

**Public Accounts Committee
01 June 2023**

Briefing Paper

Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH)

Vote 34: DHLGH Appropriation Account 2021

Local Government Fund Account 2021

Chapter 6. Central Government funding of local authorities

Contents

1. VOTE 34 – DHLGH Expenditure

2. Local Government Fund

3. Overview of Departmental Programmes:

- **Housing**
- **Water Services**
- **Local Government**
- **Planning**
- **Met Éireann**
- **Heritage**

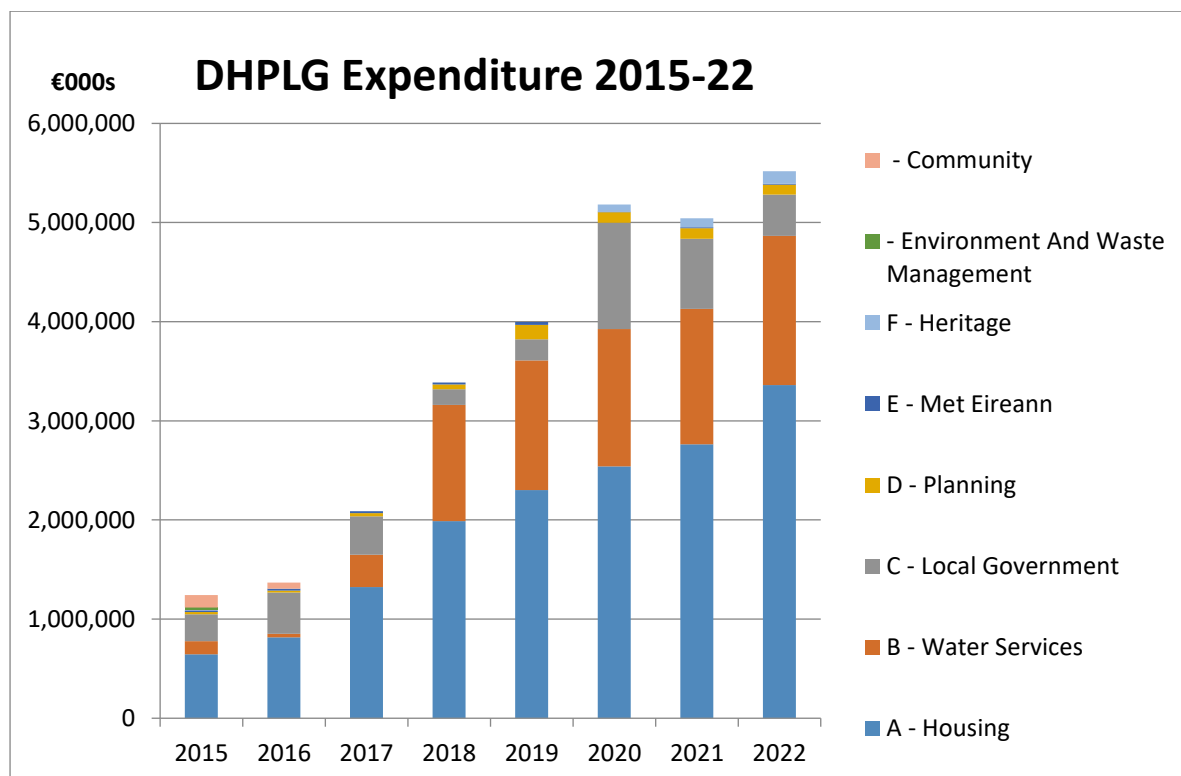
Appendix 1 - Links to Department publications

1. Vote 34: DHLGH 2021

This briefing paper has been prepared to update the Public Accounts Committee and assist in its consideration of the 2021 Appropriation Account in respect of Vote 34, Chapter 6 of the C and AG Report for that year, and the 2021 Local Government Fund Account.

Expenditure Trends 2015- 22

An overview of the trend in DHLGH expenditure 2015-22 is set out below. It shows an aggregate increase in expenditure from 2015 to 2022 of over €4.273bn (344%) driven principally by additional resources allocated to fund the implementation of *Rebuilding Ireland*, succeeded in 2021 by *Housing for All* and, from 2018, Uisce Éireann (formerly Irish Water) funding being provided through the Vote.



DHLGH's gross expenditure in 2021 was €5.143bn (2020 €5.273bn) in respect of the Department's Vote, representing a decrease of 2% on the outturn for 2020. This was comprised of current expenditure of €2.890bn (2020 €3.073bn) and capital expenditure of €2.253bn (2020 €2.197bn). An additional €91.5m was available from Local Property Tax (LPT) receipts in 2021 to fund housing programmes of certain local authorities with LPT allocations that exceeded the LPT baseline.

Expenditure in 2022 was €5.632bn in respect of the Department's Vote, representing an increase of 9% on the outturn for 2021. This was comprised of current expenditure of €2.748bn and capital expenditure of €2.884bn. An additional €84.05m from LPT receipts was also used by certain local authorities to fund housing programmes.

As regards 2023, gross expenditure is estimated to be €6.322bn in respect of the Department's Vote, representing an increase of 12% on the outturn for 2022. This is comprised of current expenditure of €2.797bn and capital expenditure of €3.525bn. An additional €167.7m from LPT receipts will also be used by certain local authorities to fund housing programmes.

Gross Expenditure (€000s)	2020 Outturn	2021 Outturn	2022 Outturn	2023 REV
Total	€5,272,560	€5,143,026	€5,632,481	€6,322,431
<i>Current</i>	<i>€3,075,078</i>	<i>€2,890,372</i>	<i>€2,747,991</i>	<i>€2,797,476</i>
<i>Capital</i>	<i>€2,197,482</i>	<i>€2,252,654</i>	<i>€2,884,490</i>	<i>€3,524,955¹</i>

The following table sets out Expenditure Outturn 2020 to 2022 and Estimate 2023 by Programme.

Programme	2020	2021	2022	2023
	Outturn €000	Outturn €000	Outturn €000	Estimate €000
Admin	91,224	101,107	116,166	153,365
Programme A - Housing	2,541,238	2,763,111	3,361,356	3,643,145
Programme B - Water	1,383,180	1,365,276	1,504,998	1,682,946
Programme C - Local Government	1,073,650	709,154	415,771	459,740
Programme D - Planning	107,560	104,990	100,090	214,746
Programme E - Met Éireann	6,116	8,698	9,173	16,055
Programme F - Heritage	69,592	90,690	124,927	152,434
Total	5,272,560	5,143,026	5,632,481	6,322,431

More detailed tables in respect of 2020-22 and 2023, broken down at subhead level (both capital and current), are also presented below.

¹ Excludes Capital Carryover from 2022 of €340m

DHLGH Expenditure 2020-22 (€000s) *	€000s	2020	2021	2022
		Outturn	Outturn	Outturn
	Current	3,075,078	2,890,372	2,747,990
	Capital	2,197,482	2,252,654	2,884,489
	Gross	5,272,560	5,143,026	5,632,479
A.3 - LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING	Current			
	Capital	890,575	960,676 ²	1,088,785 ³
A.4 – SOCIAL HOUSING CURRENT EXPENDITURE PROGRAMME	Current	197,356	271,900	368,786
	Capital			
A.5 – RENTAL ACCOMMODATION SCHEME	Current	132,964	121,995	113,910
	Capital			
A.6 – HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENT SCHEME	Current	464,649	541,693	538,961
	Capital			
A.7 – CAPITAL ASSISTANCE SCHEME	Current			
	Capital	90,749	93,047	167,982
A.8 – CAPITAL LOANS & SUBSIDY SCHEME	Current	53087	53,880	62,728
	Capital			
A.9. COMMUNAL FACILITIES	Current			
	Capital	78	122	79
A.10. MORTGAGE TO RENT	Current			
	Capital	11,732	13,988	7,602
A.11. CAPITAL ADVANCE LEASING FACILITY	Current			
	Capital	158,799	220,350	207,560
A.12. TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION & SUPPORT	Current	5,320	5,801	6,320
	Capital	14,498	15,500	20,600
A.13. ACCOMMODATION FOR HOMELESS	Current	270,900	223,500	242,450
	Capital			
A.14. HOUSING FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY AND OLDER PEOPLE	Current	512	838	1,136
	Capital			54
A.15. ESTATE REGENERATION / REMEDIAL WORKS	Current			
	Capital	65,203	43,779	37,547
A.16. ENERGY EFFICIENCY - RETROFITTING	Current			
	Capital	66,092	25,284 ⁴	64,142
A.17. REPAIR AND LEASING SCHEME	Current			
	Capital	4,003	4,276	9,949
A.18. PRIVATE HOUSING GRANTS	Current			
	Capital	44,407	53,990	66,334

² Includes €58m Capital Carryover

³ Includes €247.3m Capital Carryover

⁴ Includes €25.3m Capital Carryover

A.19. MORTGAGE ALLOWANCES	Current			
	Capital	408	471	397
A.20. AFFORDABLE HOUSING / SHARED OWNERSHIP SUBSIDY	Current	2,325	1,855	1,457
	Capital			
A.21. INFRASTRUCTURE FUND	Current			
	Capital	31,650	19,903	17,028
A.22. PYRITE AND MICA REMEDIATION - CASH LIMITED (Defective Homes Remediation in 2023)	Current			
	Capital	13,775	19,050 ⁵	28,753
A.23. HOUSING & SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES AGENCY	Current	8,750	9,456	10,294
	Capital			125,000
A.24. RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES BOARD	Current	6,300	11,012	11,138
	Capital	570		
A.25. RENTED ACCOMMODATION INSPECTION	Current	4,555	5,263	6,878
	Capital			
A.26. APPROVED HOUSING BODIES REGULATORY AUTHORITY	Current		1,050	2,189
	Capital			
A.27 PLANNED MAINTENANCE/VOIDS	Current			
	Capital		32,146	28,945
A.28 AFFORDABLE SHARED EQUITY AND COST RENTAL/ Affordable Purchase (2022)	Current			
	Capital		9253	50,873
A.29 COMMISSION ON HOUSING (2022 only)	Current			259
	Capital			
A.30 DPGs/IMPROVEMENTS/REMEDIALS (A.29 in 2023)	Current			
	Capital			18,266
A.31 FIRST HOME SCHEME (A.30 in 2023)	Current			
	Capital			40,000
A.32 AFFORDABLE HOUSING FUND (A.31 in 2023)	Current			
	Capital			8,839
A.33 CROI CONAITHE (CITIES) FUND (A.32 in 2023)	Current			
	Capital			1,473
A.34 OTHER SERVICES (A29 up to 2022)	Current	1981	3033	4,640
	Capital			
B.3 - WATER QUALITY PROGRAMME	Current	14,451	14,324	15,949
	Capital	8,167	7,100	4,697
B.4 - RURAL WATER PROGRAMME	Current	28,717	26,970	33,760
	Capital	15,271	21,086	20,761
B.5 – IRISH WATER	Current	624,189	677,059	698,040
	Capital	679,000	599,000 ⁶	717,000
B.6– LOCAL AUTHORITIES	Current	12,374	17,892	12,771
	Capital			

⁵ Includes €3.9m Capital Carryover

⁶ Includes €10m Capital Carryover

B.7- LEGACY WATER ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Current			
	Capital	43	166	287
B.8- MARINE ENVIRONMENT	Current	698	995	1,373
	Capital	247	512	314
B.9 - WATER ADVISORY BODY	Current	18	48	47
	Capital			
B10 - OTHER SERVICES	Current	5	124	0
	Capital			
C 3 - LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUND	Current	1,056,060	699,300	387,501
	Capital			
C.4 - FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES	Current	3,105	649	1,079
	Capital	12,452	7,750	22,637
C.5 – FRANCHISE	Current	365	622	1,452
	Capital		0	631
C.6 - VALUATION TRIBUNAL ¹ (from 2022)	Current			1,148
	Capital			0
C.7 - SHARED ISLAND DEVELOPMENT FUND (2023)	Current			
	Capital			
C.8 - OTHER SERVICES (C7 in 2022, C6 in 2020-2021)	Current	1,668	833	1,323
	Capital		0	
D.3 - AN BORD PLEANÁLA	Current	18,331	16,185	21,414
	Capital	1,200	942	752
D.4 - PLANNING TRIBUNAL	Current	4,322	657	1,364
	Capital			
D.5 - OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR	Current	2,481	2,992	3,588
	Capital			
D.6 - PLANNING POLICY	Current	366	715	603
	Capital			
D.7 - NATIONAL, REGIONAL & URBAN PLANNING	Current	219	163	2,011
	Capital			
D.8 - MY PLAN (Planning Spatial Data in 2023)	Current	115	152	263
	Capital			
D.9 - URBAN RENEWAL/ REGENERATION	Current	8	5	0
	Capital	39,556 ⁷	40,893 ⁸	45,156 ⁹
D.10 - DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTION REBATE SCHEME (Retired subhead in 2023)	Current	0	0	0
	Capital	0	0	0
D.11 - ORDNANCE SURVEY IRELAND (D.10 in 2023)	Current	17,070	17,640	18,593
	Capital	985	985	985

⁷ Includes €33.5m Capital Carryover

⁸ Includes €40.3m Capital Carryover

⁹ Includes €25m Capital Carryover

D.12 – LAND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (D.11 in 2023)	Current	4,600	6,600	123
	Capital	9,501	10,000	412
D.13 – FORESHORE (D.12 in 2023)	Current	803	765	687
	Capital			
D.14 – MARINE SPATIAL PLANNING (D.13 in 2023)	Current	188	783	733
	Capital			
D.15- ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING POLICY (EU & International Planning Regulation) D.14 in 2023	Current	65	36	123
	Capital			
D.16 -MARA (D.15 in 2023)	Current			471
	Capital			
D.16 - LA PLANNING, RESOURCES & SUPPORTS (new in 2023)	Current			
	Capital			
D.17 - OTHER SERVICES (D.16 up to 2022)	Current	7,750	5,477	2,813
	Capital			
E.3 - SUBS TO INTERNATIONAL METEOROLOGICAL ORG.	Current	5,100	7,729	8,167
	Capital			
E.4 -FLOOD FORECASTING AND WARNING SERVICE	Current			
	Capital	1,016	969	1,006
F.3 - HERITAGE COUNCIL (PART FUNDED BY THE NATIONAL LOTTERY)	Current	3,917	5,261	5,761
	Capital	3,477	4,390	5,684
F.4 - BUILT HERITAGE	Current	1,228	3,784	4,065
	Capital	5,937	6,612	11,646
F.5 - NATURAL HERITAGE (NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE)	Current	10,854	16,116	18,798
	Capital	7,124	9,678	12,724
F.6 - IRISH HERITAGE TRUST	Current	450	750	1,100
	Capital	200	1,400	1,400
F.7 - BUILT HERITAGE INVESTMENT SCHEME	Current			
	Capital	2,404	2,906	3,739
F.8 - PEATLANDS RESTORATION, CONSERVATION & MANAGEMENT	Current			
	Capital	6,988	9,875 ¹⁰	9,094 ¹¹
F.9 - WATERWAYS IRELAND	Current	21,283	22,918	24,488
	Capital	5,730	7,000	20,464
F.10 - STRATEGIC BUILT HERITAGE PROJECTS (from 2022)	Current			
	Capital			2,916
F.11 - CLIMATE ADAPTATION (from 2022)	Current			119
	Capital			
F.12 - NARROW WATER BRIDGE (from 2022)	Current			
	Capital			2,899
F.13 OTHER SERVICES (F.10 up to 2022)	Current			28
	Capital			

¹⁰ Includes €3m Capital Carryover

¹¹ Includes €3.5m Capital Carryover

ADMINISTRATION	Current	85,579	91,552	107,089
	Capital	5,645	9,555	9,077

Deduct:

APPROPRIATIONS IN AID	Current	51,230	60,575	69,154
	Capital	4,088	5,502	2,224

* Rounding will slightly affect totals

DHLGH Estimate 2023	€000s	2023
		Estimate
	Current	2,797,476
	Capital	3,524,955
	Gross	6,322,431
A.3 - LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING	Current	
	Capital	1,184,101
A.4-SOCIAL HOUSING CURRENT EXPENDITURE PROGRAMME	Current	367,000
	Capital	
A.5 – RENTAL ACCOMMODATION SCHEME	Current	113,000
	Capital	
A.6 –HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENT SCHEME	Current	543,800
	Capital	
A.7 – CAPITAL ASSISTANCE SCHEME	Current	
	Capital	137,000
A.8 – CAPITAL LOANS & SUBSIDY SCHEME	Current	53,900
	Capital	
A.9. COMMUNAL FACILITIES	Current	
	Capital	500
A.10. MORTGAGE TO RENT	Current	
	Capital	18,000
A.11. CAPITAL ADVANCE LEASING FACILITY	Current	
	Capital	309,599
A.12. TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION & SUPPORT	Current	6,670
	Capital	20,000
A.13. ACCOMMODATION FOR HOMELESS	Current	215,000
	Capital	
A.14. HOUSING FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY AND OLDER PEOPLE	Current	1,800
	Capital	1,300
A.15. ESTATE REGENERATION / REMEDIAL WORKS	Current	
	Capital	50,000
A.16. ENERGY EFFICIENCY - RETROFITTING	Current	
	Capital	87,000
A.17. REPAIR AND LEASING SCHEME	Current	
	Capital	12,000
A.18. PRIVATE HOUSING GRANTS	Current	
	Capital	67,000
A.19. MORTGAGE ALLOWANCES	Current	
	Capital	500
A.20. AFFORDABLE HOUSING / SHARED OWNERSHIP SUBSIDY	Current	2,200
	Capital	
A.21. INFRASTRUCTURE FUND	Current	
	Capital	10,000

A.22. PYRITE AND MICA REMEDIATION - CASH LIMITED (Defective Homes Remediation in 2023)	Current	
	Capital	65,000
A.23. HOUSING & SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES AGENCY	Current	15,230
	Capital	
A.24. RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES BOARD	Current	13,370
	Capital	
A.25. RENTED ACCOMMODATION INSPECTION	Current	9,000
	Capital	
A.26. APPROVED HOUSING BODIES REGULATORY AUTHORITY	Current	3,085
	Capital	
A.27 PLANNED MAINTENANCE/VOIDS	Current	
	Capital	31,000
A.28 AFFORDABLE SHARED EQUITY AND COST RENTAL/ Affordable Purchase (2022)	Current	
	Capital	75,000
A.29 COMMISSION ON HOUSING (2022 only)	Current	
	Capital	
A.30 DPGs/IMPROVEMENTS/REMEDIALS (A.29 in 2023)	Current	
	Capital	25000
A.31 FIRST HOME SCHEME (A.30 in 2023)	Current	
	Capital	50,000
A.32 AFFORDABLE HOUSING FUND (A.31 in 2023)	Current	
	Capital	90,000
A.33 CROI CONAITHE (CITIES) FUND (A.32 in 2023)	Current	
	Capital	30,000
A.33 SOCIAL HOUSING PPP PROGRAMME (new in 2023)	Current	
	Capital	30,000
A.34 OTHER SERVICES (A29 up to 2022)	Current	6,090
	Capital	
B.3 - WATER QUALITY PROGRAMME	Current	21,786
	Capital	10,001
B.4 - RURAL WATER PROGRAMME	Current	32,650
	Capital	35,000
B.5 – IRISH WATER	Current	679,200
	Capital	878,000
B.6- LOCAL AUTHORITIES	Current	13,600
	Capital	
B.7- LEGACY WATER ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Current	
	Capital	8,000
B.8- MARINE ENVIRONMENT	Current	3,355
	Capital	1,000
B.9 - WATER ADVISORY BODY	Current	320
	Capital	
B10 - OTHER SERVICES	Current	34
	Capital	

C.3 - LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUND	Current	421,318
	Capital	
C.4 - FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES	Current	1,415
	Capital	22,400
C.5 – FRANCHISE	Current	2,965
	Capital	1,067
C.6 - VALUATION TRIBUNAL (from 2022)	Current	1,770
	Capital	225
C.7 - SHARED ISLAND DEVELOPMENT FUND (2023)	Current	
	Capital	5000
C.8 - OTHER SERVICES (C7 in 2022, C6 in 2020-2021)	Current	2,078
	Capital	1,502
D.3 - AN BORD PLEANÁLA	Current	26,879
	Capital	
D.4 - PLANNING TRIBUNAL	Current	1,600
	Capital	
D.5 -OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR	Current	4,408
	Capital	
D.6 -PLANNING POLICY	Current	2,000
	Capital	
D.7 - NATIONAL, REGIONAL & URBAN PLANNING	Current	2,283
	Capital	
D.8 - MY PLAN (Planning Spatial Data in 2023)	Current	500
	Capital	
D.9 - URBAN RENEWAL/ REGENERATION	Current	10
	Capital	136,000
D.10 - DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTION REBATE SCHEME (Retired subhead in 2023)	Current	0
	Capital	0
D.11 - ORDNANCE SURVEY IRELAND (D.10 in 2023)	Current	2,045
	Capital	0
D.12 – LAND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (D.11 in 2023)	Current	750
	Capital	5,000
D.13 – FORESHORE (D.12 in 2023)	Current	3,726
	Capital	
D.14 – MARINE SPATIAL PLANNING (D.13 in 2023)	Current	2,205
	Capital	
D.15- ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING POLICY (EU & International Planning Regulation) D.14 in 2023	Current	350
	Capital	
D.16 -MARA (D.15 in 2023)	Current	4,345
	Capital	
D.16 - LA PLANNING, RESOURCES & SUPPORTS (new in 2023)	Current	5,400
	Capital	
D.17 - OTHER SERVICES (D.16 up to 2022)	Current	1,245
	Capital	16,000

E.3 - SUBS TO INTERNATIONAL METEOROLOGICAL ORG.	Current	8,850
	Capital	
E.4 - FLOOD FORECASTING AND WARNING SERVICE	Current	20
	Capital	7,185
F.3 - HERITAGE COUNCIL (PART FUNDED BY THE NATIONAL LOTTERY)	Current	7,141
	Capital	7,200
F.4 - BUILT HERITAGE	Current	5,470
	Capital	14,500
F.5 - NATURAL HERITAGE (NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE)	Current	23,832
	Capital	18,750
F.6 - IRISH HERITAGE TRUST	Current	1,200
	Capital	1,650
F.7 - BUILT HERITAGE INVESTMENT SCHEME	Current	
	Capital	4,000
F.8 - PEATLANDS RESTORATION, CONSERVATION & MANAGEMENT	Current	
	Capital	10,280
F.9 - WATERWAYS IRELAND	Current	27,218
	Capital	22,850
F.10 - STRATEGIC BUILT HERITAGE PROJECTS (from 2022)	Current	
	Capital	7,350
F.11 - CLIMATE ADAPTATION (from 2022)	Current	200
	Capital	
F.12 - NARROW WATER BRIDGE (from 2022)	Current	
	Capital	750
F.13 OTHER SERVICES (F.10 up to 2022)	Current	43
	Capital	
ADMINISTRATION	Current	135,120
	Capital	18,245
<i>Deduct:</i>		
APPROPRIATIONS IN AID	Current	72,551
	Capital	2,620

Additional Funding to Estimate Tables above for 2023

Capital Carryover 2023

SUBHEAD	€000
A.3. LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING	240,000
B.5 IRISH WATER	95,800
F.8. PEATLANDS RESTORATION	4,200
TOTAL	340,000

LPT self-funding for Housing Programmes 2023

	€000
Current	89,169
Capital	78,549
Total	167,718

2. LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUND 2023

The Local Government Fund

The total provision for the Local Government Fund from the departmental Vote C.3. for 2023 is €421.3m. The purpose of the fund is to support local authorities in their provision of essential services across the country. Local Property Tax (LPT) is paid into and allocated out of the fund in accordance with the LPT distribution model.

There is additional expenditure from the LG fund to assist local authorities with miscellaneous costs and schemes, e.g. **€287.2m** has been allocated for 2023 towards the increased pay and pension costs associated with the unwinding of the FEMPI legislation. With support from the exchequer from 2020 to 2022, the LG Fund provided Covid-19 supports to local authorities in the form of a Commercial Rates Waiver, and funding in lieu of income lost and additional expenditure incurred due to the pandemic. Other substantial supports have been provided in recognition of the current funding pressures on the sector. In 2022, **€23.3m** was allocated in recognition of the impact on commercial rates of the conclusion of valuation appeals by certain global utility companies. In addition, a further **€60m** will be provided in supplementary funding towards increased costs in 2023, and in particular for rising energy costs.

Reforms of LPT

A revaluation of LPT was carried out by the Revenue Commissioners in 2021, and while this has led to changes to the individual yield in each local authority area, the overall yield has only marginally increased.

The underlying principle of the current LPT distribution model is that every authority should have a minimum level of funding to support the provision of local services. In line with the commitment in the Programme for Government, the LPT allocation mechanism for 2023 is changed to allow for 100% of the estimated yield to be retained locally within the local authority area where it is collected. All of the equalization funding will be met by the Exchequer, at a cost of **€118m** for 2023. This move is exchequer cost neutral, as the increase in equalisation funding required is offset by the increased requirement to self-fund, i.e. for authorities with an LPT income above their funding baseline who are required to self-fund certain services in their area, in lieu of exchequer funding.

For 2023, self-funding authorities will now retain an increased portion of their surplus yield for their own discretionary use (move from 20% of overall yield, to 22.5%). The cost of this change to the exchequer is **€8.9m** in 2023.

A comprehensive review of the current LPT baselines has commenced and is expected to conclude shortly and in advance of the local authority budget process for 2024.

The Income and Expenditure Figures for the LGF in recent years are set out below:

Income and Expenditure from Local Government Fund from 2019 to date

Income

€m	2020	2021	2022*	2023**
Exchequer Contribution	1,056.1	699.3	381.2	421.3
Local Property Tax	481.5	550.5	499.0	510.0
Interest/Other	-	-	-	-
Total	1,537.6	1,249.8	880.2	931.3

* This includes initial allocation and Technical Supplementary Estimate €156.4m. It does not include virement of €6.3m from elsewhere in the Vote at year end.

** Estimate for 2023.

Note: LPT income represents the LPT (cash) to be collected in the calendar year, whereas the allocations are based on the liability year.

Expenditure

€m	2020	2021	2022*	2023**
Local Property Tax	516.8	530.5	523.9	609.8
Covid Payments	861.7	547.3	61.7	
Other Miscellaneous	117.7	152.6	257.6	371.3
Total	1,496.2	1,230.4	843.2	981.1

*Unaudited account for 2022; includes payment in respect of Global Valuation Appeals Refund, which is partially funded by a €6.3m virement from elsewhere in the Vote.

** Estimate for 2023. €371.3m includes €60m for Supplementary Support in 2023, which formed part of the Technical Supplementary Estimate in late 2022.

3. Overview of Departmental Programmes

PROGRAMME A - HOUSING

A.3 LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING

This subhead covers the recoupment of expenditure incurred by local authorities for the:

1. Provision of new social homes by means of construction (including turnkeys/rapids/Part Vs) and Acquisition (including Buy and Renew/Repossessions) of houses and apartments, for letting to those on the local authorities social housing waiting lists;
2. Social housing delivery via Public Private Partnership;
3. Land Aggregation Scheme; and
4. Provision of emergency accommodation for homeless households, including family Hubs.

The A.3.1 Local Authority Housing Subhead is the Department's primary capital budget for the delivery of new permanent social housing through local authorities.

A.4 SOCIAL HOUSING CURRENT EXPENDITURE PROGRAMME (SHCEP)

This subhead recoups to local authorities the ongoing cost of dwellings sourced and secured under leasing and availability agreements with AHBs and private owners. These costs are the ongoing contractual commitments of existing leases and Payment and Availability (P&A) arrangements as well as the phased cost of new commitments that arise within the year.

A.5 RENTAL ACCOMMODATION SCHEME (RAS)

This subhead provides the current funding to support the cost of recoupment made to local authorities under the RAS. It covers not only the contracted rents due to private landlords but also payments that are made to Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs), administration costs and deposits on newly acquired accommodation.

A.6 HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENT SCHEME (HAP)

The subhead recoups the HAP Shared Services Centre (SSC), operated by Limerick City and County Council, the costs associated with the making of HAP payments, including Homeless HAP; the administration costs for local authorities in their operation of the scheme; and the costs associated with providing public access to general information on the HAP scheme.

The HAP SSC manages the collection of all HAP tenants' differential rents, on behalf of the relevant local authority, and the payment of all HAP rents to landlords on behalf of tenants supported by the HAP scheme. The cost of HAP is then netted against the differential rents collected in relation to all HAP households thus reducing the cost of operating HAP to the Exchequer.

A.7 CAPITAL ASSISTANCE SCHEME

The subhead provides the capital to pay grants to local authorities under Section 12 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions Act) 2009 to enable them to advance loans to approved housing bodies providing housing for older people, homeless or people with a disability.

Loans of up to 100% (or 95% where the AHB chooses to retain the right to nominate 25% of tenancies) of the overall approved capital cost of eligible projects may be advanced, subject to CAS scheme conditions. The loans are protected by a mortgage and are non-repayable provided the accommodation continues to be let to eligible categories of persons and to be adequately maintained.

A.8 CAPITAL LOANS & SUBSIDY SCHEME (CLSS)

This subhead provides funding to local authorities for the repayment of Capital Loan Charges to the Housing Finance Agency and funding to AHBs, through the local authorities, towards the management and maintenance of the units provided under the scheme. The Scheme commenced in 1991 to provide capital funding to AHBs to meet the cost of constructing units of accommodation for renting to people on the local authorities social housing waiting list.

Importantly the local authorities access the funding they provide to the AHBs from the HFA, which is repaid over a 30-year period to the HFA by the local authority. In turn, the local authorities provide this funding to AHBs by way of a non-refundable loan as long as the AHB complies with the terms and conditions of the CLSS.

Through CLSS, about 10,200 units of accommodation have been delivered since commencement in 1991, however following a review a decision was taken in 2009 to wind down the scheme. Consequently, the number of completions has declined with the scheme now effectively terminated however; the loan charges and the management and maintenance allowance remain to be paid on an annual basis to the local authorities/AHBs/HFA.

A.9 COMMUNAL FACILITIES

This subhead provides funding towards the capital costs of providing communal facilities in both new and existing voluntary housing schemes owned and managed by AHBs. Communal facility projects are, in the main, additional facilities to complement social housing developments under CAS. Special allocations have been provided for this activity from National Lottery Funds since 1991. Eligible works include communal dining and kitchen areas, sitting/activity rooms, laundries, accommodation for therapy or treatment or other facilities reasonably required to improve the residents' living conditions.

Grants of up to 95% of the overall costs of providing the facilities, or €7,500 for each associated living unit (whichever is the lesser), are available. Payments are made to the local

authorities who administer the scheme and who advance the funding to the AHB providing the communal facilities.

A.10 MORTGAGE TO RENT

This Subhead supports activity under two Mortgage to Rent Schemes funded by the Department: (1) the Approved Housing Body (AHB) Mortgage to Rent Scheme; and (2) the Local Authority Mortgage to Rent Scheme.

A.11 CAPITAL ADVANCE LEASING FACILITY

This subhead item covers the Capital Advance Leasing Facility (CALF) which provides capital funding to approved housing bodies (to varying levels) by way of a loan, in order to facilitate the construction and acquisition of new social housing units, including units acquired through the establishment of the Housing Agency Acquisition Fund.

A.12 TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION & SUPPORT

This subhead item provides 100% recoupment to local authorities of the capital cost of Traveller specific accommodation and services, including:

- constructing, redeveloping and refurbishing serviced permanent residential caravan parks;
- providing temporary and transient residential caravan parks;
- constructing and refurbishing group housing schemes; and
- Constructing/acquiring housing for Travellers in certain circumstances, such as urgent medical needs and overcrowding.

In addition, the subhead also provides for recoupment to local authorities of the following costs:

- 50% of the cost of providing caravans to Travellers in emergency cases;
- a special grant of €3,810 payable to Travellers for the first time purchase of a house;
- a special grant of 10% of the cost up to a maximum of €640, to a Traveller family who are purchasing a caravan for the first time; and
- 100% of the cost of work for the return to use of vacant Traveller-specific accommodation.

A.13 ACCOMMODATION FOR HOMELESS

This subhead provides for the provision of services by local authorities to individuals experiencing homelessness. Under the provisions of Section 10 of the Housing Act 1988 the Department recoups up to 90% of expenditure appropriately incurred by housing authorities in relation to accommodation and related services for homeless households.

Current funding under this subhead is essential to ensure that housing authorities are in a position to deliver the necessary services to households experiencing homelessness. A significant proportion of the funding provided to housing authorities is in respect of services that are provided by non-governmental service providers under contracts governed by Service Level Agreements.

A.14 HOUSING FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY & OLDER PEOPLE

This subhead provides capital and current funding for the implementation of pilot projects, including staffing supports, for the housing of people with disabilities and older people pursuant to the policy documents National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2016-2021 and the Housing Options for our Ageing Population Joint Policy Statement 2019. Both of these are joint strategies with the Department of Health, and both Departments are responsible for individual and joint actions, as appropriate.

A.15 ESTATE REGENERATION AND REFURBISHMENT

The subhead is the voted funding stream which provides funding for multi-year programs of large-scale regeneration projects in Limerick, Cork and Dublin and smaller projects in Tralee, Sligo and Dundalk. These projects seek to address the causes of disadvantage in these communities through a holistic programme of physical, social and economic regeneration. The regeneration projects being funded by the Department target the country's most disadvantaged communities, including those defined by the most extreme social exclusion, unemployment and anti-social behaviour.

A.16 ENERGY EFFICIENCY-RETROFITTING

The objective under this subhead is to ensure that local authority-owned housing stock is maintained at a high standard, achieves an improved level of energy performance, reduces emissions and yields an important fuel poverty dividend for low income households. This programme forms part of the Government's overall programme to improve the performance of the residential housing stock and to ensure the most effective use of that stock.

A.17 REPAIR AND LEASING SCHEME

The subhead is targeted at owners of vacant properties who cannot afford or access the funding required to bring them up to the standard for rental property. The Local Authority (or AHB) pays for the repairs upfront and the home is taken into social housing stock by way of lease for at least 5 years. The cost of the repairs carried out is offset against future rent. The subhead also funds the Vacant Homes Unit which, inter alia, funds Vacant Homes Offices in each Local Authority. The enhanced programme of work for full-time Vacant Homes Officers includes:

- overseeing a co-ordinated approach to Housing for All pathways to addressing and efficient use of existing stock;

- actively lead uptake within the local authority of various Department schemes (including advocating the integrated delivery of housing options for Older People and People with Disabilities) such as Repair and Leasing Schemes etc.;
- actively monitor and assess vacancy data locally including utilisation of CSO/GeoDirectory data, vacantheses.ie etc.; and
- advisory role both internally for local authority teams and externally as a contact point for members of the public and key interested parties on vacant homes/properties.

A.18 PRIVATE HOUSING GRANTS

This Subhead makes funding provision for the payment to local authorities of expenditure incurred on the suite of Housing Adaptation grants for Older People and People with a Disability. Three separate schemes are available:

- ***Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability*** scheme provides grants of up to **€30,000** to assist people with a disability to have necessary adaptations, repairs or improvement works carried out;
- ***Housing Aid for Older People*** scheme provides grants of up to **€8,000** to assist older people living in poor housing conditions to have necessary repairs or improvements carried out; and
- ***Mobility Aids Grant Scheme*** is available to fast track grants of up to **€6,000** to cover a basic suite of works to address the mobility problems of a member of a household.

The Subhead also covers outstanding payments relating to the 1985 House Improvement Grants scheme, Thatching Grants and any outstanding payments in respect of claims received before the termination of the New House Grant Scheme.

A.19 MORTGAGE ALLOWANCES

The subhead provides funding for the mortgage allowance scheme which was introduced in 1991 to assist householders who are tenants or tenant purchasers of local authority houses to become owner-occupiers of other dwellings. Eligibility was extended to tenants of dwellings provided by Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) under the rental subsidy scheme, who return their accommodation to the body, thus making it available for re-letting.

The mortgage allowance is payable for mortgages entered into on or after 1 May 1995. The amount of the allowance, up to €11,450, is payable over 5 years with an annual payment each year. The allowance is paid by the Department in instalments directly to the mortgage institution. Instalment claims can be submitted by the individual paying the mortgage, or the lending agency, credit union, bank or local authority who provided the mortgage.

A.20 AFFORDABLE HOUSING / SHARED OWNERSHIP SUBSIDY

This subhead provides for the recoupment to local authorities of the mortgage subsidy payable under the Affordable Housing Scheme and the rent subsidy element of the Shared Ownership Scheme. The annual subsidy payable ranges from €1,050 to €2,550 to applicants based on income bands of between €13,000 and €28,000.

A.21 LIHAF

The subhead provides for:

- The Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF) is primarily designed to fund the provision of public off-site infrastructure to relieve critical infrastructure blockages and enable housing developments to be built on key sites at scale.

30 projects have been approved with a total budget of €200m (€150m to be funded by the Department and Local Authorities to fund €50m).

A.22 PYRITE AND MICA REMEDIATION

This subhead previously covered the expenditure incurred by the Pyrite Resolution Board and the Housing Agency in the implementation of a scheme (i.e. the Pyrite Remediation Scheme) to remediate dwellings affected by significant pyritic damage from 2014 and into future years as may be required.

From 2020, the subhead now provides funding for the operation of both the Pyrite Remediation Scheme and the Defective Concrete Blocks Grant Scheme.

1. The Pyrite Remediation Scheme provides for the remediation of dwellings, which are subject to significant damage attributable to pyritic heave consequent on the presence of reactive pyrite in the subfloor hard-core material, provided for by the Pyrite Resolution Act 2013.
2. The Defective Concrete Blocks Grant Scheme is available to financially assist homeowner(s) of dwellings (located in Donegal or Mayo) which are damaged due to defective concrete blocks containing excessive amounts of deleterious materials namely mica or pyrite. The grant scheme is a scheme of last resort for affected homeowners who have no other practical options to remediate their dwellings.

A.23 HOUSING & SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES AGENCY

This Subhead provides for the annual operating costs of the Housing and Sustainable Communities Agency (formally established on 1 August 2012 under S.I. No. 264 of 2012 but operating on an administrative basis from mid-2010 and referred to as “The Housing Agency”). The principal costs relate to staffing and accommodation.

A.24 RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES BOARD

This subhead covers the projected shortfall between RTB income (primarily derived from fees for Registration of tenancies) and current expenditure. The subhead also covers the scheme set up and development costs for the Deposit Protection Scheme.

A.25 RENTED ACCOMMODATION INSPECTIONS

The Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2019 specify requirements in relation to a range of matters, such as structural repair, sanitary facilities, heating, ventilation, natural light, fire safety and the safety of gas, oil and electrical supplies. All landlords have a legal obligation to ensure that their rented properties comply with these regulations. Responsibility for the enforcement of the Regulations rests with the relevant local authority.

The Department's Strategy for the Rental Sector, published in December 2016, stated that in order to increase the numbers of properties inspected, specific ring-fenced funding for inspection and compliance activity would be identified from 2018 onwards and annual targets for both inspection and compliance would be agreed with LAs. The objective was to increase inspection numbers incrementally each year, to allow housing authorities build inspection capacity by recruiting, outsourcing, etc., with the aim of achieving a 25% annual inspection rate by 2021. Housing for All reaffirms the 25% inspection target on an ongoing annual basis.

A.26 APPROVED HOUSING BODIES REGULARITY AUTHORITY (AHBRA)

This subhead covers the pay and general administration costs of the Approved Housing Bodies Regulatory Authority (AHBRA) in order that they may perform their functions pursuant to the Housing (Regulation of Approved Housing Bodies) Act 2019.

AHBRA is an important element in support of an ambitious housing agenda, overseeing the effective governance, financial management and performance of all AHBs. AHBs make a vital contribution to the delivery of social housing across the country. Statutory regulation will provide further assurances to tenants, the public and potential investors that AHBs operate in a secure environment

A.27 PLANNED MAINTENANCE / VOIDS

The subhead ensures that future improvement works are driven by strategic and targeted work programmes informed by stock condition surveys and implementation of a planned maintenance approach to the maintenance of local authority housing stock. This will see circa 140,000 local authority social housing properties surveyed over a 4/5 year period, commencing in 2022. These stock condition surveys will inform future work programmes, unding requirements and allocations.

The subhead also provides for the national Voids programme which exclusively targets local authority-owned vacant dwellings with a focus on returning these properties to productive

use as quickly as possible and in line with the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2019.

A.28 COST RENTAL EQUITY LOAN

The subhead has been designed as a method for funding the delivery of Cost Rental housing by Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) through the Cost Rental Equity Loan (CREL) scheme to target rents at a minimum discount of 25% below open market rents.

A.29 COMMISSION ON HOUSING [New subhead in 2022 then moved to A.23 in 2023]

This subhead provides funding to support the Programme for Government commitment to establish a Housing Commission to examine issues such as tenure, standards, sustainability and quality-of-life issues in the provision of housing, all of which have long-term impacts on communities. The establishment of the Commission presents an opportunity to take a long-term strategic view on these aspects of housing, over an extended time horizon, as well as the other issues identified as being suitable for in-depth examination. The Housing Commission will also bring forward proposals on the referendum on housing referred to in the Programme for Government.

A.30 DPGS/IMPROVEMENTS/REMEDIALS [New subhead in 2022; A.29 in 2023]

This subhead is the funding stream for two programmes designed to meet the needs of local authority tenants and maintain and improve local authority estates that have fallen into disrepair.

- **Disabled Persons Grants** - provides funding on an annual basis under the Disabled Persons Grants (DPGs) to local authorities for adaptations and extensions to the existing social housing stock to meet the needs of local authority tenants. The scheme applies to works that are necessary to address the needs of older people or people with a disability and overcrowded situations. The scheme also caters to improvement works in lieu scheme (IWILs) which provides funding for adaptations or extensions for local authority tenants or applicants in lieu of social housing.
- **Remedial Works Scheme** - provides funding to assist housing authorities to carry out major essential repairs to certain clusters of their rented dwellings which they cannot fund from their own resources. It is focused on full estate remediation works rather than individual houses.

A.31 FIRST HOME SCHEME [New subhead in 2022; A.30 in 2023]

This subhead will fund the State's capitalisation of the First Home SPV (50:50 with participating banks AIB/BOI and PTSB), in order to implement the First Home shared equity scheme - *Housing for All*. The First Home shared equity scheme will primarily support First-time-buyers to bridge the gap between the maximum value of deposit and mortgage and market cost of a newly constructed home.

A.32 AFFORDABLE HOUSING FUND [New subhead in 2022; A.31 in 2023]

This subhead provides for the Affordable Housing Fund:

- The Affordable Housing Fund Subsidy is available to local authorities to reduce the cost, and accordingly the minimum price/rent required, of housing made available to qualified affordable housing purchasers or cost renters.
- Following a review of SSF progress and projects and, having regard to feedback from local authorities, a number of significant improvements to the SSF funding scheme, renamed the Affordable Housing Fund subsidy scheme, were agreed & communicated to local authorities by way of Circular in June 2021.
- The scope of costs covered were extended to subvent the all-in development cost of delivering the housing, including land purchase costs; applications are now accepted as they are developed on a rolling basis as opposed to time constrained funding calls; and, funding support now extends from the previous maximum of €50,000 per affordable dwelling on a stepped scale to €100,000, based on location and density.

A.33 CROÍ CÓNAITHE (CITIES) FUND [New subhead in 2022; A.32 in 2023]

As outlined in Housing for All, the new *Croí Cónaithe (Cities)* fund is intended to ensure that, aligned with the objectives of the National Planning Framework, additional choices are made available to home buyers in our urban cores.

The Croí Cónaithe (Cities) Fund aims to activate the delivery of apartments in high demand areas of the existing built up foot print of our cities for sale to individual purchasers. The first step to achieving this is to ensure that apartment developments with planning permissions in place are built and occupied. The fund will assist in addressing the viability challenges for such developments by providing support to help realise this vision and by benefiting the end consumer in terms of additional homes for purchase. The fund will be managed by the Housing Agency on behalf of the Department.

Croí Cónaithe Towns Scheme A specific programme, to be delivered by Local Authorities, for the provision of serviced sites for housing to attract people to build their own homes and to support the refurbishment of vacant properties, enabling people to live in small towns and villages in a sustainable way.

A.33 SOCIAL HOUSING PPP [New in 2023, post FREV]

This subhead provides funding to support the social housing PPP Programme. Building on the successful model of social housing PPPs introduced in recent years, which will deliver in the region of 1,500 social homes across 3 bundles nationally, the Department will increase the use of PPPs to deliver social housing under Housing for All. The homes are being delivered using an ‘availability based’ PPP model, in which a private sector company designs, builds,

finances, maintains and operates (DBFMO) social housing developments in return for a monthly payment from the State – a Unitary Charge – which is paid over a 25 year contract period once construction is completed. The PPP model provides a delivery structure whereby social housing units remain in State ownership throughout and are handed back to the relevant local authority with a pre-defined residual life for future use after the 25 year contract period.

A.34 OTHER SERVICES [re-numbered in 2022]

This subhead provides grant aid towards the administrative and general expenses incurred by organisations that conduct research or provide information, advice or training related to housing. It also finances Building Standard related research projects. The bulk of funding provided is for representative bodies and federations in the non-profit approved housing body sector involved in the provision of housing research, advice and information. Such organisations include the Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH) and Threshold.

PROGRAMME B - WATER SERVICES

B.3 – WATER QUALITY PROGRAMME

Funding under the Water Quality Programme supports initiatives to protect and restore water quality, particularly those associated with the implementation of, and compliance with, the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD), including programmes provided by key stakeholders.

B.4 – RURAL WATER PROGRAMME

The subhead provides for operational and management subsidies for the group water sector and capital investment in the wider rural water sector. Current funding provides an annual subsidy payable by local authorities to group water schemes towards their operational and management costs of supplying water for domestic use. The capital funding is delivered through a multi-annual programme which comprises of a range of measures aimed at improving the quality, reliability and efficiency of rural water services infrastructure

B.5 – UISCE ÉIREANN (FORMERLY IRISH WATER)

The subhead provides funding to Uisce Éireann to meet the cost of normal domestic water services. Uisce Éireann's primary function is to provide clean safe drinking water to customers and to treat and return waste water safely to the environment. The Voted funding for Uisce Éireann is in the form of a monthly payment (current and capital) to Uisce Éireann for normal domestic water services (other than the Household Water Conservation charge for excessive use); and a separate capital contribution for the domestic component of capital investment. There is also a provision of €200,000 for the ongoing refunds of domestic water charges by Irish Water.

B.6 – LOCAL AUTHORITIES

This subhead funds local authorities for:

- Legacy water services commercial loans that contributed to the capital costs of the provision of water services assets by local authorities (with most loans due to be repaid by 2029);
- Water Services Transition Office (WSTO) in the context of the water reform programme; and
- Administration overheads for the transfer of water services assets ownership to Irish Water, known as the 'Asset Transfer Process'.

B.7 – LEGACY WATER ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

The purpose of this subhead provision is to fund:

- **Standalone Developer Provided Water Services Infrastructure (DPI) Resolution Programme** to facilitate the resolution of standalone DPI estates in a sustainable manner and to support the taking in charge of these estates.

- **Lead Remediation Grant** - The Lead Remediation Grant is a demand-led grant scheme to support the replacement of lead pipes supplying drinking water to homes.

B.8 – MARINE ENVIRONMENT

The purpose of the subhead is to support actions under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)

- to achieve good environmental status in the Irish marine environment;
- to further advance the MSFD monitoring programme;
- to continue the 2nd cycle of the MSFD (2018-2024)
- Start work on the third cycle of the directive to update to part 1 of Ireland’s Marine Strategy
- to co-ordinate Ireland’s participation in the OSPAR Commission;
- to provide for the development of a coherent, representative, connected and resilient network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs);
- to develop and implement national and international marine environmental policy;
- to support research and programmes which will inform public policy increase public awareness and positively influence societal behaviour in relation to marine environmental matters.

B.9 – WATER ADVISORY BODY

The purpose of Subhead B9 is to fund the WAB's secretariat, its overhead and administration costs, its members' fees and expenses as well as any consultancies undertaken by the WAB. The subhead contains therefore both a pay (€20,000) and a non-pay (€300,000) element.

The WAB was established on 1 June 2018. The purpose of the WAB is to advise the Minister on measures needed to improve the transparency and accountability of Irish Water; and to report, on a quarterly basis to an Oireachtas Committee on the performance, by Irish Water, on the implementation of its Strategic Funding Plan.

PROGRAMME C - LOCAL GOVERNMENT

C.3 – LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUND

This subhead provides for an Exchequer contribution to the Local Government Fund (LGF) in the form of a payment from the Department's Vote. The other income source to the LGF is Local Property Tax (LPT).

The payment from C.3 to the Local Government Fund comprises:

- contribution to local authority pay costs and the unwinding of FEMPI legislation.
- LPT equalisation
- Contribution to a variety of smaller schemes, which support local government initiatives across the country, including shared services.
- Funding to cover the estimated increase in the annual pay bill for elected members of local authorities following the recommendations of the Moorhead Report.

C.4 – FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Fire Services Capital Programme support fire authorities in the development and maintenance of a quality fire-fighting and rescue service. This subhead provides capital funding for the construction/upgrading of fire stations and the procurement of fire appliances and specialised equipment.

C.5 – FRANCHISE

This subhead covers Franchise expenditure in relation to electoral law and administration including modernising the electoral registration process.

*Electoral Commission transferred to Taillte Éireann on 31 March 2023

C.6 – VALUATION TRIBUNAL

The Valuation Tribunal is an independent appeal body established and operating under the Valuation Acts of 1988 and 2001. It deals with appeals against decisions of the Commissioner of Valuation on the valuation of commercial properties for rating purposes and appeals against determinations of market value on derelict sites or vacant sites made by local authorities under the Derelict Sites Act 1990 and the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015. This subhead provides for the effective and efficient operation of the Tribunal. Since 1st January 2022, the Valuation Tribunal has moved from Vote 16 (Valuation Office) to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (Vote 34).

C.7 - SHARED ISLAND LA DEVELOPMENT FUND [New in 2023]

On 9 December 2021, the Taoiseach announced in a speech on the next phase of the Government's Shared Island initiative, that Shared Island development funding for Local Authorities would be made available. The Shared Island Local Authority Development

Funding Scheme will provide support to development of joint investment projects by cross-border Local Authority partnerships that can deliver shared regional development goals. €5m in capital funding from the Shared Island Fund will be made available in 2023 for this specific purpose. The purpose of the funding is to support the initiation of new joint investment projects by cross-border Local Authority partnerships, that can link funding streams from North and South and better deliver regional development goals. This reflects the Government's commitment under the Shared Island dimension of the revised National Development Plan (2021-2030) to support cross-border working and investment by Local Authorities.

C.7 – Other Services [C.8 in 2023]

This subhead includes funding for the Directly Elected Mayor. The Government is committed to establishing a directly elected Mayor of Limerick that is empowered and accountable, with a direct democratic mandate and the means to deliver on that mandate.

Government approved the publication of the General Scheme of the Local Government (Directly Elected Mayor with Executive Functions in Limerick City and County) Bill 2021, as well as its referral both to the Oireachtas for pre-legislative scrutiny and to the Office of the Attorney General for priority drafting of a Bill.

The Joint Oireachtas Committee published its Report on the pre-legislative scrutiny of the General Scheme in November 2021. The Report contains a number of important recommendations, including in relation to the functions of the role of directly elected mayor, governance arrangements in the local authority and the annual budgetary process, among other matters. These recommendations are currently under consideration.

PROGRAMME D - PLANNING

D.3 – AN BORD PLEANÁLA

Funding supports the administration and general expenses of An Bord Pleanála, which is an independent and impartial national body with responsibility for adjudicating on planning appeals, strategic infrastructure development applications, including major rail, road, gas and electricity infrastructure, as well as strategic housing developments.

D.4 – PLANNING TRIBUNAL

This subhead provides exchequer funding for the Tribunal of Inquiry into Certain Planning Matters and Payments, with the exception of the salaries of the three Members of the Tribunal, which are paid from the Central Fund.

D.5 - OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR

This subhead provides exchequer funding for The Office of the Planning Regulator. The Office of the Planning Regulator is grant funded through the Department. The Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) was formally established in April 2019 on foot of recommendations made by the Tribunal of Inquiry into Certain Planning Matters and Payments (i.e. The Mahon Tribunal). The Office of the Planning Regulator has a range of functions, including:

- independent assessment of all local authority and regional assembly forward planning, including the zoning decisions of local authority members in local area and development plans;
- conducting reviews of the organisation, systems and procedures used by any planning authority or An Bord Pleanála in the performance of any of their planning functions under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended); and
- driving national research, education and public information programmes to highlight the role and benefit of planning.

D.6 – PLANNING POLICY

This subhead provides for the costs associated with research and related expenditure by the Planning Policy and Legislation section. These costs include EU-wide initiatives - participation in (and contributions to) European Territorial Cooperation programmes in spatial and urban planning.

D.7 – NATIONAL, REGIONAL & URBAN PLANNING POLICY

This subhead mainly provides for costs associated with ongoing implementation, monitoring and reporting of progress of the final National Planning Framework (NPF), published under *Project Ireland 2040* in 2018.

D.8 – MY PLAN

To fund the on-going development, operation and maintenance of the Department’s planning data systems - Myplan.ie and the National Planning Application Database (NPAD) and all ancillary services.

D.9 – URBAN RENEWAL/REGENERATION**Urban Regeneration and Development Fund**

The URDF, which was launched in 2018, is providing part-funding for applicant-led projects that will enable a greater proportion of residential and mixed-use development to be delivered within the existing built-up footprints of our cities and large towns, while also ensuring that more parts of our urban areas can become attractive and vibrant places in which people choose to live and work, as well as to invest and to visit.

As a key activator of the National Planning Framework the €2 billion URDF, is one of four funds established under the National Development Plan 2018-2027, and is focussed on supporting projects that will contribute to compact sustainable growth through the regeneration and rejuvenation of Ireland’s five cities and other large towns. The URDF will play a key role in the achievement of the National Strategic Outcomes identified in PI2040.

D.11 – ORDNANCE SURVEY IRELAND

The purpose of the subhead is to support financially Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSi), which is the State body under the aegis of the Department responsible for creating, maintaining and providing the State’s definitive mapping and geospatial information services to support citizens, business and policy makers.

In addition to the above-referenced grant from the Department, OSi also generates revenue from the sales of its mapping and geospatial information products and services.

* OSi transferred to Tailte Éireann on 31 March 2023.

D.12 – LAND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY [D.11 in 2023]

The purpose of the Subhead is to provide funding for the LDA to cover expenditure associated with their non-commercial functions. These functions are detailed under Section 29 of the LDA Act 2021 and include the development of a Register of Relevant Public Lands, the development of a report to Government on relevant public lands and any functions associated with the development of a Strategic Development Zone as provided for under Part IX of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. Under Section 29, grant funding can be allocated to the LDA to cover costs associated with these functions as approved by the Minister for Housing, Local government and Heritage, with the consent of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform.

D.13 – FORESHORE [D.12 in 2023]

The purpose of the subhead is to provide for the operation of the foreshore consent process under the Foreshore Act 1933 by the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

D.14 – MARINE SPATIAL PLANNING [D.13 in 2023]

This subhead meets costs associated with the development of a Marine Spatial Plan (MSP) for Ireland.

D.15 – EU AND INTERNATIONAL PLANNING REGULATION [D.14 in 2023]

This subhead meets costs associated with the implementation and guidance for EU Directives and UN environmental obligations relevant to the Planning System in Ireland, and advising on and management of EU planning litigation in domestic courts particularly relating to the EU Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directives, as well as Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) referrals and relevant infringements.

D.16 – MARITIME AREA REGULATORY AUTHORITY [D.15 in 2023]

The Maritime Area Planning (MAP) Act provides for a new marine planning system within the maritime area, designed to work for all types of development - from smallest structures to largest offshore renewable energy (ORE) projects. The MAP Act provides for establishment of the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA), a new State agency under the aegis of the Department, which will be responsible for consenting and enforcement functions in the maritime area. This funding is provided for the dedicated MARA Establishment Unit in the Department to progress the implementation plan.

D.16 - LA PLANNING & RESOURCES

The provision of €5.4m under this subhead supports the increased investment in the resourcing of the planning system, and provides funding for additional staff for local authorities and support for a new planning learning and development initiative which is currently being finalised.

D.17 – OTHER SERVICES (INCLUDING PROVISION FOR CORK EVENTS CENTRE)

The Cork Event Centre was included as a commitment under Project Ireland 2040 with a view to contributing to the achievement of the Government's objectives around urban regeneration, enhanced amenity and heritage, associated quality of life standards, balanced regional development, and the regeneration and development of Cork City Centre. Responsibility for the advancement of proposals for the development of the Cork Event Centre remains, in the first instance, a matter for Cork City Council.

PROGRAMME E - Met Éireann

E1-E4 MET ÉIREANN

Met Éireann, Ireland's National Meteorological Service is maintained by the State under the UN Convention of the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO). In the context of climate change and the impact of weather on Ireland, serve society through the production and communication of reliable weather and climate information to protect life and property and to further enhance Met Éireann's role as the authoritative voice on meteorology and climatology in Ireland. The current allocation is used to cover expenses arising from the fulfilment of these obligations. The Capital Allocation is used for the essential maintenance, development and support of Met Éireann's specialised meteorological and ICT infrastructure.

PROGRAMME F – Heritage

F.3 – HERITAGE COUNCIL

The purpose of this subhead is to provide funding to the Heritage Council. The vision of the Heritage Council, as set out in its strategic plan, is that by 2022 heritage will be at the heart of Irish society and decision-making and that Ireland will be internationally recognised as a centre of excellence in heritage management, conservation and community engagement. The Heritage Council works to achieve this vision through its programmes, by providing policy advice to government and by supporting and advocating for the heritage sector.

F.4 – BUILT HERITAGE

This subhead makes provision for the Built Heritage Capital and Current Programmes, including the Archaeological Survey of Ireland, the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage, and the Historic Structures Fund. In addition, this subhead also includes provision for the Office of Public Works programme for the conservation of the State's heritage portfolio. The Subhead also provides continuing financial support for Heritage organisations including the Irish Architecture Foundation, Irish Architectural Archive and ICOMOS. The National Monuments Service provides for the protection, conservation and management of Ireland's archaeological heritage through the provision of an appropriate administrative, policy and legislative framework under the National Monument Acts.

F.5 – NATURAL HERITAGE (NATIONAL PARKS & WILDLIFE SERVICE NPWS)

This subhead provides funding for:

- the maintenance, development, management and operations of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). It includes the management and operational costs of the state's 87,000 hectare Natural Heritage property portfolio (which comprises 6 National Parks and more than 80 statutory Nature Reserves and other conservation/recreational sites as well as over 500km of trails). This includes conservation and infrastructural projects, health and safety, visitor management, improvements to existing visitor facilities, completion and opening of new visitor facilities and other minor capital projects.
- conservation-related scientific survey and reporting, as required in the EU Nature Directives and compensatory measures for landowners' costs and losses resulting from restrictions in managing their land in areas designated under the EU Habitats and Birds Directives. There is also provision for supporting small scale conservation and community education and awareness projects in areas affected by the cessation of domestic turf cutting on raised bog special areas of conservation and natural heritage areas; for the operational costs of the Peatlands Council and the scanning costs of applications referred to the Minister in his role as a statutory consultee under the Planning Acts and from other consent authorities.

- The Conservation Measures and International directorate in NPWS will support the development and implementation of a dedicated Conservation Measures programme to address the challenges of protecting Natura 2000 sites, and meeting Ireland's obligations under the Nature Directives. This Unit will also co-ordinate and prepare Ireland's defence to European Court of Justice Case C-444/21.

F.6 – IRISH HERITAGE TRUST

The purpose of this subhead is to provide funding support to the Irish Heritage Trust. The Irish Heritage Trust was established in 2006 as an independent not-for-profit and is responsible for bringing heritage properties to life and ensuring financial sustainability at each property in its care. The Trust was established to bridge the gap between those heritage properties fully supported by direct public funding and those in private ownership. The funding supports operations and important capital works that assist the Trust in conserving and sustainably developing the properties in its care.

F.7 – BUILT HERITAGE INVESTMENT SCHEME

The Built Heritage Investment Scheme provides grant aid to protect and maintain important historic buildings in our local communities.

F.8 – PEATLANDS RESTORATION, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

This Subhead provides for conservation related measures and compensatory measures for landowners and land users resulting from restrictions in managing their land in areas designated under the EU Habitats and Birds Directives and the Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000.

The provision in this subhead also support the Voluntary Bog Purchase Scheme, the raised bog Cessation of Turf Cutting Compensation Scheme (CTCCS) including the relocation of turf cutters, and the management, revitalisation and restoration of Ireland's protected peatlands including the Protected Raised Bog Restoration Incentive Scheme. It also supports certain administrative functions required by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 and the Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000.

F.9 – WATERWAYS IRELAND

This subhead provision provided funding to Waterways Ireland. Waterways Ireland is one of six North/South Implementation Bodies established under the British-Irish Agreement of 1998. It is the cross-border navigational authority responsible for the management, maintenance, development and promotion of over 1000 km of inland navigable waterways, principally for recreational purposes.

F.10 – STRATEGIC BUILT HERITAGE PROJECTS

The purpose of this new subhead is to support urgent conservation works at built and archaeological heritage sites of national importance.

F.11 – CLIMATE ADAPTATION

This subhead makes provision for implementation of actions under the Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan for Built and Architectural Heritage and the Climate Action Plan 2021. Actions to be progressed in 2022 include to:

- Carry out a condition assessment of a sample of heritage sites/properties in public ownership;
- Monitor atmospheric climate at selected heritage properties;
- Monitor ongoing maintenance and repair works undertaken and emergency response;
- Work with other sectors and local authorities to identify heritage assets within their remit that may be under threat, directly or indirectly, because of climate change;
- Develop guidelines and recommendations for local authorities;
- Assess existing communication gaps and strategy for public engagement.

F.12 – NARROW WATER BRIDGE

In June 2021 Taoiseach Micheál Martin announced funding from the Shared Island Fund to progress work on the Narrow Water Bridge to tender phase. Consultants have been appointed by Louth County Council and are working on steps toward drawing up a detailed tender. Further funding will be allocated from the Shared Island Fund, once the due diligence process has been completed and the final costs of the project are determined.

Appendix 1

The range of programmes and schemes supported and administered by the Department during 2019 is vast, and significant detail is published and available at the following links:

Annual Report 2021:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/f9a38-annual-reports/>

Irish version

<https://www.gov.ie/ga/bailiuchan/8c2f0-tuarascalacha-bliantula/>

Housing Statistics:

<https://www.housing.gov.ie/housing/statistics/housing-statistics>

Social Housing Provision Statistics:

<https://www.housing.gov.ie/housing/social-housing/social-and-affordable/overall-social-housing-provision>

Social Housing Construction Status Report. This report is a compendium of the new build programme across the 31 local authorities for new build social housing activity. All social Housing Construction Status Reports can be found at:

www.gov.ie - [Social Housing Construction Projects - Status Reports \(www.gov.ie\)](#)

The **Q4 2022 Social Housing Construction Status Report** is also available on data.gov.ie at:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/14f82-social-housing-construction-projects-status-report-q4-2022/>

Housing Updated response re Recommendations in PAC report on 2019 Appropriation Accounts

Recommendation 1:

The Committee recommends that the Department works to substantially reduce the expenditure year-on-year on social housing supports such as HAP, RAS and SHCEP starting from 2022, and focuses on increasing capital expenditure on housing stock that will remain an asset of the State.

Updated Response (May 2023)

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage accepts this recommendation but wishes the Committee to note the countervailing pressures to reducing current expenditure in these areas as (i) current expenditure on HAP and RAS is demand led, (ii) the SHCEP budget supports current costs associated with the provision of homes by Approved Housing Bodies through the Capital Advance Leasing Facilities (CALF), and also supports the Repair and Leasing Scheme and the Mortgage to Rent programme. Allocations for each of these subheads have been set for 2023 in the Estimates process. The Department will work to progress this recommendation over the period of the Housing for All Plan, taking account of the NDP capital envelope for housing, while also taking into account the range of services to be delivered from the current expenditure element of the Vote.

Housing for All is the Government's plan to increase the supply of housing to an average of 33,000 per year over the next decade. Under Housing for All, the focus is to deliver social homes through build programmes delivered by local authorities and Approved Housing Bodies. In the period 2022-2030, Housing for All includes a target to deliver nearly 90,000 new build social homes. This focus on build will see a reduced reliance on leasing, with long-term leasing to be ended by 2025. Local authorities have been provided with social housing targets for the period 2022-2026 and significant work is underway to develop a pipeline of new housing developments to meet these targets. The most recent Construction Status Report for Quarter 4 2022 shows that 6,525 social homes were onsite with an additional 12,733 homes at design and tender stage. In Q4 2022, 147 new construction

schemes, (713 homes) were added to the pipeline. Additional social housing developments are being added to the pipeline on a regular basis.

Over time, as the stock of social housing increases, we will see more households on social housing waiting lists in local authority allocated properties with a reduced reliance on the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) and the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS).

However, at end 2022 we had over 59,000 households in a HAP-supported property and more than 16,500 in RAS properties. The Programme for Government commits to ensuring that HAP levels are adequate to support vulnerable households. An increase in the HAP discretionary rate from 20% to 35% was introduced in 2022. Additional HAP supports are available under HAP for homeless households or households at risk of homelessness.

Housing for All includes a commitment that the State will continue to support households currently in HAP supported tenancies and to provide funding to support households on social housing waiting lists to secure a HAP supported tenancy, while we increase the levels of housing stock managed by local authorities and AHBs. The Department will engage with the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform through the annual Estimates process in relation to the budget requirements to meet these commitments.

The Social Housing Current Expenditure Programme (SHCEP) supports the costs of homes delivered through leasing programmes, including Repair and Leasing and Mortgage to Rent. Under Housing for All, long-term leasing will be ended by 2025. Housing for All also commits to increases in the numbers of households supported through the Mortgage to Rent scheme. The Targeted Leasing Initiative (which aims to deliver approx. 1,000 additional long term leased homes and was one of the extra measures announced at the end of the Winter Eviction Ban) will also be funded from SHCEP.

The SHCEP budget also supports current costs associated with the provision of homes by Approved Housing Bodies through the Capital Advance Leasing Facilities (CALF) and the associated Payment and Availability agreements. Under Housing for All, Approved Housing Bodies will have an important role in the delivery of new build social homes.

The total spend for both HAP and RAS decreased in 2022 compared to 2021.

1. Whether it remains the intention of the Department to establish a building standards regulator

Department Response

(i) Building Standards Regulator

The Department remains committed to establishing an independent building standards regulator to strengthen the oversight role of the State with the aim of further reducing the risk of building failures and enhancing public confidence in construction-related activity.

The objective is to ensure that this regulator has sufficient breadth of scope, effective powers of inspection and enforcement, and an appropriate suite of sanctions.

It is intended that the building standards regulator will be established on a statutory basis (through primary legislation). In this regard, the Minister informed the Government on 18 January of his intention to develop legislative proposals for the establishment of an independent building standards regulator.

As a first step, a comprehensive desktop study was undertaken by the Housing Agency in collaboration with the Department, which documented the current building control system and construction product enforcement system in Ireland and other countries. It also provides an overview of other relevant regulators and inspectorates in Ireland.

Building on the information contained in this study (completed in March 2023), the Department has commenced dialogue with the County and City Management Association with a view to determining the scope, functions, role and structure of the regulator. It is likely to be Q3 2023 before proposals are ready for Government.

2. A detailed note on the work involved in re-establishing the Building Regulations Advisory Body including the reason for the delay.

Department Response

The Department remains committed to re-establishing the Building Regulations Advisory Body (BRAB) under Section 14 of the Building Control Act 1990.

In line with the Government's Public Service Reform Plan, published by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in November 2011, the BRAB was listed as one of the forty six "Candidate Bodies for Critical Review by end June 2012". The outcome of that review process was that the work of the BRAB was to be absorbed into the Department.

Since the rationalisation and reduction of State Bodies was made by way of a Government Decision, it is proposed to submit a Memo for Government seeking Government approval to re-establish the BRAB.

Preparatory work has commenced in this regard with a view to re-establishing the Advisory Body in H2, 2024.

3. Whether the proposed agreement with HomeBond will ensure the payment of the full liability due from the insurer.

Department Response

The Department has been made aware of an agreement reached between the Housing Agency and HomeBond. Signed contracts were sent to HomeBond by the Pyrite Resolution Board on the 25th of April, 2023, and they are currently awaiting the return of the counter signed agreements.

The Department asked the Housing Agency to provide the Committee with an update on this matter in due course.

4. RTB Issues

Issue 1. Reports to the RTB about non-registered tenancies

The Committee also noted the Department's response to the Committee's recommendations in relation to the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB). It was agreed to express disappointment at the lack of progress in implementing a system whereby those who contact the RTB are given a reference number for their referral and request further clarification in light of the Minute of the Minister of Public Expenditure and Reform which stated that the Board would examine the creation and implementation of this system.

Chairman: Finally, regarding recommendation 4, there are a number of issues with the information provided, all of which relates to the Residential Tenancies Board, RTB. Three specific actions were recommended by the committee, which were as follows.

The first one was to create a reference number for each property reported to the RTB as unregistered in order that the individual or individuals making a referral have a record of same. While the RTB stated in the relevant minute of the Minister that it "does not disclose detailed information in relation to the specifics of cases", the board confirmed that it will "examine the creation and implementation of a system of reference numbers and a related database for all referrals". However, in this latest item of correspondence, the RTB appears to contradict this commitment. The board confirms that each referral is given a unique internal number; however, it "does not provide updates on referrals and does not comment on the compliance of individual landlords, on investigation cases or on potential prosecutions". The committee's recommendation was that the person contacting the RTB would be given a reference number for his or her referrals. I propose that we express the committee's disappointment at the lack of progress in implementing a system whereby those who contact the RTB are given a reference number for their referral, and I request that the Department clarify this response in light of the minute of the Minister.

Department Response

- **Reference Number**

Reports on unregistered tenancies that are made to the RTB's dedicated registration enforcement email address are acknowledged within 10 days. The information received is assessed carefully to establish the nature and extent (if any) of the non-compliance and determine next steps.

In the previous submission to the Committee in 2021, referred to in the letter, the RTB acknowledged that there was room for improvement in the process of reporting unregistered tenancies and that it would take steps to focus on implementing measures that would be more supportive of those who wish to receive assistance and confirmation of current registration status and indeed the status of their referral.

Since then, the RTB has implemented a number of actions to improve this process such as:

- updated the information on the website to assist persons in searching the public register of tenancies to find the tenancy they are looking for;
- new process of annual registration requires landlords to enter details of the Eircode of the dwelling which will improve the quality of data in the public register;
- provided additional information on the remit of the RTB and the types of arrangements that fall outside the remit of the RTB;
- updated referral form on the RTB website to guide a member of the public in making their report of potential non-compliance;
- all reports made to the RTB's dedicated registration enforcement email address are acknowledged within 10 days.

Although the RTB has an internal reference numbering system in place for internal management and tracking purposes, a reference number is not created for persons contacting the RTB.

In considering the issue of providing a reference number, it is important that the rights of all persons are considered. While a reference number may seem to be a simple administrative action it in itself creates a direct link between the number and a person against whom a report of potential non-compliance has been made and who may not yet be aware of the report or who may not be in breach of any particular law. Such a link could lead to the disclosure of information regarding matters related to compliance and/or enforcement actions which are in progress. This could, in turn, compromise the integrity of the enforcement process and jeopardise the outcome of any legal case in relation to non-compliance.

The Department has been informed that the RTB has given this recommendation considerable thought and is of the view that a reference number system is not appropriate for complaints of this type.

Where non-registration is suspected or alleged, the approach of the RTB is to write to landlords and to give the landlord reasonable opportunity to comply before a prosecution is initiated. Landlords receive two notices from the RTB before any legal notices as defined in the process set out in the Act are issued. It should be noted that the RTB publishes details of prosecution outcomes on the RTB website.

As with all areas of the RTB's remit, the processes used by the Board are kept under ongoing review. There is no disagreement with the Committee that genuine reports of potential non-compliance are followed up on and the Department can assure the Committee that these concerns will be considered further as part of the review of the RTBs Strategy which is currently under way.

The RTB continues to monitor its processes with regards to non-compliance. The RTB is currently finalising its new Statement of Strategy for the period 2023-2025 which will include a commitment on the compliance element of RTB activities. This will include a review of how it currently identifies and responds to non-compliance with registration requirements and rental law and ensure proactive and effective processes are in place to address non-compliance.

Issue 2. RTB to establish a targeted timeframe for resolution of each reported case of an unregistered tenancy.

The second part of our recommendation was that the RTB establish a target timeframe for resolving each reported case. The RTB has given a timeframe for its response to members of the public upon making a referral, rather than the timeline for resolving each referral. At best the recommendation has been misunderstood. I suggest we request clarity as to whether the RTB intends to develop a target timeframe for resolving referrals to the board, or any form of performance metric.

Department Response

The Department welcomes the Committee's recommendation that the RTB to develop a target timeframe for resolving reports to the board. This Department is currently engaging with the RTB on the prioritisation of the implementation of the new requirement for annual registration, which commenced in April 2022.

However, the new RTB Statement of Strategy 2023-2025, which is currently under development, will set out details of all of the RTBs key strategic objectives in relation to effective regulation including its intention to implement a revised compliance and enforcement policy in 2023. This policy will include details of how the RTB will operate as a fair, transparent, and effective regulator. This Department is engaging with the RTB on the Strategy Statement in order to ensure that revised processes, procedures and performance metrics will be developed as part of the revised compliance and enforcement policy. Details of the new compliance and enforcement policy will be published on the RTB website as soon as possible to ensure transparency with the public and the population the RTB regulates.

As referenced above, the RTB's new Statement of Strategy with a corresponding Business Plan for 2023 is currently being finalised; the RTB Business Plan 2023 includes the implementation of a revised compliance and enforcement policy by the end of Q4.

Issue 3. RTB protocol for updating the register of tenancies for student-specific accommodation.

The third part of our recommendation was that the RTB should publish a register of tenancies for student-specific accommodation as a matter of priority. While it is welcome that the proposed register of tenancies for student accommodation has been published online, it appears to have been last updated in June 2022. I propose that we ask the RTB to clarify its protocols for updating the register. Is that agreed? Agreed. 64 PAC I thank members for allowing the time to set that out. It is important that we follow

up on recommendations we have made and hold bodies to the commitments made in the minute, which is the key bit, of the Minister, which provides the Government's response to this committee's recommendations.

Department Response

The Student Specific Accommodation (SSA) Register is a list of all SSA tenancies registered with the RTB at a point in time. The Register went live on the RTB website on 18 February 2022 and was updated in April and June 2022.

SSA register was updated on 31 December 2022 on the [RTB website](#) and will be updated quarterly hereinafter.

Issue 4. Has the RTB assessed any public sector database that might be useful (e.g. Revenue, or the Departments of Social Protection or Housing, Local Government and Heritage) or contacted the Data Protection Commissioner regarding the impact of availing of such databases to assist in ensuring relevant properties are registered with the RTB.

Regarding recommendation No. 4, it would be useful to find out whether most landlords are in compliance and will register with the RTB. The ones who do not are the problem. How do we get to those who do not, so that we have satisfactory standards? Are there databases that should be shared with the RTB? For example, Revenue has a database. It may not be sufficient because it may not identify if something is leased or rented but it might be there. Has the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage or the RTB been in contact with the data regulator regarding an impact assessment on any database that might be useful to them in their work? Databases may exist that get to the point we are looking for without duplication. Chairman: In conversation, we have gathered that the RTB has access to the data from the housing assistance payment, HAP, which is social protection. We could request the RTB to clarify whether it has full access to Revenue. The Department of Social Protection still pays rent supplement. Has it full access to the list of properties - obviously not all the information in the database - for the rental accommodation scheme, RAS, and HAP? The obvious ones would appear to be RAS, HAP, the Department of Social Protection and Revenue. We could ask for that to be clarified. Deputy Catherine Murphy: It is worth asking if the RTB has asked the Data Protection Commissioner about an impact assessment on any other database. Is the RTB audited? Mr. Seamus McCarthy: Yes. Its representatives were here in the past number of months. I signed its financial statements for 2021 at the end of June so they are due in to the committee around now. Three months is coming to an end. I expect its financial statements for 2021 will be available soon. Chairman: I suggest we seek clarity from the RTB regarding those four sources and any other databases it has access to, to try to ensure the accuracy of the registration system.

Deputy Catherine Murphy: It is worth asking if the RTB has asked the Data Protection Commissioner about an impact assessment on any other database. Is the RTB audited? Mr. Seamus McCarthy: Yes. Its representatives were here in the past number of months. I signed its financial statements for 2021 at the end of June so they are due in to the committee around now. Three months is coming to an end. I expect its financial statements for 2021 will be available soon. Chairman: I suggest we seek clarity from the RTB regarding those four sources and any other databases it has access to, to try to ensure the accuracy of the registration system

Department Response

The RTB receives information on a routine basis from a range of sources regarding potential non-compliance including:

- Department of Social Protection
- Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)
- Local Authorities

All information received is analysed and instances of potential non-compliance are processed using the same process and approach as described above for reports from members of the public.

The RTB is currently working on Action 2.5 of *Housing for All - a new Housing Plan for Ireland*, which looks at expanding the data sharing between Revenue and the RTB. The Action, with a target of Q1 2023, is to facilitate increased enforcement of registration of tenancy requirements and tenancy obligations generally enhanced through measures such as the expansion of data-sharing arrangements between the Revenue Commissioners and the RTB to ensure the performance of the Boards functions pursuant to Section 151 of the Residential Tenancies Act 2004 (as amended). This includes the provision to the review of the operation of the Act (and, in particular, Part 3) and any related enactments and the making of recommendations to the Minister for the amendment of this Act or those enactments.

The RTB approached the Revenue Commissioners proactively earlier this year and since then has had very positive engagement to scope out areas of common interest and understand how certain data could enhance RTB regulatory compliance and enforcement activity in relation to registration as well as other legal requirements. Preliminary discussions have also taken place on matters including the existing and incoming digital infrastructure, confidentiality and the relevant legal bases required for data sharing in the appropriate and lawful manner. As and when this process reaches the point where consultation with the Data Protection Commissioner is required, the Committee can be assured that the RTB will engage in the appropriate manner.

Work will continue on this important project over the rest of this year and in to 2023.

The RTB has met with the Revenue Commissioners to discuss the relevant data points collected and collated by Revenue. These meetings have also covered the current systems, data sources, limitations of some data and reporting frameworks. The RTB currently exchange information to Revenue pursuant to Section 148 of the Act.

Legislative change may be required to provide the basis for effective data exchange with the Revenue Commissioners. RTB is examining what such legislative change may look like with regard to data exchange with both the Commissioners and other public bodies.

The RTB welcomes the commitment in *Housing for All* for increased data sharing with the Revenue Commissioners.