

# DELIVERING AFFORDABLE HOMES

Sinn Féin Alternative Budget for Housing 2024



*Sinn Féin*



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# 1 The Government's record to date

Fine Gael, Fianna Fáil and the Green Party have been in Government together for three and a half years.

During that time the housing crisis has gone from bad to worse with enormous impacts on people, public services, and the wider economy.

- ✔ **house prices have increased 28%, costing on average €70,000 more**
- ✔ **rents have increased by 25% costing on average €3700 more per year**
- ✔ **homelessness, including child homelessness, has increased by 47%**

According to the Department of Housing there were 12,872 people including 3,904 children in emergency accommodation at the end of September.

This is the highest number of people officially recorded as homeless since these records began.

Homelessness is rising because Governments social housing targets, too low to begin with, are not being delivered.

- ✔ **social housing output has been 33% below target between 2020 and 2022, leaving a shortfall of 8,527 homes**
- ✔ **just 1401 social homes of a target of 9100 were delivered by June 2023**

The Government's failure to delivery genuinely affordable homes to rent or buy has left an entire generation locked out of affordable housing, many with good qualifications and jobs being forced to emigrate.

Meanwhile a growing number of people over the age of 55 are forced to live in an expensive and insecure private rental sector, unsure of their future post-retirement.

- ✔ **zero affordable homes were delivered in 2020 or 2021**
- ✔ **just 1007 affordable homes were delivered in 2022, 50% behind target**
- ✔ **only 123 affordable homes of a target of 3500 were delivered by June 2023**

Despite all the Government talk of unprecedented allocations for social and affordable housing, red tape and poorly designed schemes are preventing funding from being spent.

- ✔ **over €1bn of voted capital expenditure for social and affordable homes went unspent from 2020 to 2022**
- ✔ **over €1bn of general government capital expenditure, including voted capital expenditure, AHB borrowing and LDA funding, went unspent in 2022**
- ✔ **at the end of September 2023 less than half of the allocated €4bn general government expenditure for housing, including voted capital expenditure, AHB borrowing and LDA funding, was spent**

Fine Gael have been in power for twelve years. Fianna Fáil have been propping them up for seven years. The current coalition is three and a half years in office. It is clear they are failing on housing.



## 2 The Government's housing budget for 2024

The Government's housing budget for 2024 saw no additional exchequer capital investment above 2023 levels.

While the overall social and affordable housing targets for 2024, as set in the Government's housing plan, remain unchanged, figures provided by the Department of Housing actually indicate a cut of €93m in social housing funding for Local Authorities for 2024 compared to 2023. However, this may change when the Revised Estimates published in December.

Set against their lack of delivery to date, this means that Budget 2024 is a real missed opportunity to start addressing the need for social and affordable housing.

Funding Stream	2023	2024	Change
Overall Housing Capital	€2.5bn	€2.5bn	NC
Local Authority Capital	€1.424bn	€1.331bn	- €93m
Capital Assistance Scheme for AHBs	€137m	€140m	+ €3m
Capital Advance Loan Facility for AHBs	€310m	€315m	+€5m
Cost Rental Equity Loan for AHBs	€75m	€100m	+ €25m
Affordable Housing Fund for LAs	€90m	€100m	+ €10m
Croí Cónaithe	€30m	€50m	+ €20m
STAR investment	NA	€15m	New Scheme
First Home Scheme	€50m	€50m	NC



### 3 Public Housing

The only way to address the deepening affordable and social housing crisis is for Government to dramatically scale up the delivery of public housing to meet social and affordable housing need.

The Government targets as set out in their housing plan are too low and they are not even meeting these.

The Governments targets for 2024 are to deliver 9,300 new build social homes and 6,400 affordable homes.

However, 2000 of these affordable targets are not affordable homes at all. Rather they are overpriced private homes purchased with the controversial shared equity loan rebranded as the First Home scheme.

The number of genuinely affordable homes to be delivered by Local Authorities, Approved Housing Bodies and the Land Development Agency in 2024 is 4,400.

There is also a growing concern that the rents being charged for cost rental homes by the LDA, now at €1450 and €1550 per month for two and three bed homes, are increasingly unaffordable.

Sinn Féin believes that at least 21,000 social and affordable homes must be delivered in 2024 to start addressing the growing levels of demand.

Table 1 sets out the government’s targets, Sinn Féin’s additional committed delivery and the additional cost.

**Table: 1 Overall public housing provision**

Housing Type	Government targets	Sinn Féin additional targets	Total output	Cost of additional targets
Social	9,300	3,700	13,000	€929,500,000
Affordable	4,400	3,600	8,000	€508,701,600
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,700</b>	<b>7,300</b>	<b>21,000</b>	<b>€1,438,201,600*</b>

\* cost additional €1.44 billion voted capital expenditure but €1.74 billion general government expenditure. Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) are classified in the General Government sector by Eurostat therefore all AHB expenditure including monies from their own borrowings or revenue is classified as general government expenditure and we factor this expenditure into the calculation of our general government balance. 1,800 of our proposed additional affordable cost rental homes would be 40% funded on average by Voted Capital and 60% funded on average by AHBs. The expenditure for affordable purchase homes is 95% Voted and 5% General. Note also, our capital funding allocation for housing specified here is additional to pre-committed capital funding for housing contained in the National Development Plan which relates to government targets.

#### Social Homes

The 3,700 additional social homes contained in Sinn Féin’s plan will be delivered via four separate schemes. These are Buy and Renew, Turnkey, Acquisitions and New Building Technologies.

Buy and Renew funds the purchase and renovation by Local Authorities of vacant and derelict properties to be added to the housing stock.

Turnkey New Build involves the forward purchasing of private sector developments which would not otherwise get built or the entering into Design and Build Contracts with private builders.

Acquisitions are the purchase of second-hand homes either with a HAP/RAS/RS tenant-in-situ with an eviction notice, or vacant homes not on the market, to include one bed, four bed and medically adapted properties.

New Building Technologies involves the use of off-site, timber based, manufacturing of high-quality permanent homes.





Table 2 below sets out the scheme, number, average unit cost and total cost of each measure.

**Table 2: Social housing provision**

Scheme	Number	Unit cost	Total cost
Buy and Renew Social	1,000	€266k	€266m
Turnkey New Build	1,000	€294k	€294m
Acquisition	700	€266k	€186.2m
New Building Technologies	1,000	€183k	€183.3m
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,700</b>		<b>€929.5m</b>

## Affordable homes

The government's housing plan includes a target for 'affordable' homes of 6,400 for 2023 (P32 HFA).

However, this includes 2,000 unaffordable private sector homes purchased with the controversial Shared Equity Loan scheme, now rebranded the First Home Scheme. In Sinn Féin's view these are not affordable homes.

The target for genuinely affordable homes in the government’s plan to be delivered by Local Authorities, Approved Housing Bodies and the Land Development Agency via the Affordable Housing Fund, the Cost Rental Equity Loan Scheme and Project Tosaigh is 4,400.

Sinn Féin believes that at least 8,000 genuinely affordable homes must be delivered in order to start dealing with the pent-up demand for affordable cost rental and affordable purchase homes.

Cost rental homes would be delivered with the Cost Rental Equity Loan to Approved Housing Bodies covering a percentage of the delivery costs. Approved Housing Bodies would raise the remainder of the finance from the Housing Finance Agency, the European Investment Bank or low interest private finance.

The Buy and Renew affordable purchase scheme would fund the purchase and renovation by Local Authorities of vacant and derelict properties. These would then be sold on to affordable purchasers under the terms of the affordable purchase scheme.

While this fund would primarily be used directly by Local Authorities to deliver affordable homes directly, Sinn Féin would also allow individual purchasers who qualify for the affordable purchase scheme to access funding, similar to the Governments vacant and derelict refurbishment grant, from their Local Authority.

The Affordable Housing Fund provides Local Authorities with a percentage of the development costs of new build affordable homes. The remainder of the finance is provided by the building contractor from finance provided by Home Building Finance Ireland or commercial banks. The properties are then sold on to affordable purchasers under the terms of the affordable purchase scheme.

Sinn Féin’s affordable purchase scheme differs from the governments in one crucial respect. The government scheme sells the property at a discount of the all-in development cost while retaining the difference as an equity share in the property. This equity is redeemable by the State on sale by the owner.

Sinn Féin’s scheme retains ownership of the land under a no-charge indefinite leasehold. The sale price of the property does not include the land costs or the cost of servicing the site. The property is owned by the purchaser and can be passed on to subsequent generations of the same family.

The free indefinite leasehold is subject to a legal covenant prohibiting the use of the property for private rental. At the point of future sale, the covenant also obliges the homeowner to sell to another affordable purchaser at the future affordable purchase price, which would be the initial price paid index linked for inflation and home improvements.

The benefit of this scheme is that there is no hidden shared equity charge on the purchaser and year on year we build up a stock of privately owned, privately traded but permanently affordable homes in the housing system.

Table 3 below sets out the scheme, number, average unit cost and total direct exchequer cost of each measure.

**Table 3**

Scheme	Number	Unit cost	Total cost
Cost Rental	1,800	€108k	€195m
Buy and Renew Affordable Purchase	900	€266k	€239.4m
Affordable Housing Fund	900	€82.5k	€74.3m
<b>Total</b>	<b>3600</b>		<b>€508.7m</b>





## Delivering the targets

Delivering 21,000 public homes in a single year is ambitious. In 2020, 2021 and to date in 2022 the government has missed their social and affordable housing targets.

While this was in part due to Covid-19 disruption of building sites, other factors were at play. These include micro-management of the public housing development process by the Department of Housing and bureaucratic procurement rules set by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform which slow down development, reduce competition and increase costs.

In order to ensure delivery of Sinn Féin's ambitious public housing targets we would combine the increase of capital investment outlined above with six key policy initiatives.

- ✔ **Almost 20% of our public housing delivery in 2023 would be from existing vacant and derelict housing stock. 4,000 of the 21,000 public homes would be from reused buildings. Delivering units in this way is quicker, cheaper, requires less labour and has a lower carbon footprint.**
- ✔ **Reform the Department of Housing's Four Stage Approval Process to accelerate the delivery of public housing already in the pipeline. At present this process can add up to two years to the development process which under Sinn Féin's proposals would be reduced to between 6 and 12 months.**
- ✔ **Reform the public procurement process through the use of regional and tiered framework agreements. This would end the need for individual procurement processes for every new build project. It would also encourage greater competition, help manage cost inflation and ensure greater stability of labour supply as contractors would be guaranteed a pipeline of work over a 3 to 5 year period.**
- ✔ **Create a specific framework agreement for the delivery of new homes through the use of low carbon, off site manufactured new building technologies. Significant advances have been made by Irish companies in the development of high-quality timber-based products that meet the building control, fire safety and life span requirements for public housing. When delivered at scale these products can be quicker to assemble, result in lower costs and lower carbon than traditional building methodologies. Our proposal for 2024 is that at least 2,000 public homes would be delivered via this stream.**
- ✔ **Expand the use of turnkey new builds to include mixed developments with social, affordable cost rental and affordable purchase homes. With private sector investment in high density schemes falling significantly due to rising interest rates there is significant volume and value to be secured by Local Authorities and Approved Housing bodies in acquiring turnkey projects at an advanced stage in the development process that are otherwise unlikely to be built.**
- ✔ **Redirect existing construction sector labour supply away from projects with limited social value such as co-living, aparthotels and high-end build to rent through the ending of tax reliefs for institutional investment funds. This would free up additional capacity to focus on what would be a Sinn Féin government's key priority of delivering 21,000 public homes to meet social and affordable housing need.**

## 4 Protecting Renters

Rents continue to spiral out of control. Both existing tenants in and outside Rent Pressure Zones and those in new rental stock have faced years of unprecedented rental increases.

Renters need a break. They were not able to absorb further rent increases before the current cost of living crisis. Now the need for some form of relief is urgent.

Sinn Féin's approach to the private rental sector combines both short term emergency measures to protect renters combined with medium to long term reforms to stabilise the rental sector providing security and affordability to tenants while allowing legally compliant landlords to make a fair return on the service they provide.

### Ban on rent increases

Sinn Féin would introduce emergency legislation to ban rent increases for all tenants in the private rental sector for three years. This would apply to existing tenants, new tenants in existing rental stock and new tenancies in new rental stock.

Rents would be capped at their current level of existing tenants and rental properties and at a Residential Tenancies Board standard equivalised rent index price for the property size and location.

The ban on rent increases would be in place for three years and then be replaced by an index linking of rent reviews for all existing and new tenancies. The index would be based on wages and landlords' real costs as determined by way of regulation by the Minister for Housing.

### Cutting rents

Banning rent increases does nothing to reduce the cost of renting for tens of thousands of tenants who are paying 40% and in some cases 50% of their net disposable income on rent.

In Budget 2024, Sinn Féin is proposing a refundable tax credit to put a month's rent back into renters' pockets every year for three years capped at €2000.

Based on the most recent tenancy registration figures and rent index rates from the Residential Tenancies Board the full year cost of the tax credit would require €200 million of additional expenditure above the Government's allocation.

Sinn Féin would also remove the requirement for a tenant to provide RTB registration as a condition for receipt of the refundable tax credit. Rather one of a number of forms of evidence that a tenancy exists would be required including proof that rent is paid, a valid tenancy agreement or RTB registration.

## 5 Reducing Homelessness

Since the Minister for Housing Darragh O'Brien ended the Covid-19 ban on evictions in April 2021, the rate of homeless presentations and the number of households in emergency accommodation has increased dramatically.

In every single month this year homelessness among single people, families, children and pensioners increased. There are now almost 13,000 people including almost 4,000 children in Department of Housing Funded emergency accommodation.

The primary cause of homelessness is the failure of the state to provide an adequate supply of social and affordable homes.

There is a need to introduce an emergency package of measures to slow down the flow of households into homelessness and increase the availability of long term social and affordable housing.

In addition to the measures outlined in the section above Sinn Féin's Alternative Budget for 2024 proposes:

### Ending homelessness for people over 55 in a single year & reducing child homelessness

There are currently several hundred people over the age of 55 in emergency accommodation. There are also thousands of social housing tenants over the age of 55 who would like to right size from larger social homes into smaller more energy efficient homes in their local communities.

In Budget 2024 Sinn Féin has made provision for the delivery of 1000 social homes for people over the age of 55.

Using emergency procurement and planning powers combined with new building technologies we would deliver these additional 1000 social homes in 12 months.

These homes would be delivered in small infill developments within existing social housing estates.

The initial tranche of these homes would be used to end homelessness for people over 55.

The remaining homes would be offered to existing social housing tenants over the age of 55 who want to right size. In turn their larger family homes would be ringfenced for families with children in emergency accommodation.

This would ensure that in 2024 1000 additional households would exit from emergency accommodation in addition to those exiting via Sinn Féin's proposed significant increase in general needs social housing.

### Tenants in Situ

While some progress has been made in the social housing tenant-in-situ scheme during the course of 2023 there are still issues preventing it from functioning properly.

There are also very significant issues with the operation of the cost rental tenant-in-situ scheme, as evidenced by the small number of referrals into the scheme from Local Authorities and the tiny number of purchases.

In addition to addressing the issues with the operation of the scheme, Sinn Féin has included in our overall social housing provision, sufficient additional capital for the scheme to deliver at least an additional 700

purchases in addition to the Government's target of 1300.

This would ensure that up to 2000 private rental tenants at risk of homelessness would become social or affordable cost rental tenants in 2024.

## Housing First

Housing First has been government policy since 2008. It is a proven solution to long-term homelessness for both single people and families. It provides people experiencing homelessness with a home and the necessary wrap around supports required to sustain their tenancy.

To date the programme has been chronically underfunded. As a result, the number of Housing

First tenancies created has been low and has focused on those with the highest level of need, particularly amongst the single homeless population.

The government's housing plan has increased the target number of Housing First Tenancies to an average of 240 per year (Page 52, H4A).

In Budget 2024 Government have increased this to 261 Housing First tenancies for next year.

In order to accelerate the number of households exiting long term emergency accommodation Sinn Féin would increase this target further to 500 Housing First Tenancies in 2023. We would also widen the eligibility criteria to ensure all households in need of this scheme could access it.

The funding for these additional tenancies would come from within the main social housing capital budget.

## Domestic Violence

Domestic Violence continues to be a major driver of homelessness. During the Covid-19 pandemic, a significant increase in levels of domestic violence was reported by all domestic violence support organisations.

Despite this, the provision of dedicated domestic violence refuge places for women and children fleeing physical and sexual violence and coercive control remains wholly inadequate.

Figures provided by Tusla indicate that on any given night up to 599 adults and children are sleeping in domestic violence refuges funded by the State. As many as 10 counties have no refuge provision and support organisations estimate that current provision meets barely a quarter of need.

Sinn Féin's Alternative Budget proposes a €15 million increase in capital funding for domestic violence refuge provision in the form of ringfenced Capital Assistance Funding provided by the Department of Housing.



## 6 Adequate Housing

Housing policy is not only about the number of homes delivered in a given year. It is also about the standard and quality of existing and new homes. Homes must not only be secure and affordable they must also be adequate to meet people's needs.

In our Alternative Budget for 2024 Sinn Féin has included a range of measures aimed at addressing some of the worst examples of inadequate housing in our housing system. We have also included measures aimed at ensuring new housing meets key standards such as fire safety and habitability for people with disabilities including wheelchair users.

### Inner City Flat Regeneration

Dublin City Council and Cork City Council have in their social housing stock a significant number of flat complexes built from the 1930s to the 1960s. Many of these, while well built, have not been adequately maintained over the years.

Overcrowding, structural disrepair, damp and weak estate management have a very significant negative impact on tenant's quality of life.

Sinn Féin's Alternative Budget proposes to double the Estate Regeneration fund to €100m in 2024.

This additional funding will be focused on upgrading and improving flat complexes.

### Social Housing response maintenance

The day-to-day maintenance of social housing stock is funded through the rents paid by tenants.

Figures from the National Oversight and Audit Commission indicate that Councils rents cover approximately half of the cost of response maintenance.

In recent years a number of Councils have experienced shortfalls in their response maintenance budgets. In our Alternative Budget for 2024 Sinn Féin has included a new provision of a €50 million

Response Maintenance Fund to which Local Authorities can apply on a once off basis to supplement their own maintenance budgets.

This is a new budget head and is in addition to the cyclical maintenance grants that Councils can apply for from the Department for works such as heating, windows and electrical upgrades.

## Traveller specific accommodation

The failure of successive governments and Local Authorities to address the Dickensian conditions in which large numbers of the Travelling community live is a stain on Irish housing policy and society more generally.

There is an urgent need to implement the 32 recommendations of the 2019 report of the Expert Group on Traveller Accommodation. Central to this is an annual increase in capital funding for the provision of new culturally appropriate Traveller accommodation.

Sinn Féin's Alternative Budget includes an allocation of an additional €10 million of capital funding. This funding would be specifically ringfenced for new accommodation provision.

## Tenant Empowerment and Participation

Sinn Féin is committed to ensuring that tenants in Local Authority and Approved Housing Bodies estates are provided with the opportunity to become active participants in the decisions about the management and development of the communities in which they live.

For too long social housing landlords have adopted a top-down attitude to tenants, viewing them merely as receivers of state services or as consumers.

Tenants are best placed to understand the needs and requirements of the built environment in which they live.

Sinn Féin has included a budget line provision for 2024 of €5 million to fund pilot schemes in which tenants are supported to become active participants in local decision making. These pilots should take a human rights-based approach to allow for meaningful tenant participation on issues such as but not exclusive to estate regeneration, environmental management, estate management, estate enhancement.

The schemes would be designed on a location-by-location basis with the support of housing rights and tenants' rights advocacy groups.



## 7 Climate Change

Thirty percent of the States greenhouse gas emissions are from the built environment. Twenty percent come from the energy used in the buildings in which we live, work, study and socialise.

Ten percent comes from the embodied carbon generated in new building developments.

Reducing the carbon emissions from our built environment is the responsibility of a number of Departments.

In light of the new legally binding carbon reduction targets agreed by the Oireachtas and the government, each Department has a responsibility to set out year on year what policy changes it intends to use to meet those targets.

Sinn Féin's Alternative Budget sets out three key budgetary measures aimed at reducing the overall emissions of the public housing sector.

### Vacant Homes

As stated earlier almost 20% of Sinn Féin's public housing build programme in 2024 will come from vacant and derelict buildings. The lowest carbon building is the one already in existence.

Reusing existing buildings not only involves a dramatically reduced carbon footprint it also contributes to the revitalisation of city, town and village centres where most of the vacancy exists.

The re-use of existing dwellings in country-side areas will also assist in addressing population decline while at the same time reducing the negative impact of unrestricted new ribbon development.

The delivery of 4,000 social, affordable rental and affordable purchase homes from vacant and derelict stock in urban and rural Ireland is a key plank for Sinn Féin's emission reduction strategy in public housing.

As part of the financing of this component of our public housing policy Sinn Féin would redirect the small amount of funding in the Croí Cónaithe Towns Refurbishment Grant fund into the capital funding for Local Authorities.

Individuals who qualify for the Local Authority affordable purchase scheme would still be able to apply for this grant funding subject to the existing terms and conditions, including the existing grant caps of €50k for a vacant and €70k for a derelict property.

Added to the overall increase in capital funding for public housing provision and the ability of Local Authorities to take a proactive approach to vacancy and dereliction this will result in a greater number of vacant and derelicts being brought back into use and made available to a wider number of households in urban, town, village and countryside locations.

## Social housing retrofitting

Primary responsibility for the government's retrofitting programme lies with the Department of Energy, Climate and Communications. However, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage has responsibility for the financing of the social housing retrofitting programme.

Social housing tenants are amongst the lowest income households in the State and are at greater risk of fuel poverty. Inadequate financing of the maintenance and upgrading of social housing stock has resulted in very low levels of energy efficiency in the social housing stock.

Sinn Féin is committed to accelerating the pace of retrofitting of the social housing stock and in our Alternative Budget for 2024 have included an additional €43.5 million to the Department of Housing which represents a 50% increase on the government's allocation of €87 million for 2023.

## Social Housing Solar Panels

As part of our commitment to improving the energy efficiency of existing social housing stock and reducing energy poverty we have included an additional funding line of €1.5m for the installation of solar panels.

## New Building Technologies

Reusing existing buildings and retrofitting older homes is only one part of reducing the carbon emissions in our built environment. It is not possible to meet our legally binding emissions reduction targets in the built environment without changing the way in which we build and what we build with.

While traditional building technologies such as steel, cement and bricks will continue to be used into the future, the government must facilitate the growth of new building technologies including low carbon timber-based construction products and low carbon cement.

While this transition from high carbon to low and in some cases zero carbon technologies will take some time, the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government must take the lead and ensure a dedicated pipeline of new build public housing contracts using low carbon new building technologies.

Sinn Féin's public housing programme for 2024 aims to secure at least 2,000 new public housing units using these new low carbon building technologies through the use of a specific framework agreement open to manufacturers providing such technologies.

1,000 of these units would be for general needs social and affordable housing. The remainder would be used specifically to end homelessness among people over 55 in a single year and reduce child homelessness.

This would be accompanied by the phased introduction into the wider public housing framework agreements of criteria to promote the use of lower carbon materials including timber frame, low carbon cement and timber-based products.

Sinn Féin is also committed to a reform of the building regulations to permit timber based residential developments above 10 meters subject to the highest fire safety and building control regulations.

Beyond these immediate measures the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage must work with stakeholders including the Irish Green Building Council, the Construction Industry Federation, The Irish Homebuilders Association and the City and County Managers Association to set out a clear and ambitious pathway ensuring that the construction industry plays its part in meeting our legally binding 2030 and 2050 emission reduction targets.





## 8 Building Defects

Sinn Féin is committed to delivering 100% redress for all those living in defective homes. We believe that the responsibility for funding the necessary redress schemes must be borne by both the State and industry including the construction, quarry, block manufacturing, non-life insurance and banking sectors.

Given the scale of the defects that have been discovered, full redress is going to take many years and billions of euro.

Sinn Féin is committed in our Alternative Budget for 2024 to ensuring at least €200 million of exchequer funding is provided next year for those affected by pyrite, defective block and Celtic Tiger era building defects.

We have made provision for an additional €140 million in addition to the €60 million provided by the government in core funding for 2023.

Sinn Féin would also pursue the creation of an industry fund, either through agreement or legislation with the relevant sectors.

Any funds raised through an industry contribution would be additional to committed Government expenditure and both contributions would be multi annual.

Sinn Féin continues to be concerned with the delay in both the provision of emergency funding and the wider redress scheme for people living in homes with Celtic Tiger era defects.

We are also concerned that the revised defective block scheme launched in June of this year will not provide 100% redress for effective homeowners.

Sinn Féin will continue to work with homeowners and tenants living with all forms of defects to ensure that adequate redress schemes are in place to enable people to rebuild their lives and their homes.





## 9 Planning Reform

The primary cause of delays in our planning system is the result of years of under investment in Local Authority Planning Departments and An Bord Pleanála by successive Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael governments.

In this year's alternative budget Sinn Féin are proposing to significantly increase funding available to both Councils and the Bord to ensure they have the sufficient staff to make good quality planning decisions in a timely manner.

We have made provision for an addition €10m for Councils to commence recruiting the additional 500 staff required over a two year period. We have also made provision for an addition €1.9m for An Bord Pleanála to recruit an additional 30 staff in 2024, with a particular focus on increasing their capacity to respond to the expected increase in offshore wind planning applications.

Sinn Féin remains committed to increasing constructive and informed participation by communities and stakeholders in the planning process Sinn Féin's Alternative Budget includes a new provision of €500,000 for a number of participative planning pilot projects.

The aim of these projects would be to empower communities and stakeholders to engage effectively and early in order to make the overall planning process more efficient. The aim of the pilot projects would be to assess the viability of making such funding a mainstream part of the planning process.

# DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HERITAGE

## CURRENT EXPENDITURE MEASURES

Measure	(€m)
Increase staff in ABP (cost for additional 30 staff)	1.9
Increasing staff in local authority housing, planning & building control	10
Expand and restore national parks	2
Increase staffing for environmental planning in Maritime Area Regulatory Authority	1.2
Participative planning pilot scheme	0.5
Tenant empowerment and participation fund	5
Disability inclusion fund for all local authorities	7
Increase funding to local government	48
<b>Total</b>	<b>75.7</b>

## CAPITAL EXPENDITURE MEASURES

Measure	(€m)
1000 turnkey social homes	294
1000 buy & renew social homes	266
700 acquisition social homes	186.2
50% in traveller accommodation capital allocation	10
1800 CREL affordable cost rentals	195
900 extra buy and renew affordable purchase homes	239.4
900 extra AHF affordable purchase homes	74.2
1000 older persons/right sizing units	183.3
Building Defect Redress Scheme	140
Double estate regeneration and refurbishment funding	50
Double disabled persons/improvements/remedials	25
Social Housing Stock Response Maintenance Fund	50
50% increase in social housing retrofit	43.5
Establish solar PV scheme for local authority homes	1.5
First Home Scheme	(50)
Croí Conaithe Cities	(30)
Capital funding for domestic violence refuges	15
Expand and restore national parks	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,705.2</b>
<b>Total Plus €292.6m AHB expenditure and 3.7m local government expenditure which is classified as general government expenditure for the purposes of calculating the general government balance</b>	<b>2,001.5</b>

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Published November 2023