

# OFFALY HOUSING DELIVERY ACTION PLAN 2022 - 2026



<b>Document Title:</b>	<b>Offaly Housing Delivery Action Plan 2022 - 2026</b>
<b>Document Detail:</b>	<i>A requirement of Circular 32/2021 to compile an action plan to include social and affordable housing supply over the Housing for All period of 2022 to 2026</i>

## Contents

1. Introduction .....	3
2. Alignment with National Planning Framework (NPF) .....	4
3. Housing Need .....	4
4. Housing Delivery Pipeline .....	6
4.1 Social Housing Targets & Delivery 2022-2026 .....	6
4.2 Affordable Housing Delivery .....	6
4.3 Social and Affordable Housing Need (Housing Strategy & County Development Plan 2021-2027) .....	7
4.4 Affordable Housing Fund .....	8
4.5 Affordability Constraint and the HNDA Tool.....	8
5. Land Holding & Land Requirements .....	9
6. Disability & Age Friendly Housing Delivery .....	10
6.1 Disability.....	10
6.2 Age Friendly & Universal Design .....	12
7. Vacant Property .....	13
7.1 Vacant Homes Census Data .....	13
7.2 Vacant Homes Action Plan 2017-2021.....	13
8. Traveller Accommodation.....	14
9. Conclusions/Challenges .....	16
9.1 Requirement for land.....	16
9.2 Resources required to progress social housing .....	16
9.3 Design Team Challenges and Building Industry Capacity .....	16
9.4 Traveller Accommodation.....	17
9.5 Affordable Housing .....	17
9.6 Irish Water Infrastructure .....	17

## 1. Introduction

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.

The delivery of new social and affordable homes is a key priority of the plan and will form an important element of the overall new housing delivery.

Housing for All includes a commitment to deliver 90,000 social homes by 2030. This includes over 10,000 social housing homes each year over the next five years, with an average of 9,500 of those being new-build social homes. Housing for All also commits to a very significant increase in the delivery of affordable homes (for purchase and rent), by local authorities, the Land Development Agency and Approved Housing Bodies. In all, an average of 6,000 affordable interventions per year are targeted under the Plan. This will see the delivery of 54,000 new social homes, with approximately 36,000 homes for purchase and 18,000 cost rental homes. Of this total, some 9,000 affordable homes are targeted for delivery by the relevant local authorities.

A key action of Housing for All is that local authorities will develop and submit Housing Delivery Action Plans to include details of social and affordable housing delivery. These Action Plans will be consistent with the relevant adopted Development Plan for that area and any associated environmental assessments. The Plans will set out details of both social and affordable housing delivery as appropriate over the period 2022-2026, in line with targets set under Housing for All. The Plans will set out:

- The alignment of the Housing Delivery Action Plan with the National Planning Framework, in particular compact growth objectives;
- An outline of locations where housing will be delivered (e.g. towns, villages, urban areas, rural areas, etc.) and the planned numbers of homes to be delivered in each area and by year;
- Details of existing land holdings and land acquisition required to deliver the targets in the Plan;
- An outline of planned delivery streams used to meet the targets, including the role of the Approved Housing Bodies /LDA or other partners with a focus on delivery through new build;
- An assessment of housing types and sizes, in accordance with local need, including the adequate proportion of 1-, 2-, 3- and 4- bedroom homes aligned with those needs;
- The provision of housing for people with a disability and the provision of Age Friendly Housing; and,
- Targets for the use of vacant properties as social housing through Buy and Renew Construction and Repair and Leasing schemes.

This plan will examine Offaly County Council’s social housing need and set out how the targets set by the *Housing for All* program will be achieved. The plan will also explore the need for Affordable Housing in the context of the schemes currently available to fund same.

## 2. Alignment with National Planning Framework (NPF)

The NPF is the overarching planning policy for the state (published in February 2018 under Project Ireland 2040) and contains 10 National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) and 75 National Policy Objectives (NPOs). There is significant alignment between the UN SDGs and the NPFs NSOs. This planning framework sets out where development and investment should be guided to shape the national, regional and local spatial development in economic, environmental and social terms to 2040. The ambition of the NPF is to create a single version, shared set of goals for every community across the country. These goals are expressed as National Strategic Outcomes which are indicated below in Figure 1, which will influence the future development of County Offaly and the policies and objectives of the County Development Plan and the housing strategy contained therein (see section 3.3).



Figure 1: National Strategic Outcomes of the National Planning Framework (Source: Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027)

## 3. Housing Need

Our records show that there were 1,434 on the Social Housing Support List awaiting housing support at the end of September 2021. The net need awaiting Social Housing Supports was 522 applicant families. The remaining applicants, 912 applicant families were on the approved Transfer Social Housing Support List, i.e., 800 active tenancies were being supported under the Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) Scheme and are eligible for social housing allocation and the balance 112 applicant families were approved and awaiting a transfer from Local Authority or Approved Housing Body units.

Each applicant has selected at least one area of choice with a maximum of 3 areas (all holding equal preferential weight). It is therefore not possible to give a fully accurate picture of a waiting list per area or settlement and an estimate must be determined using a weighting based on the number of

times an area is selected by each family. Table 1 is a summary of the number of applicants requiring housing in each of the settlement areas under consideration i.e. Tullamore, Birr and Edenderry Municipal Districts.

<i>TULLAMORE MD</i>	<i>BIRR MD</i>	<i>EDENDERRY MD</i>
<b>276</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>110</b>

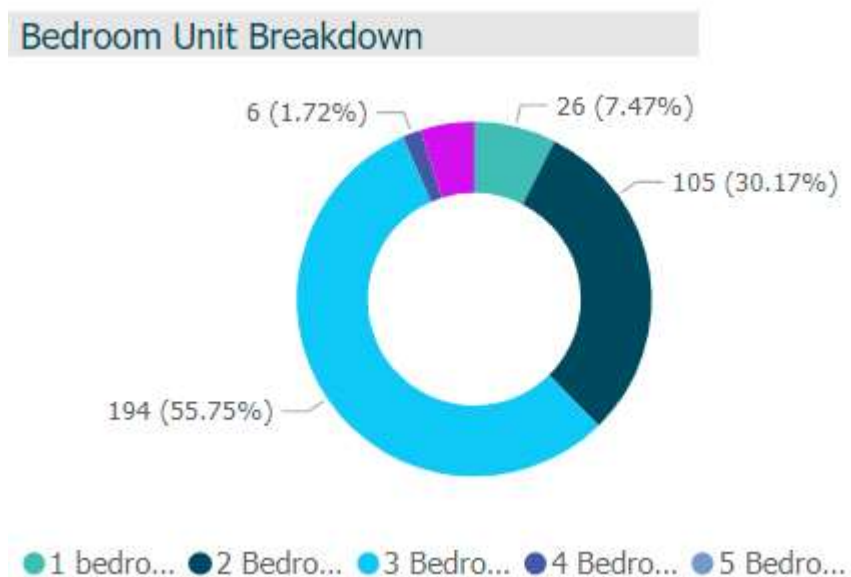
*Table 1: Apportioned Need*

In order to determine the type of houses needed further analysis was carried out and Table 2 shows that over 68% of the need is for 1 and 2 bed homes, 24% need for 3 bed homes and the remaining requirement is for 4 or more bedrooms.

<b>Number of Beds Approved</b>				
1	2	3	4	5+
35.97%	32.42%	23.82%	3.34%	4.45%

*Table 2: Beds Approved*

Figure 2 shows the delivery across 4 years by bedroom type. The 3-bedroom type house is by far the most commonly available and oftentimes cost optimal unit to deliver. However, the local authority acknowledges the high percentage of need for 1 and 2 bedroom units and a number of AHB's have been engaged to provide supply in this area. In addition, Part V and all new capital schemes contain a higher % of smaller units than previous schemes.



*Figure 2: Delivery & Projection Bedroom breakdown 2021-2024 (Source: TRABIS, Local authority live tracker)*

In addition to considering 1 beds in all new schemes both social and private, Offaly County Council has increased its supply of 1 bed units through liaising with AHB's and encouraging the use of the Repair and Lease Scheme. It is acknowledged that there is a cost premium in the provision of new 1 bed units therefore Offaly County Council have turned their attention to other options. In 2022 we are projecting **17 x 1 bed units** in Tullamore with 4 already delivered. These 17 units have all been brought

about through the re-use of existing town properties and the council will continue to aggressively pursue similar proposals where appropriate in the County. Figure 2 illustrates the known projections on approved schemes demonstrating a good start at 131 x 1 & 2 bed units projected to 2024 which represents 30% of the housing for all target with potential for many more up to and beyond 2024.

#### 4. Housing Delivery Pipeline

##### 4.1 Social Housing Targets & Delivery 2022-2026

Housing for All includes a commitment to deliver 47,600 new build social homes in the period 2022-2026. The Minister issued individual targets for social housing to each Local Authority Chief Executive on 19 September 2021. These targets were developed based on the most recent Social Housing Support Waiting List for each local authority and data obtained from the Housing Needs Demand Assessment, which profiles future demand for social housing. The target notified to Offaly County Council is **463 units** over the programme period, **2022 to 2026**.

The social housing supply pipeline and targets for Offaly County Council are set out in **Error! Reference source not found.** below. It is notable that delivery is projected to be front loaded following substantial work by Offaly County Council, Approved Housing Bodies and officials in the relevant government departments over the Re-building Ireland period 2015-2021. Approved projects already amount to 77% after the first 2 years of *Housing for All*, with 34% (of target) delivery by approved housing bodies and 43% (of target) by the local authority. Following consultation with the department of housing, **Error! Reference source not found.** also includes a further 227 units projected over the lifetime of housing for all. These units include some schemes known to the local authority in areas of need but are at the early stages of examination. The projected figure also contains units not known to the local authority that it is hoped will manifest through further land acquisitions, AHB's and future turnkey expressions of interest.

Year	Part V	Units built on LA land	LA Turnkey	LA Buy & Renew	AHB CALF	AHB CAS	Build Projections	Housing for All Targets
2022	5	11	42	3	42	19	122	180
2023	10	31	33	2	41	17	134	67
2024	2	75		3		39	119	68
2025	5	32	23	3	77		140	73
2026	5	32	25	3	10		75	75
<b>TOTAL</b>	27	181	123	14	170	75	590	463
<b>% of Target</b>		75%			53%		127%	

##### 4.2 Affordable Housing Delivery

Housing for All will see the delivery of 54,000 new social homes by 2030 as part of the Government's commitment to a very significant increase in the delivery of affordable homes (for purchase and

rent), by local authorities, the Land Development Agency and Approved Housing Bodies, with approximately 36,000 homes for purchase and 18,000 cost rental homes. In all, an average of 6,000 affordable interventions per year are targeted under the Plan. Of the overall total, some 9,000 affordable homes are targeted for delivery by the relevant local authorities.

### 4.3 Social and Affordable Housing Need (Housing Strategy & County Development Plan 2021-2027)

The Housing Strategy adopted in October 2021 as part of the Offaly County Development Plan forecasts a population increase of 5,823 in County Offaly. This in turn indicates a total population of 87,200 in 2027. The Housing Supply Targets for this Plan period (2021-2027), for Offaly is 3,978 units over this period, the equivalent of 663 units per annum. It has been determined that 1,280 of the 3,978 additional anticipated households will not qualify for a mortgage during the plan period, and that 1,213 of these households do not meet the affordability criteria for private rental. With regards to private rental affordability, households which are identified as not being able to meet the 'Affordability Criteria' over the plan period are therefore considered to require social (and affordable) housing which equates to an average of 30.5% of the additional anticipated households.

Section 93 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, defines 'affordability' as "a person who is in need of accommodation and whose income would not be adequate to meet the payments of a mortgage for the purchase of a house to meet his or her accommodation needs because the payments calculated over the course of a year would exceed 35% of that person's annual income net of income tax and pay related social insurance..." This metric informs the determination of the social requirement for the plan period. It should be noted that while some of these households could afford to sustainably repay a loan of a certain size, their inability to qualify for a mortgage precludes them and effectively results in them being considered as having either a social or affordable need (after their assessment under private rental conditions). Most of the households who do not qualify for a loan also face difficulties affording private rental. Based on this analysis, the identified social requirement for the 6-year plan of the County Development Plan period, 2021-2027, is 1,213 units (30.5%) of total additional households.

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2021-2027
No. of Additional Anticipated Households	166	663	663	663	663	663	497	<b>3,978</b>
No. of Additional Households That Do Not Qualify for a Mortgage	51	205	205	205	205	205	205	<b>1,280</b>
No. of Additional Anticipated Households That Do Not Qualify for a Mortgage and Cannot Afford Private Rental	49	197	197	197	197	197	178	<b>1,213</b>
Housing Shortfall (%)	29.7%	29.7%	29.7%	29.7%	29.7%	29.7%	35.8%	<b>30.5%</b>

Table 3: Housing Shortfall over 2021-2027 period (Source: Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027)

#### 4.4 Affordable Housing Fund

The Affordable Housing Act, 2021 sets out the legislative provisions to govern the sale or cost rental of supported affordable homes. The Affordable Housing Fund (AHF) will provide Exchequer funding support to local authorities to assist in meeting the cost of delivery of affordable housing. Delivery of a minimum discount of 15% on market prices for homes to be sold under the Affordable Purchase Scheme. Funding can be made available in accordance with Table 4 if an affordability constraint of more than 5% can be achieved.

<b>Scheme density</b>	<b>Funding limit</b>
Dwellings in schemes with a net density of over 50 dwellings per hectare in cities designated under the National Planning Framework	€100,000
Dwellings in schemes with a net density of over 35 dwellings and under 50 dwellings per hectare in all urban areas	€75,000
Dwellings in schemes with a net density of less than 35 dwellings per hectare	€50,000

Table 4: AHF Funding Level (Source: Additional Information circulated following circular 28/2021)

The AHF focuses funding support on projects where it has been clearly identified that an affordability challenge exists. A Housing Needs Demand Assessment (HNDA) for a whole local authority (or a focused HNDA in relation to a large town) must form the basis for (a) determining the scale of need with affordability constraint, (b) identifying affordably constrained need as a proportion of total housing need arising and, accordingly, (c) whether the proportion of affordably constrained demand is at least 5% of total demand arising in the next 5 years.

#### 4.5 Affordability Constraint and the HNDA Tool

The HNDA tool estimates overall future requirements (existing housing need and future additional households) divided into four tenure-based categories on the basis of estimates of housing affordability (see below). The assessments are designed to give broad, long-run estimates of what future housing need might be, rather than precision estimates.

1. Owner Occupiers
2. Private Renters
3. Affordability Constraint
4. Social Renters

The affordability constraint is the number of households that would qualify for affordable housing expressed as a percentage of the entire housing need. Inputs such as household formation, population and migration, housing affordability, including incomes, house prices, rent levels, access to finance and key drivers of the local and national economy together with details of existing stock are used in the HNDA.

The HNDA was not available for use in advance of the preparation of the Housing Strategy as part of the Offaly County Development Plan process (see 4.3). Hence the information in Table 3 above does not arrive at an affordability constraint figure. The HNDA tool was made available to local authorities in 2021 and it is now possible to calculate an affordability constraint for the whole county of Offaly which is currently at **2.2%**. A more focused approach is now needed to establish a higher affordability



constraint at a town based level if any affordable housing is to be considered in Offaly. This process is underway and will inform the likely requirement and location of affordable housing in the County. In the interim Appendix A is populated with estimated affordable housing need.

## 5. Land Holding & Land Requirements

In 2015 Offaly County Council's land holding with housing potential was assessed. A number of plans were put in place to either develop houses through in-house design and the 4 stage process or sell to Approved Housing Bodies to allow for a dual approach to housing delivery over the Re-building Ireland period of 2015-2021. This approach has been successful. However, it has left the Council with a depleted land bank that has less potential and, in some cases lands located in areas with lower housing need, has been un-zoned, or with increased potential for abnormal costs should construction progress. Offaly County Council have stayed alert to lands for sale in areas where social housing development makes sense and have acquired a total of 0.9Ha of land in recent times and have subsequently received stage 1 approval for 29 houses which will be delivered over the Housing for All period 2022-2026.

There is a need to identify further lands for housing development and most particularly in areas that will address the growing demands in the urban centres and certain towns in Offaly. The LA has recently, at the end of October 2021, adopted its County Development Plan 2021 to 2027. The LA now feels that it is appropriate to seek expressions of interest for lands in the county in areas where social housing need is greatest. **Error! Reference source not found.** shows a target of 590 houses over the Housing for All Period which will necessitate the acquisition of land to accommodate further units after the existing land bank has been utilised. Assuming a typical density of 25 units per hectare and a minimum requirement for 5.6 hectares (14 acres) of land will be required to deliver 140 units. A flexible approach will be needed in determining where and how much land the LA should acquire to satisfy the numbers projected in Table 2, Appendix A. Where the right land is available at an appropriate price then it may be possible to reduce the quantity of units projected under LA Turnkey or AHB categories.

Offaly County Council will be progressing an expressions of interest for Lands now that it is appropriate to do so given that the County Development Plan has now been adopted. However, the current development plan reflects a fundamentally different approach to the preparation and adoption of previous development plans. The need to plan for a projected continuation of population growth at a similar rate of increase, to include additional housing, employment, infrastructure and amenities and securing compact and sustainable growth by addressing the pattern of urban sprawl. The current approach favours compact forms of development that focus on consolidating the footprint of existing settlements with new development. This has impacted on the possibility of acquiring lands outside of these settlements for social, affordable or private housing. It is also possible that lands that are available for sale will cost more to develop as they will be located in an urban setting and will demand higher densities. It has been confirmed to local authorities that the Housing Delivery Action Plans will be "live" documents and should therefore be revised annually to reflect the addition or subtraction of schemes as circumstances change throughout the life of the delivery plan.

## 6. Disability & Age Friendly Housing Delivery

### 6.1 Disability

Housing Need has been defined as the extent to which quantity and quality of existing accommodation falls short of that required to provide each household or person in the population, irrespective of ability to pay or of particular personal preferences, with appropriate housing. In November 2021 there were 478 on the social housing list awaiting housing within Offaly, with a further 743 active tenancies supported under the HAP scheme. The housing need is defined as the type of house, size, design, location and any associated support that is required to allow the person to live appropriately. There is a legitimate expectation amongst adults with disabilities to have access to housing from which they can build their lives.

The National Guidelines for the Assessment & Allocation Process for Housing Provision for People with Disability states

*“People with a Disability shall not be deemed adequately housed when their current address is a congregated Setting, institution, hospital/nursing home, community based group home, or when they, although an adult, remain in the family home due to their personal circumstances and or support needs”*

The *National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011–2016*, extended to 2020, recommends the prioritisation of housing need where people on the Council housing lists are unnecessarily having a prolonged stay in hospital because their previous accommodation is no longer suitable to their changed housing need.

	Nov-21	Social Housing Support List	Transfers / HAP	Tenant Transfers / LA & AHB & Leasing
(A) Total Number of Housing Applicants		478	743	2,255 tenancies (LA Housing & Leasing Units. Excls AHB units)
(B) Number of Applicants by Disability Category				
- Physical	68	16	32	20
- Sensory	8	3	2	3
- Mental Health	38	8	16	14
- Intellectual	66	50	10	6
- Exceptional Medical	27	3	6	18
<b>Total No. of Disabled Applicants</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>61</b>

% of Disabled (B) by Total No. of Applicants (A)	16.74%	8.88%	2.71%
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Table 5: Offaly Social Housing Support Waiting List - Disability Numbers

Offaly County Council have identified a number of properties either for specific medical needs or in anticipation of a nomination from persons who have indicated a disability from Table 5 above. The numbers are outlined in Table 6 & Table 7 below.

Project	Total Units in Scheme	No. Houses – Ambulant Disabled	No. Houses – Wheelchair Accessible / Universal Design	No. Houses - Medical Needs based on OT report
Kearneys Drive, Tullamore	41	16		
Clonminch, Tullamore	19	15	4	
Raheen, Clara	38		2	1
Beechgrove, Belmont	7	4	2	1
Sr. Senan Avenue (OPD's)	4		4	
Elderberry Drive, Moneygall	4			
Circular Road, Daingean	9			1
Daingean 2	9	4	1	
Dargan Drive, Tullamore	20	4	1	1
Shannon View, Kylebeg	18			
Sycamore Drive, Ballycumber	10		2	
Rathbaun, Shinrone	15		7	
Bracknagh	7		5	
Unit, Birr	1		1	
Unit, Clara	1		1	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Projected % of total</b>		<b>21%</b>	<b>14.7%</b>	<b>2.0%</b>

Table 6: Offaly County Council Work Program – Disability/Universal Designs

	No. Houses – Ambulant Disabled	No. Houses – Wheelchair Accessible / Universal Design	No. Houses - Medical Needs based on OT report
2022	19	7	1
2023	20	6	2
2024	4	5	1
2025		12	
2026			
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>4</b>

Table 7: Disability/Universal Design per Year

All dwellings including two storey dwellings comply with Technical Guidance Document Part M for accessible accommodation on the ground floor whereby all visitors are accommodated. All public

spaces in housing schemes will be wheelchair accessible i.e. no steps will be provided and sloped areas will be in compliance with Technical Guidance Document (TGD) Part M.

## 6.2 Age Friendly & Universal Design

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

Offaly County Council will be including a larger percentage of Universal Design dwelling in all new housing stock and to ensure a mix of tenure sizes in all schemes where feasible to allow future adaptability of housing stock to accommodate the changing needs of tenants as families grow and change and people age. "Right Sizing" will be facilitated through the inclusion of a wide variety of house typologies in housing schemes to accommodate movement of family units within housing estates. Offaly County Council will endeavour to include practice design models as promoted by Age Friendly Ireland and the Irish Wheelchair Association to achieve above recommended minimum targets for accessibility. Table 8 below outlines Offaly County Councils current plans for Age Friendly & Universal Design proposals throughout the county. It is envisaged that as more land is acquired further projects will manifest thereby increasing the number of units available under this category. The age friendly technical advisor and the local authority specific disability expert are both situate in the housing section in Offaly County Council where they are best placed to advise on public and private schemes in order to increase the numbers of age friendly and universally designed units over the housing for all plan period.

Age Friendly & Universal Design	
2022	27
2023	4
2024	17
2025	13
2026	
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>

Table 8: Provision of Age Friendly & Universal Design Houses

## 7. Vacant Property

### 7.1 Vacant Homes Census Data

Census 2016 results record a total housing stock of 30,740 units in County Offaly, which represents a marginal decrease of 10 units on 2011 levels (30,750 in 2011). The number of vacant units in 2016 stood at 2,640 (excluding holiday homes and those dwellings deemed to be temporarily absent). The 2011 Census data does not distinguish between categories of vacancy and indicates that there were 4,120 unoccupied dwellings in 2011. In contrast, the 2016 data illustrates the number of temporarily absent dwellings, unoccupied holiday homes and other vacant dwellings. For comparison purposes, the total number of vacant dwellings across these three categories in 2016 is 3,480. As such, there is an overall decline in the number of vacant dwellings of 640 between 2011-2016. This indicates the existing vacant stock is absorbing much of the growing need for housing in the county. A summary of the information on the existing housing stock is provided in Table 9

County	Housing stock	Holiday homes	Other vacant	Temporarily Absent	Total vacancy	% Vacancy <sup>5</sup>
Offaly County	30,740	244	2,640	596	2,640	8.6%
MD						
MD Birr	10,629	138	1,161	177	1,161	10.9%
MD Tullamore	11,358	71	778	287	778	6.8%
MD Edenderry	8,753	35	701	132	701	8.0%

Table 9: Vacancy Rate per MD (Source: Census 2016)

According to the 2016 Census, the overall vacancy rate of houses and flats but excluding holiday homes in Co. Offaly fell from 3,402 in 2011 to 2,640 in 2016. This 2016 figure represents a vacancy rate of 8.6% which is considerably lower than the national average of 12.8%. The current vacancy rate according to the 2016 Census is exactly half way between the national average and the 6% base rate expected in a functioning market due to selling, rental gaps, deaths etc.

### 7.2 Vacant Homes Action Plan 2017-2021

The Department of Housing Planning and Local Government (DHPLG) issued government circulars dated 2nd August 2017 and 25th August 2017 (Circular PL 7/2017), requiring all local authorities in the Dublin area and the other four main cities to develop and adopt Vacant Homes Action Plans by the end of October 2017. The remaining County Councils were requested to complete their Action Plans by the end of 2017. The central objective of the Vacant Homes Action Plan is to assess the vacancy levels within County Offaly and to formulate appropriate actions in order to address any vacancy issues that may be present in the County. The purpose of this is was to increase the occupancy of existing homes across all forms of tenure, thereby increasing housing supply and facilitating the most effective use of properties at all times. In terms of determining “what is a vacant home”, it was agreed that the property must be a house, may be boarded up, may have evidence of inactivity i.e. build-up of junk mail, overgrown gardens etc., could be habitable and must be suitable for habitation with a

quick turnaround. It was also determined that a vacant home was not a holiday home, under construction, for sale or lease or a derelict site.

The output of the surveys carried out in advance of the publication of the Vacant Homes action plan paint a very different vacancy picture whereby data from geodirectory was used showing 993 vacant homes i.e. a much smaller amount. The 5 largest towns in Offaly were subsequently surveyed and results showed that less than 40% of the houses identified in the 2017 geodirectory database were actually vacant.

There has been substantial progress through the efforts of the housing team in facilitating a number of projects involving vacant units across the county for the social and private market. The LA has also completed 3 compulsory purchase orders during Re-building Ireland and there are a number of further units planned for the Housing for All 2021-2026 period. The Housing and Planning section continue to work together to identify derelict units in strategic locations. It is highly likely that the census planned for April 2022 will yield an improvement in vacancy levels across the county. The publication of the Town Centre First policy in early 2022 and the proposed Town Regeneration Officers and Town teams will bolster the local authorities' attempts to address dereliction and vacancy in Offaly towns and villages. **Error! Reference source not found.** indicates a projection of 14 vacant units to be progressed through the Buy and Renew Scheme over the Housing for All period. Section 3 also notes the creation of 17 x 1 bed units which have come about through the re-use of 5 separate buildings by harnessing the Repair and Lease scheme.

## 8. Traveller Accommodation

Under the provisions of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998, Offaly County Council is required to prepare, adopt and implement a Traveller Accommodation Programme (TAP). The TAP was adopted in 2019 and a range of accommodation options will be required to meet the needs of Travellers over the lifetime of the 2019 – 2024 Programme.

The Council's Planning Department has seen an increase in the number of multi-residential unit applications granted in Offaly in recent times and as these new housing developments materialise, across the County, a significant increase in new private rented accommodation should be seen in the coming years. This should result in more affordable accommodation becoming available to rent across the county and it is hoped that the experience of the Traveller Community in recent years in sourcing private rented accommodation should be reversed. The Council is awaiting a decision from the Department as to whether traveller accommodation will be included in the Housing for All targets. Offaly County Council are progressing with the TAP and are exploring a number of options to deliver further group housing units over its lifetime (see Table 10). A submission for 4 x Group Houses has already been submitted to the department in 2022.

Offaly County Council continues to engage with the Department in relation to the Traveller-specific accommodation funding required to deliver on the TAP within the specified timelines.

Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019 -2024		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Sub-Total	Total
Municipal District of Birr	Standard/RAS/Leasing/AHB	2	2	2	2	2	2	12	19
	GHS		6					6	
	Halting Site			1				1	
Municipal District of Tullamore	Standard/RAS/Leasing/AHB	4	4	4	4	4	3	23	39
	GHS	4		4			4	12	
	Halting Site	4						4	
Municipal District of Edenderry	Standard/RAS/Leasing/AHB	1	1	2	2	1		7	7
	GHS								
	Halting Site								
								Total	65

Table 10: Annual Targets (Source: Offaly Traveller Accommodation Plan 2019-2024)

## 9. Conclusions/Challenges

### 9.1 Requirement for land

One of the purposes of this report is to identify the gap between current delivery pipeline and the target set for Offaly in the Housing for All programme.

- Section 5 identifies the land required to achieve housing for all targets as advised to Offaly County Council by the Department but does not address future housing needs outside of that target.
- It does not take into account land which may be required to build affordable housing should same not become available via Turnkey or Part V.
- Table 3 indicates an ongoing need for social and affordable housing in the county up to 2027, indicating that almost a third of the total housing units delivered annually are required for social and affordable housing applicants.
- The stated amount of required land does not take into account department approved housing projects (pre stage 3) that have yet to attain planning. Should planning not be secured then further lands will be required to substitute for these proposals.
- In addition, our proposed expression of interest to acquire housing lands may yield a number of valid proposals that could exceed the requirement of this plan but would provide a secure land bank for the LA over the coming decade and thereby ensure a steady throughput of LA built units during and after the relevant period of this housing plan.
- It should also be noted the current arrangement whereby the interest paid on loan finance to acquire land is limited to 7 years. This is and will continue to be problematic in relation to acquiring larger land banks to cater for future needs. It is proposed to liaise further with the Department to effectively address this matter.

### 9.2 Resources required to progress social housing

It is acknowledged that the resources required to deliver targets provided for in Housing for All and previously in Re-building Ireland are insufficient having regard to the increase in the number of new build projects and in particular where they are delivered from a LA build pipeline. Offaly County Council has just received notification of additional technical staffing sanctions for the Housing Capital Team and same is most welcome. It should be noted that the recruitment process will take some time to complete and so many of these posts may not be filled until mid-year 2022. As our programme is already under time delivery pressures, this will continue to be problematic for some time.

### 9.3 Design Team Challenges and Building Industry Capacity

Offaly County Council works closely with the department's inspectorate and projects have progressed well notwithstanding difficulties in recruitment and retaining LA staff in the current climate where mobility has increased since the cessation of the recruitment moratorium. In our view the 4 stage process is necessary and there are no particular areas that we have identified as deficient or in need of change. It is acknowledged that the 59-week process is an ideal scenario but to date unachievable because of the lack of capacity in the industry when it comes to site investigation works and workflow issues associated with the competing demands for consultants. The majority of delays experienced by Offaly County Council during the 4 stage process are due to this. Although there are punitive measures in place to address a building contractor's performance there are none to deal with consultant



delivery/performance. The debate around the lack of trades and builders has manifested in Offaly in a lack of interest in LA work or the tendering of exceptionally high prices.

#### 9.4 Traveller Accommodation

As stated earlier, Offaly is experiencing many challenging traveller accommodation issues. Successfully delivered Traveller Specific Accommodation benefits greatly from significant engagement and consultation throughout the planning and development of Traveller Specific Accommodation. Accordingly, they benefit from increased Council staff resources and may take a significantly longer period to design and build than other social housing programmes. Offaly County Council have been liaising with the traveller accommodation unit in an effort to increase staff resources to help address and progress traveller specific accommodation units. Regrettably, to date these capital development resources have not materialised and it will continue to be a challenge for our Housing Section's Capital Team to progress the Social Housing and Traveller Specific Accommodation units required in the prescribed timeframes.

#### 9.5 Affordable Housing

The recent introduction of measures to address affordable housing is welcome however it is unclear how, and if, they apply to Offaly. The timeframe for the development of this action plan has resulted in the Executive not being in a position to fully address the development of Affordable Accommodation units in Offaly. This is a challenge, recognised by the Elected Members and a cause of concern for us all.

Accordingly, Section 4 remains effectively incomplete - it contains the information available to Offaly County Council from the Housing Strategy adopted as part of the County Development Plan. Regrettably, the HNDA was not available to the LA when the housing strategy was required and there now remains a further body of work to be completed in relation to its application to the relevant towns.

#### 9.6 Irish Water Infrastructure

Offaly County Council's Housing Section works closely with Irish Water. To date our existing schemes have progressed while Irish Water have been setting up their processes to deal with new applications. It needs to be acknowledged that any effort to acquire land will require substantial due diligence through the 16-week pre-connection enquiry process with IW; following this, there will be a minimum 4 week lead time for stage 1 department approval i.e. up to 6 months to gain approval to acquire lands for housing. In general, housing schemes are now at the mercy of Irish Water decision making timelines that were once in the gift of local authorities.

Irish Water infrastructure is challenging in the major towns in Offaly when it comes to waste water treatment plant capacity; sewer network in Edenderry; and, sewer and water network issues in Tullamore. Further social, affordable and private housing developments may be limited to certain areas until this is addressed.

## Appendix A

Table 1 - Geographical distribution of Social Housing demand and current approved delivery

Area / Municipal District/ Division	Settlement	No. of Households on SSHA	No. of Households on HNDA*	% of Demand by Settlement	2022-2026 Target Distributed by Demand	Approved Delivery	Outstanding Delivery per MD	Proposed Delivery by MD/Division/Settlement
Tullamore	Tullamore MD	276		53%	245	205	40	325
Edenderry	Edenderry MD	110		21%	98	98	0	146
Birr	Birr MD	136		26%	121	60	61	119
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>TOTAL MD</b>	<b>522</b>			<b>463</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>590</b>
* Information is not available at an MD level								

Table 2 - Future Programme Master Summary (Social Housing)

Settlement	Estimated Part V (Private & LDA)	Existing LA Landbank	Future land Purchases	LA Turnkey	LA Buy & Renew	AHB CALF	AHB CAS	Social Homes via Mixed Tenure	Total Social Homes to be delivered	Comments
Tullamore MD	18	66	30	53	8	160	36		371	
Edenderry MD	7	22	20	40	3	10	39		141	
Birr MD	2	29	14	30	3				78	
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>75</b>		<b>590</b>	

Year	Part V	Units built on LA land	LA Turnkey	LA Buy & Renew	AHB CALF	AHB CAS	Build Projections	Housing for All Targets	
2022	5	11	42	3	42	19	122	180	
2023	10	31	33	2	41	17	134	67	
2024	2	75		3		39	119	68	
2025	5	32	23	3	77		140	73	
2026	5	32	25	3	10		75	75	
<b>TOTAL</b>	27	181	123	14	170	75	590	463	
<b>% of Target</b>	75%				53%		127%		

Year	Projected HNDA Need with Affordability Constraint (Number of Households)	Proposed Total Affordable Delivery (Number of Units)
2022		
2023		
2024		
2025	10	10
2026	30	30
<b>Total</b>		

Table 5 – Future Programme by Year (Affordable Housing)

Year	LA Build Affordable Purchase	LA Turnkey Affordable Purchase	LA Cost Rental Build (Affordable Housing Fund)	AHB Cost Rental (Cost Rental Equity Loan)	LDA Affordable Purchase	LDA Cost Rental	Total Dwellings to be Delivered
2022							
2023							
2024							0
2025		10					10
2026	15	15					30
Total							