

# Social Housing Acquisitions 2024 & 2025 funding comparison – a snapshot

## SIGNIFICANT CUTS TO SOCIAL HOUSING ACQUISITIONS BUDGETS FOR 2025

The Minister for Housing James Browne has changed the way funding is being provided for social housing acquisitions in 2025.

Social Housing Acquisitions relates to a number of programmes that allow Local Authorities and Approved Housing Bodies to buy second hand homes.

These programmes include:

- *Tenant-In-Situ where Councils purchase private rental homes where the tenant is in situ and on the social housing waiting list*
- *Housing First where AHBs and Councils can buy vacant one-bedroom homes for single people with complex needs in homeless accommodation*
- *Vacant Acquisitions where Local Authorities buy vacant one bed, four bed and medically adapted units for people trapped long term in emergency accommodation*
- *Buy and Renew where Local Authorities buy vacant and derelict homes for renovation and use as social homes*

Some Local Authorities have variants of these schemes including acquisition of smaller homes to facilitate rightsizing. In the overwhelming majority of cases Councils do not buy properties available on the open market for private buyers.

Acquisitions for Housing First were guided by annual regional targets set by Government. Buy and Renew acquisitions were demand led. The rules underpinning tenant-in-situ and vacant acquisitions for 2023 and 2024 were set out in two Departmental circulars issued in those years.

In 2022, 947 homes were bought through these various schemes, including 200 vacant acquisitions.

Following the ending of the ban on no fault evictions in April 2023, a target of 1,300 was set for the tenant-in-situ scheme, with the total number of social housing acquisitions in that year rising to 1,829.

In 2024 the target for tenant-in-situ was again set at 1,300 along with 200 vacant acquisitions. The total number of social housing acquisitions last year was down by 328 on 2023 to 1,501, a drop of 18%.

The circular underpinning the operation of the tenant-in-situ scheme for last year expired in November 2024. This led to a pause in the progress of a significant number of applications received from landlords up to that date.

As the outgoing Government failed to set new targets for 2025 or approve the issuing of a circular for this year, pending tenant-in-situ applications were put on hold and local authorities stopped taking new applications from the end of 2024 or in some cases the start of 2025.

After the formation of the new Government in 2025, and under advice from the Department of Housing, Government changed the way funding was allocated to all of the social housing acquisition programmes.

For the first time all Local Authorities were to be given a funding allocation for 2025 along with a new set of rules governing all acquisition programmes.

The rule changes to the tenant-in-situ scheme were significant and will have the impact of reducing access to the scheme. This was subject to significant political and media debate in April and May following publication of the circular and notification of the capital allocations to Local Authorities. (see appendix 1 and 2).

However, as the initial analysis sets out below, the change in how these acquisition programmes are now being funded, will not only impact on the tenant-in-situ scheme but on all acquisition programmes.

In April Sinn Féin elected representatives wrote to Councils asking them a series of questions about the

number of acquisitions in 2024 and the cost of these; the number of 2024 applications paused and the potential cost of these; and the allocation for 2025 that remains after the 2024 overhang is dealt with.

Eight Councils have, to date replied, and a summary of the information is set out below, providing an initial snapshot of the impact of the changes. As you can see the key impact of the changes made by the Minister for Housing James Brown is a significant cut to the funding available to Local Authorities.

When the cost of the 2024 overhang in acquisitions is taken into account the cut to funding for new applications for social housing acquisitions in 2025 is set out below:

↓ **Cork City Council – 100% cut**

↓ **Galway County Council – 92% cut**

↓ **Mayo County Council – 63% cut**

↓ **Dublin City Council – 50% cut**

↓ **Fingal County Council – 39% cut**

↓ **Kerry County Council – 35% cut**

These figures may be a conservative estimate as they do not take into account applications that had not closed in 2024 and now need to be reassessed under the new rules. This means the scale of the cuts for new applications in 2025 could be even greater.

The consequence of these cuts will be less acquisitions across all funding programmes in 2025. This means more people being at risk of homelessness, more people trapped in emergency accommodation, more vacant and derelict homes and less rightsizing.

Sinn Féin is calling on the Minister for Housing James Browne to immediately reverse these cuts, provide the same level of funding for 2025 acquisitions as will be spent on 2024 acquisitions and to reverse the severe restrictions on the operation of the tenant-in-situ scheme.



# SUMMARY OF INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO DATE



COUNCIL	Total social housing acquisitions purchased in 2024	Total cost of social housing acquisitions purchased in 2024	Number of 2024 tenant-in-situ acquisitions paused at the end of 2024	Cost of acquiring paused 2024 tenant-in-situ acquisitions from 2025 budget allocation	2025 budget allocation for all social housing acquisitions in € and as % of 2024 expenditure	Balance remaining for 2025 in € and as %
DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL	334	€117m	105 closed 122 not closed	€37m for 105 closed Currently assessing 122 against new rules, no numbers or costings yet	€95m 19% less ⬇️	€59m 50% less ⬇️ (This figure does not include any costs from acquisition of the 122 2024 applications still being assessed)
FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL	134	€43.7m	25 closed 34 not closed	€2.9m for 24 of the closed sales Currently assessing 34 against new rules, no numbers of costings yet	€20m 46% less ⬇️	€17.1m 39% less ⬇️ (This figure does not include any costs from acquisition of the 2024 applications still being assessed)
CORK CITY COUNCIL	135	N/A	33 closed	N/A	€20m	Zero 100% less ⬇️ Cork City Council has said that "After reviewing the current programme and financial commitments from 2024, we have determined that the allocated funding has been exhausted"
GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL	15	€3.343m (purchase price only)	13	€3.760m for 10 of the 13	€6m 79% more	€500k 92% less ⬇️ Galway County Council have said that when all the 2024 overhang is dealt with the "Estimated remaining balance of allocation + €500,000)
KERRY COUNTY COUNCIL	13	€3.671m	4 closed 2 not closed	€1.08m for 2 closed & 1 not closed sales	€3.5m 5% less ⬇️	€2.4m 35% less ⬇️
LOUTH COUNTY COUNCIL	69	€18.844m	43	N/A	€12m 56% less ⬇️	N/A
DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL	10	€1.779m	9	N/A	€2m 12% more (though this will be spent if even 1 of the 9 paused applications is purchased)	N/A
MAYO COUNTY COUNCIL	21	€4.1m	13	€2m for 9 of the 13 properties	€3.5m 15% less ⬇️	€1.5m 63% less ⬇️