

*Dé Céadaoin, 10 Aibreán, 2019*  
*Wednesday, 10th April, 2019*

10.30 a.m.

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**GNÓ COMHALTAÍ PRÍOBHÁIDEACHA**  
**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

*Fógra i dtaobh Leasuithe ar Thairiscint: Notice of Amendments to Motion*

**220.** “That Dáil Éireann:

declares that:

- shelter is a fundamental human right, as recognised in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and in Ireland everyone has a right to decent, affordable housing;
- it is the duty of the Government and the State, as well as of everyone in society, to ensure that every person can have their right to shelter fulfilled, through the provision of quality affordable housing; and
- in the context of Ireland’s obligations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, all housing should be designed or retrofitted to minimise emissions, and in so doing, reduce and eliminate energy poverty;

acknowledges that:

- the cost of renting and home purchase has soared in recent years, especially in the major urban areas, far in excess of the average household incomes, which clearly shows that the current situation is unsustainable and that housing is no longer affordable for many workers;
- more than 10,000 persons are currently homeless, tens of thousands of people have experienced homelessness in recent years, and every year more people are becoming homeless than are leaving homelessness; and
- around 75,000 households (4.4 per cent) are unable to afford to keep their homes adequately warm, and around 138,000 (8.1 per cent) go without heating at some point during the year;

recognises that:

- for over 10,000 people to be homeless is a national scandal and proves Government policy on housing to have failed utterly;
- Ireland’s market-dependent approach to housing provision has failed and a fundamentally new approach is required;
- in some European countries, especially in cities such as Vienna, a much larger

proportion of the population rents their homes from public authorities;

- in some European countries, such as Denmark and Sweden, housing co-operatives provide a much larger proportion of the housing stock, which is more affordable;
- in other jurisdictions, standards of insulation are much higher than in Ireland, whereas in Ireland nearly half (49 per cent) of all dwellings with an energy rating, are rated D1 or worse;
- the Government has the means to invest at least €16 billion for State-led development of social housing and affordable public housing without increasing taxes;
- the State can build well-insulated, good quality homes for less than €200,000 per unit on publicly-owned land; and
- State-led action to provide social housing and affordable housing would reduce house prices overall, making it easier for young families to afford home ownership, if they wish, while also providing them with a secure alternative; and

calls on the Government to:

- create an Irish housing development bank, by merging parts of the National Asset Management Agency (NAMA) with the Housing Agency, Housing Finance Agency and the Land Development Agency, to act as a State-owned commercial housing developer with a remit to produce social housing and affordable public housing on publicly-owned land;
- allocate €5 billion from the Ireland Strategic Investment Fund to the Irish housing development bank;
- allocate annual payments of €500 million to the Irish housing development bank rather than to the so-called ‘rainy day fund’;
- establish a State-led public housing fund in the Central Bank of Ireland, to allow credit unions to invest some or all of their approximately €14 billion in savings, so that this money can be used by the Irish housing development bank to develop social housing and affordable public housing;
- create through these means a fund of no less than €16 billion which can be invested to develop at least 80,000 units of social housing and affordable public housing on publicly-owned land over the next five years;
- keep the same or greater amount of land for residential housing in public ownership;
- establish a retrofitting scheme, to ensure that all local authority housing is brought up to a high-energy rating in terms of good insulation and energy efficiency;
- raise the requirement to sell housing units at cost to the local authority under Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 from 10 per cent to 20 per cent, and allow local authorities to choose which units to purchase at cost;
- create housing executives within a number of local authorities, to operate as shared services across all of the State and to restore the necessary competencies for housing management, maintenance and development at local government level;
- strengthen the protection of tenants in the private rented sector, especially those at risk of homelessness, while supporting landlords with only one or two properties to comply with the law;
- provide a strong legal basis for long-term leasing of private residential property, with safeguards for older people and people affected by illness or disability; and
- support home ownership by supporting the development of housing co-operatives and by regulating institutional buy-to-let investors to ensure they have no unfair advantage over households seeking to purchase housing.” — *Brendan Howlin, Joan Burton,*

*Alan Kelly, Jan O'Sullivan, Willie Penrose, Brendan Ryan, Sean Sherlock.*

*Leasuithe:*

*Amendments:*

1. To delete the following words:

“ — allocate annual payments of €500 million to the Irish housing development bank rather than to the so-called ‘rainy day fund’;” — *Eamon Ryan, Catherine Martin.*

2. To delete all words after “calls on the Government to:” and substitute the following:

“ — dramatically increase the supply of social and affordable (including cost rental) housing by increasing capital spending on housing to €2.3 billion;

— increase Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 requirements to 20 per cent in standard developments, and 30 per cent in strategic development zones;

— prioritise the delivery of public housing on public land, and aggressively target the return of vacant houses to active use;

— ensure local authorities are fully-funded and staffed to carry out this ambitious public house building programme, as local authorities are best placed to democratically deliver social and affordable housing need;

— reduce the flow of adults and children into homelessness with emergency legislation to make it illegal for landlords, banks and investment funds to evict tenants and homeowners in mortgage distress into homelessness;

— provide real security of tenure and introduce a temporary rent freeze and measures to reduce the cost of rent;

— introduce a target for ending long-term homelessness and the need to sleep rough; and

— hold a referendum to enshrine the Right to Housing in the Constitution of Ireland.” — *Eoin Ó Broin, Gerry Adams, John Brady, Pat Buckley, Seán Crowe, David Cullinane, Pearse Doherty, Dessie Ellis, Martin Ferris, Kathleen Funchion, Martin Kenny, Mary Lou McDonald, Denise Mitchell, Imelda Munster, Jonathan O'Brien, Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin, Donnchadh Ó Laoghaire, Louise O'Reilly, Aengus Ó Snodaigh, Maurice Quinlivan, Brian Stanley.*

3. To delete all words after “That” and substitute the following:

“Dáil Éireann acknowledges the extensive range of measures which the Government has brought forward to address the significant challenges in the housing sector and, in particular, notes that:

— the Government introduced the Rebuilding Ireland Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness in 2016, providing a comprehensive framework for tackling the range of complex issues needing to be addressed across the housing sector, and it is underpinned by over €6 billion in funding to support the delivery of 50,000 new social housing homes and 87,000 other housing supports over the 6 years from 2016 to 2021;

— very significant progress has been made on delivery through local authorities, approved housing bodies (AHBs) and a range of other delivery partners, with over 72,000 households having their housing needs met during the first three years of Rebuilding Ireland, with a further 27,300 households, supported by a record investment of €2.4 billion in housing, to be supported this year, bringing to almost 100,000 the total number of households who will have been assisted under Rebuilding

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Ireland by the end of 2019;

- notwithstanding the continued increases in homelessness, record exits from homelessness into sustainable tenancies have been achieved in recent years and the Government remains resolutely focused on ensuring that all appropriate measures to address the challenges in relation to homelessness will continue to be deployed, including:
  - the national roll out of Housing First;
  - the provision of additional emergency beds to reduce rough sleeping; and
  - the further development of family hubs to provide more appropriate short term accommodation for families than can be provided through hotels, while more enduring housing solutions are brought forward;
- Rebuilding Ireland is further supported by Project Ireland 2040, the Government's overarching policy initiative to align, in a strategic manner, our spatial planning and investment programmes, to underpin a sustainable approach to planning for a growing population and the associated need for housing;
- the new €2 billion Urban Regeneration and Development Fund aims to support sustainable growth in Ireland's five cities and other large urban centres, with the aim of delivering at least 40 per cent of our future housing needs within our existing built-up areas;
- the Land Development Agency (LDA) has been established to ensure more effective co-ordination and management of the development of lands, in particular publicly-owned lands in our urban centres, supporting the ambition to achieve more compact and sustainable growth;
- the LDA has an immediate focus on managing the State's own lands to develop new homes, and regenerate under-utilised sites and, in the longer-term, assembling strategic landbanks from a mix of public and private lands, with the overall objective to be involved in the delivery of 150,000 new homes over the next 20 years;
- to enable more delivery of social and affordable homes on public lands, the Government has, in parallel with the establishment of the LDA, approved a new public land affordability requirement, whereby a minimum of 30 per cent of any housing developed must be reserved for affordable purposes, be it affordable purchase or cost rental, in addition to the 10 per cent statutory social housing requirement under Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000, whether such development is being progressed by the LDA or any other market operator;
- following enactment of the required primary legislation, arrangements will be finalised in relation to the capitalisation of the LDA, through a combination of transfers from the Ireland Strategic Investment Fund (ISIF) and private finance, with capital of up to €1.25 billion to be used to fund enabling feasibility appraisal, masterplanning, infrastructure, and in some cases the ultimate development of sites, as well as strategic private land acquisition;
- in order to support local authorities to get their sites ready for affordable housing, funding of €310 million over 2019 to 2021 has been allocated for enabling infrastructure via the Serviced Sites Fund (SSF) in Budget 2019;
- cost rental housing is being brought forward in conjunction with the Housing Agency, the Land Development Agency, local authorities and other stakeholders, with two pilot projects already being progressed;
- there is no current legislative or regulatory impediment to the credit union sector (or any other party) establishing a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) to invest credit union funds in Tier 3 AHBs, and on foot of proposals from the credit union sector, a new investment framework was introduced by the Central Bank in March 2018, following

- a public consultation, to specifically allow for such investments up to certain limits;
- in terms of housing generally, overall supply continues to show significant increases, with over 18,000 new homes built in 2018, a 25 per cent increase on the previous year and the highest number of newly built homes any year this decade and, in addition, more than 2,500 homes were brought out of long-term vacancy, and almost 800 dwellings in unfinished housing developments were completed, meaning the number of new homes available for use increased by almost 21,500 in 2018, together with over 3,700 student bed spaces;
  - there is clear evidence of moderation in the annual rate of growth of house prices, due primarily to increasing supply and the Central Bank macro-prudential rules, and residential property prices increased by 5.6 per cent nationally in the year to January 2019, compared to 6.4 per cent in the year to December and 11.8 per cent in the year to January 2018;
  - moderation in the rate of rent increases is also evident, reflecting increased supply and the impact of the measures introduced under the Government's Strategy for the Rental Sector, including the introduction of Rent Pressure Zones in areas of high and increasing rents, and further strengthening of these and other measures in the rental sector is being introduced through the Residential Tenancies (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 2018;
  - the Housing Agency has a broad remit to work with and support local authorities, approved housing bodies, and the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government in the delivery of housing and housing services and is already working with the LDA in appropriate areas;
  - the Housing Finance Agency is operating effectively, in advancing loan finance to local authorities and the voluntary housing sector;
  - the Government has also established Home Building Finance Ireland (HBFI), a new State lender for small and medium sized builders/developers, with an initial €750 million to fund the delivery of up to 7,500 new homes over the next five years;
  - the National Asset Management Agency (NAMA) was established with a very specific legal mandate, which was approved by the European Commission in 2010 and it is important that NAMA's role is preserved and that it completes its work in line with its original mandate;
  - The 'rainy day fund' forms part of the Government's policy to stabilise the public finances and increase the State's resilience to external economic shocks, and it is intended to act as a counter-cyclical buffer which can complement the operation of the automatic stabilisers in the event of a particularly severe economic downturn; and the annual allocation will operate in the first instance as a contingency reserve that may be drawn on in the event of a serious unforeseeable event occurring during the relevant year, with the unused balance rolling into the 'rainy day fund';
  - the Government's commitment to improving the energy efficiency of our housing stock, through a number of grant schemes to encourage energy efficiency upgrades in homes, including supports for lower income households, an energy efficiency programme in the social housing stock that has seen 64,000 homes upgraded with some €116 million of investment to end 2018, with a further 9,000 homes to be upgraded in 2019;
  - the National Development Plan sets out the Government's target of 45,000 deeper retrofits each year from 2021;
  - new Building Regulations will be brought forward to introduce minimum energy performance requirements for existing buildings undergoing major renovation where

feasible; and

- the issue of a right to housing has been addressed in the Eighth Report of the Convention on the Constitution, which, by resolution of both Houses, has been referred to the Oireachtas Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform, and Taoiseach for consideration.”—*An tAire Tithíochta, Pleanála agus Rialtais Áitiúil*.

4. To delete all words after “calls on the Government to:” and substitute with:

- merge the National Asset Management Agency (NAMA), the Housing Agency, Housing Finance Agency and the Land Development Agency and all their land, resources and assets to establish a State-owned housing construction company, which will work with local authorities and other State and semi-State agencies to produce social and affordable housing on publicly-owned land;
- allocate €5 billion from the Ireland Strategic Investment Fund to the Irish housing construction company;
- allocate annual payments of €500 million to the Irish housing construction company rather than to the so-called ‘rainy day fund’;
- establish a State-led public housing fund in the Central Bank of Ireland, to allow credit unions to invest some or all of their approximately €14 billion in savings, so that this money can be used by the Irish housing construction company to develop social housing and affordable public housing;
- create through these means a fund of no less than €16 billion which can be invested to develop at least 80,000 units of social housing and affordable public housing on publicly-owned land over the next five years;
- immediately cease the sale or transfer of any and all publicly-owned land whether owned by local authorities, State or semi-State agencies;
- establish a retrofitting scheme, to ensure that all local authority housing is brought up to a high-energy rating in terms of good insulation and energy efficiency;
- raise the requirement to sell housing units at cost to the local authority under Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 from 10 per cent to 20 and 30 per cent in strategic development zones, and allow local authorities to choose which land or units to purchase at cost and ensuring in the case of purchase, the public homes are of the same standard and quality as the homes in the rest of the development and further empowering local authorities to impose severe penalties and sanctions on any private developer who shows evidence of land hoarding;
- support the development of housing co-operatives;
- immediately abolish the income eligibility thresholds for social housing so that people of all incomes can apply for social housing in order to ensure real social mix and to end the stigma around social housing;
- dramatically increase the supply of social and affordable (including cost rental) housing by increasing capital spending on housing to €2.3 billion;
- prioritise the delivery of public housing on public land, and aggressively target the return of vacant houses to active use;
- ensure local authorities are fully-funded and staffed to carry out this ambitious public house building programme, as local authorities are best placed to democratically deliver social and affordable housing need;
- reduce the flow of adults and children into homelessness with emergency legislation to make it illegal for landlords, banks and investment funds to evict tenants and

homeowners in mortgage distress into homelessness;

- provide real security of tenure and introduce an emergency rent freeze and measures to reduce the cost of rent;
- introduce a target for ending long-term homelessness and the need to sleep rough; and
- hold a referendum to enshrine the Right to Housing in the Constitution of Ireland.” — *Richard Boyd Barrett, Gino Kenny, Bríd Smith.*