

Key Takeaways:

The Beauchamps' Housing Conference, **Beyond the Blueprint | Accelerate 2026**, focused on the central question facing Ireland's housing sector: how to move from increasingly ambitious plans, policies and funding commitments to sustained delivery of homes and thriving communities.

The event brought together key stakeholders in housing including senior government figures, developers, funders, state infrastructure providers, approved housing bodies, investors, local government and planners. Across the morning, a consistent message emerged: Ireland has made significant progress on housing supply, but the scale of the historic deficit means that maintaining momentum, and changing how the system operates, will be critical if the targets set out in the housing plan for 2025-2030 are to be reached.

Minister James Browne T.D., Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage opened the conference with a keynote address and asked the question "What actually takes housing delivery beyond the blueprint?"

- Highlighted rising completions, commencements, planning permissions, affordable supports, cost rental and record social-housing delivery.
- Stressed that Ireland remains in a housing crisis despite the progress and argued for continued momentum, standardisation, simplification and collaboration between government, agencies, local authorities and the private sector.
- Emphasised major State investment in housing and infrastructure and the role of the Housing Activation Office in unlocking sites.

Deloitte Ireland's Chief Economist, Kate English argued that the economic backdrop has changed significantly since the previous year, and although housing delivery has increased, it has only marginally improved Ireland's housing stock per capita.

- Tariffs have receded as the dominant concern, while energy prices, inflation, geopolitical risk and interest rates have become more important.
- Construction-cost inflation is rising but is not yet comparable with 2022.
- Ireland's economy remains resilient, but geopolitical risk and uncertainty could affect housing viability.



Top Image: Kate English, Chief Economist, Deloitte Ireland; John Coleman, Chief Executive, Land Development Agency; Maria O'Dwyer, Infrastructure Delivery Director, Uisce Éireann; John White, Managing Partner, Beauchamps; Minister James Browne T.D., Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage; Fidelma McManus, Partner & Head of Housing, Beauchamps; Mick Mulhern, Assistant Chief Executive, Dublin City Council; Aoife Watters, Chief Executive Officer, Respond; Garret Doocey, Deputy Secretary General, Housing Activation Office; Alice Charles, Director, Cities, Planning & Design, Arup, and Caroline Timmons, Assistant Secretary, Housing Policy and Standards Division.

Middle Left Image: Minister James Browne T.D., Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Middle Right Image: Fidelma McManus, Partner & Head of Housing, Beauchamps.

Bottom Left Image: Fidelma McManus, Partner & Head of Housing, Beauchamps and Kate English, Chief Economist, Deloitte Ireland.

Bottom Right Image: Micheál Martin, Taoiseach.



Panel 1 - Breaking the Infrastructure Bottleneck Garret Doocey, Deputy Secretary General, Housing Activation Office outlined that the Housing Activation Office represents a structural change because it brings multiple agencies and disciplines together around housing-enabling infrastructure.

- Emphasised coordination, parallel processing and reducing unnecessary procedural delays.
- Concern was the number of sequential processes that still add time to delivery.
- Suggested that the State should do what the market cannot, but the State cannot do everything.

Maria O'Dwyer, Infrastructure Delivery Director, Uisce Éireann positioned water infrastructure as a fundamental enabler of housing.

- Highlighted increased investment, the Accelerated Growth Fund, priority settlements and progress on major projects including the Water Supply Project and Greater Dublin Drainage Project.
- Argued that regulatory and consenting reform is essential to accelerate delivery.
- Outlined that response times and engagement levels have improved and further improvement is anticipated.

John Coleman, Chief Executive, Land Development Agency outlined how the identification and preparation of the next generation of large strategic sites critical.

- Argued that the immediate pipeline is increasingly being built out.
- Stressed that infrastructure must be coordinated with land activation and that private-sector apartment delivery needs to recover so the State does not remain the permanent backstop.

Alice Charles, Director, Cities, Planning & Design, Arup challenged the focus on greenfield land and housing numbers, arguing for brownfield regeneration, infill, densification and carefully planned urban extensions.

- Stressed that genuine infrastructure includes schools, healthcare, parks, transport and other facilities required to create communities, not just roads and utilities for houses.
- Drawing on international examples, she advocated more strategic, plan-led and integrated development.
- Argues that housing policy should start with the needs of residents, including children, rather than with housing numbers.

Taoiseach Micheál Martin – Recorded address

A pre-recorded address by Taoiseach Micheál Martin reaffirmed housing as a core Government priority and pointed to planning reform, zoning, financial viability, infrastructure and major State investment.

- Highlighted €28 billion of direct investment to 2030 and 82 infrastructure projects under the Housing Infrastructure Investment Fund, intended to enable substantial housing delivery.
- Stressed that State investment must be complemented by private-sector finance, capacity and innovation.

Panel conclusion: The strongest shared message was that infrastructure and housing cannot be planned separately. The system needs greater coordination, strategic planning, faster consenting and a shift from individual development responses towards large-scale, place-based delivery.



Panel 2 - What will it take to deliver Affordable Housing at scale? **Caroline Timmons, Assistant Secretary, Housing Policy and Standards Division, Department of Housing** argued that affordability is difficult to define universally and should instead be understood in terms of who is being served and what households can reasonably afford.

- Outlined that the long-term objective is a housing system that can produce affordable homes without permanent reliance on State supports.
- Stressed policy stability, continuous evaluation and the gradual shift towards a more normally functioning housing market - all delays have a cost.
- Noted that affordability is not static and is continuously influenced by wider economic conditions, cost inflation and external pressures.



Aoife Watters, Chief Executive Officer, Respond argued that affordability must be assessed over the lifetime of a home, not merely by its initial construction cost.

- Highlighted the long-term stewardship role of AHBs, the importance of community infrastructure and the need for stable, multi-annual funding.
- Argued for recalibrating cost rental to increase its reach and delivery potential.
- Described housing as a form of enabling infrastructure that underpins education, labour mobility, community well-being and national competitiveness.

Mandy Johnston, Chief Executive Officer, Irish Institutional Property said affordability and viability have to meet if private capital is to participate.

- Argued that Ireland now has a much stronger investment environment but should focus on improving existing interventions rather than continually creating new policies.
- Suggested that greater certainty, stability and practical refinement of schemes such as cost rental and STAR could help unlock additional investment.
- Encouraged stakeholders to look beyond individual policy issues and instead view housing challenges holistically.

Mick Mulhern, Assistant Chief Executive, Dublin City Council highlighted Dublin's huge housing requirement and the particular difficulty of delivering viable apartment schemes.

- Supported continued State investment, greater local-government financial autonomy and reforms to cost rental.
- Flagged continuing significant difficulties in converting permitted schemes into actual construction.
- Highlighted the value of standardised design, procurement and delivery processes in reducing cost and increasing certainty.

Panel conclusion: The panel broadly agreed that Ireland is moving in the right direction, but that affordability will require a combination of supply, viable economics, stable policy, efficient public investment and growing private participation. A sudden withdrawal of State support would risk undermining the very delivery capacity Ireland is trying to build.



Key Reflections:

- The housing system is beginning to develop the mechanisms needed to move forward, but the test is whether those mechanisms operate collaboratively rather than individual agencies optimising their own mandates.
- A sudden withdrawal of state supports could destabilise delivery.
- Policy stability, long-term funding certainty, faster processes, greater local-government autonomy, better use of existing schemes and stronger sector engagement were identified as key priorities.
- There is a continued and renewed need for collaboration and implementation: the blueprint largely exists; the challenge now is making the system work collectively, at speed and at sufficient scale.

Contact Us:

Should you wish to speak with a member of our Housing and Commercial Real Estate group, please contact us via housing@beauchamps.ie.



Top Image: Maria O'Dwyer, Infrastructure Delivery Director, Uisce Éireann; John Coleman, Chief Executive, Land Development Agency; Fidelma McManus, Partner & Head of Housing, Beauchamps; Garret Doocey, Deputy Secretary General, Housing Activation Office; Alice Charles, Director, Cities, Planning & Design, Arup.

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