerous facilities such as the Primary Health Care Unit, the Council offices, the leisure centre, the social welfare office, the church, the pharmacy and the bus stop. The need for this housing development was identified during the consultation process conducted to inform the Louth Age Friendly County Strategy. The agencies worked collaboratively to deliver an innovative, first of a kind development which supports older people to continue to live independently in their own communities. This is a flagship project for County Louth as Ireland's first 'Age-Friendly' County, and for the Netwell & CASALA research centres at the Dundalk Institute of Technology. However, while innovation is happening the challenge is that it is piecemeal.

⁶ <http://rebuildingireland.ie/news/smart-ageing-universal-design-challenge-winner/>

The Committee is very supportive of schemes such as the Great Northern Haven and it is an example of what can be achieved with universal design and technology.

DOWNSIZING

Ageing in place is the ultimate wish of older people but downsizing is one of those re-occurring terms often explored in the topic of housing options for older people. However, the Committee heard from a range of witnesses that downsizing is not the ultimate solution for addressing the housing needs of older people and while it is an option for some, it is limited in its appeal to others. ALONE noted that downsizing has a role to play but;

“without alternative housing options, if one does decide to downsize, where is one going to go? Where is one going to go in one’s own community? We need to move away from downsizing a little bit, as an immediate solution. Maybe it is a long-term solution on the basis of having housing choices for older people and they will choose to downsize”.

The current lack of housing options nationwide severely limits the options for older persons to downsize. The Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland (RIAI) noted that;

“Most of the housing built in Ireland over the past century has been three and four-bedroom houses. Of the 2 million homes in Ireland in 2016, according to the Census of 2016. 1.7 million of them were family homes. There were 860,000 families with children in the State at that time. There were, therefore, 900,000 more family homes than families. We need one and two-bedroom apartments in villages, towns and cities, both as starter homes and step-down homes for older people”.

The RIAI have highlighted how traditionally developers have focused on building larger family homes. This has resulted in Ireland’s national housing stock being greatly weighted in terms of large family houses which are not representative of our population or societal needs. If downsizing is to become a reality for those who wish to downsize then smaller housing units need to become more readily available.

The Housing Agency in their submission to the Committee noted that some local authorities are operating a financial contribution downsizing scheme. These schemes allow homeowners over the age of 60 to request their local authority purchase their home in return for a life-long tenancy in a senior citizen dwelling, on condition that they make a financial contribution to the local authority.

COMMUNITY SUPPORTS & SHELTERED HOUSING

Enabling older people to age and live in an environment in which they are comfortable, happy and secure has many benefits. The design of a home is very important and equal to

the wrap around services provided within the community in which they reside. Providing a home within close reach to a multitude of services such as a post office, shops, church and health care facilities allows an older person to access these services and maintain their independence. In particular, providing housing in a central location allows for an older person to remain active and participate in the community. However, facilitating an older person to age and reside in their community is currently a challenge. The RIAI stated that;

“The question is whether our current suburbs and neighbourhoods can accommodate both an increase in population while also allowing older people to remain in their community”.

Sheltered housing is part of the more traditional model of providing housing solutions to older people. The form of sheltered housing can vary from scheme to scheme but in general it consists of a community of houses often supported with on site help and security. Sheltered housing can be an ideal option for some older people and an area which needs to be expanded on further. It is another part of the mix and the solution. The RIAI noted that;

“It is dealing with highly specialised dependent care that there is a need to look at sheltered housing and so forth. Unfortunately, at present, the only example we have of housing for the aged is the sheltered, highly specialised care type. It is the other types that we need to build”.

FUTURE NEEDS

As Ireland’s population of older people increases, the challenge of meeting the current needs of an ageing demographic presents a significant issue. The recently published National Planning Framework⁷ (NPF) has been written and designed to set out the development strategy to shape our national, regional and local spatial development in economic, environmental and social terms to 2040. The NPF has identified housing for older people as a particular issue that needs addressing and has set out various objectives. The various policy objectives to achieve the overarching goals of the framework with the two most relevant objectives relating to housing for older people are outlined below.

⁷ <http://npf.ie/wp-content/uploads/Project-Ireland-2040-NPF.pdf>

National Policy Objective Number 30

Local planning, housing, transport/accessibility and leisure policies will be developed with a focus on meeting the needs and opportunities of an ageing population along with the inclusion of specific projections, supported by clear proposals in respect of ageing communities as part of the core strategy of city and county development plans.

National Policy Objective Number 34

Support the provision of lifetime adaptable homes that can accommodate the changing needs of a household over time.

In looking forward, the role of local authorities in meeting the demands of housing for older people must be emphasised. City and County development plans are the means by which broader planning policy is implemented at a local level and the method by which many of the objectives set out in the NPF will be achieved.

The RIAI noted that;

“Local authorities are starting to plan for the future densification of their areas, whether urban, suburban, or rural, and to prepare masterplans that promote the principle of densification and the provision of universal access. With careful planning, we should be looking at regenerating our towns and villages by adapting existing domestic housing for older users, improving the public realm, services and amenities and centralizing our services to encourage older people move into town”.

The NPF also outlines that as more people live longer lives, they will want to stay healthy and independent, live in their own homes and communities and keep to a minimum their use of in-patient and out-patient hospital services. Government policy is to support older people to live with dignity and independence in their own homes and communities for as long as possible. In providing a more seamless and appropriate continuum of housing choices with appropriate supports for older people and a built environment that is attractive, accessible and safe, older people will be supported and motivated to enjoy more active, healthy and connected lives and to age confidently and comfortably in their community.

In determining the mix of housing for older people the delivery of social housing targets under Rebuilding Ireland should be consistent with the housing need identified in the annual summary of social housing assessments. The Department noted that;

“At a national level we have guidance for social and private housing, quality housing and sustainable communities which refers to having a good mix and providing for

sheltered accommodation or housing with supports for the elderly and people with disabilities. We are not keen to set targets because we have the comprehensive information from the housing needs assessment. We take a more tailored approach to each local authority. There are different age mixes in local authorities and different types of accommodation required”.

In planning for the future the RIAI specified that;

“It is now time to propose that housing typologies in housing developments, particularly private developments, match the age demographic of the area in which the development is being proposed”.

Matching planned housing developments with predicted local demographics ensures that housing supply meets housing demand. Coupled with this, community facilities provision should also be aligned with the needs of the local demographics. The RIAI highlighted how it is currently necessary to audit the availability of local crèche facilities before making a planning application and that local retail capacity studies are required to accompany commercial development applications. Therefore, it would appear logical that planning should include considerations for older persons.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends that -

1. housing typologies in housing developments be required to match the age demographic of the area in which the development is being proposed;
2. mechanisms be developed to incentivise and promote the construction of housing options and residential care facilities located in town centres or central locations within easy access of local services;
3. the Housing Adaption Grant eligibility be lowered from 66 years of age to 60 years of age;
4. the Housing Adaption Grant form be revised and introduced as a matter of priority and training for front line staff be introduced to assist applicants;
5. funding be standardised across local authorities for the Housing Adaption Grant;
6. the Housing Adaption Grant be provided in two separate funding strands, emergency and proactive;
7. a cost benefit analysis be conducted into the exact costs per unit and the corresponding long term savings of implementing universal design into all housing and
8. choice based downsizing schemes being operated in some local authorities be introduced nationwide.

APPENDIX 1 – ORDERS OF REFERENCE

a. Functions of the Committee – derived from Standing Orders [DSO 84A; SSO 70A]

(1) The Select Committee shall consider and report to the Dáil on—

(a) such aspects of the expenditure, administration and policy of a Government Department or Departments and associated public bodies as the Committee may select, and

(b) European Union matters within the remit of the relevant Department or Departments.

(2) The Select Committee appointed pursuant to this Standing Order may be joined with a Select Committee appointed by Seanad Éireann for the purposes of the functions set out in this Standing Order, other than at paragraph (3), and to report thereon to both Houses of the Oireachtas.

(3) Without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (1), the Select Committee appointed pursuant to this Standing Order shall consider, in respect of the relevant Department or Departments, such—

(a) Bills,

(b) proposals contained in any motion, including any motion within the meaning of Standing Order 187,

(c) Estimates for Public Services, and

(d) other matters

as shall be referred to the Select Committee by the Dáil, and

(e) Annual Output Statements including performance, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of public monies, and

(f) such Value for Money and Policy Reviews as the Select

Committee may select.

(4) The Joint Committee may consider the following matters in respect of the relevant Department or Departments and associated public bodies:

(a) matters of policy and governance for which the Minister is officially responsible,

(b) public affairs administered by the Department,

(c) policy issues arising from Value for Money and Policy Reviews conducted or commissioned by the Department,

(d) Government policy and governance in respect of bodies under the aegis of the Department,

(e) policy and governance issues concerning bodies which are partly or wholly funded by the State or which are established or appointed by a member of the Government or the Oireachtas,

(f) the general scheme or draft heads of any Bill,

(g) any post-enactment report laid before either House or both Houses by a member of the Government or Minister of State on any Bill enacted by the Houses of the Oireachtas,

(h) statutory instruments, including those laid or laid in draft before either House or both Houses and those made under the European Communities Acts 1972 to 2009,

(i) strategy statements laid before either or both Houses of the Oireachtas pursuant to the Public Service Management Act 1997,

(j) annual reports or annual reports and accounts, required by law, and laid before either or both Houses of the Oireachtas, of the Department or bodies referred to in subparagraphs (d) and (e) and the overall performance and operational results, statements of

strategy and corporate plans of such bodies, and

(k) such other matters as may be referred to it by the Dáil from time to time.

(5) Without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (1), the Joint Committee appointed pursuant to this Standing Order shall consider, in respect of the relevant Department or Departments—

(a) EU draft legislative acts standing referred to the Select Committee under Standing Order 114, including the compliance of such acts with the principle of subsidiarity,

(b) other proposals for EU legislation and related policy issues, including programmes and guidelines prepared by the European Commission as a basis of possible legislative action,

(c) non-legislative documents published by any EU institution in relation to EU policy matters, and

(d) matters listed for consideration on the agenda for meetings of the relevant EU Council of Ministers and the outcome of such meetings.

(6) The Chairman of the Joint Committee appointed pursuant to this Standing Order, who shall be a member of Dáil Éireann, shall also be the Chairman of the Select Committee.

(7) The following may attend meetings of the Select or Joint Committee appointed pursuant to this Standing Order, for the purposes of the functions set out in paragraph (5) and may take part in proceedings without having a right to vote or to move motions and amendments:

(a) Members of the European Parliament elected from constituencies in Ireland, including Northern Ireland,

(b) Members of the Irish delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and

(c) at the invitation of the Committee, other Members of the European Parliament.

b. Scope and Context of Activities of Committees (as derived from Standing Orders) [DSO 84; SSO 70]

- (1) The Joint Committee may only consider such matters, engage in such activities, exercise such powers and discharge such functions as are specifically authorised under its orders of reference and under Standing Orders.
- (2) Such matters, activities, powers and functions shall be relevant to, and shall arise only in the context of, the preparation of a report to the Dáil and/or Seanad.
- (3) The Joint Committee shall not consider any matter which is being considered, or of which notice has been given of a proposal to consider, by the Committee of Public Accounts pursuant to Standing Order 186 and/or the Comptroller and Auditor General (Amendment) Act 1993.
- (4) The Joint Committee shall refrain from inquiring into in public session or publishing confidential information regarding any matter if so requested, for stated reasons given in writing, by—
 - (a) a member of the Government or a Minister of State, or
 - (b) the principal office-holder of a body under the aegis of a Department or which is partly or wholly funded by the State or established or appointed by a member of the Government or by the Oireachtas:

Provided that the Chairman may appeal any such request made to the Ceann Comhairle / Cathaoirleach whose decision shall be final.
- (5) It shall be an instruction to all Select Committees to which Bills are referred that they shall ensure that not more than two Select Committees shall meet to consider a Bill on any given day, unless the Dáil, after due notice given by the Chairman of the Select Committee, waives this instruction on motion made by the Taoiseach pursuant to Dáil Standing Order 28. The Chairmen of Select Committees shall have responsibility for compliance with this instruction.

APPENDIX 2 – MEMBERSHIP

Deputies: Maria Bailey – Chair (FG)
 Pat Casey – Vice Chair (FF)
 Ruth Coppinger (Solidarity-PBP)
 Mattie McGrath (IND) – Rural Independent Technical Group
 Darragh O’Brien (FF)
 Eoin O Broin (SF)
 Fergus O’Dowd (FG)

Senators: Victor Boyhan (IND)
 Martin Conway (FG)
 Jennifer Murnane O’Connor (FF)
 Grace O’Sullivan (GP)

Notes:

1. Deputies nominated by the Dáil Committee of Selection and appointed by Order of the Dáil of 16 June 2016.
2. Senators nominated by the Seanad Committee of Selection and appointed by Order of the Seanad on 21 July 2016.
3. Elected Vice Chair on 24 May 2017

APPENDIX 3 – LIST OF WITNESSES

❖ **Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government**

Ms Mary Hurley

Ms Sarah Neary

Ms Patricia Curran

❖ **Department of Health**

Mr Niall Redmond

Ms Frances Spillane

❖ **Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland**

Mr Derek Tynan

Mr John O'Mahony

❖ **Age Friendly Ireland**

Ms Catherine McGuigan

Mr Barry Lynch

❖ **ALONE**

Mr Seán Moynihan

Mr Pat Doherty

❖ **NetwellCASALA**

Mr Rodd Bond

Dr Lucia Carragher

❖ **Age Action**

Ms Corona Joyce

Mr Gerard Scully

APPENDIX 4 – LINKS TO MEETING TRANSCRIPTS

- ❖ [Meeting of 17 April 2018](#)

- ❖ [Meeting of 24 April 2018](#)

APPENDIX 5 – LINKS TO SUBMISSIONS & OPENING STATEMENTS

- ❖ [Age Friendly Ireland](#)
- ❖ [Age Action](#)
- ❖ [ALONE](#)
- ❖ [NetwellCASALA](#)
- ❖ [Department of Health](#)
- ❖ [Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government](#)
- ❖ [Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland](#)
- ❖ [Housing Agency](#)
- ❖ [Cluid Housing](#)

