

Key Highlights:

The Beauchamps Housing Conference Momentum Matters | Accelerate 2025, opened with a keynote address and powerful statement of political intent from **Minister James Browne T.D.**

- Ireland is in a housing emergency and bold decisions are required to drive delivery forward.
- His address called for coordinated efforts across private, public and voluntary sectors and highlighted both ambition and realism.
- Minister James Browne T.D. closed by emphasising the need for joined-up delivery, stating he is working closely with Minister Jack Chambers T.D. to ensure infrastructure can support the scale of delivery required.

A pre-recorded address by **Minister Jack Chambers T.D.**, who leads the Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation, reinforced the theme of ambition paired with urgency.

- Minister Jack Chambers T.D. presented the National Development Plan (NDP) Review 2025, which earmarks €36 billion for housing—over a third of all capital funding to 2030.
- He cautioned that increased investment alone will not provide the change needed—and emphasised the parallel need for system reform and delivery-focused action.

Deloitte Ireland's Chief Economist, Kate English, set the scene, and focused on the intersection of global economic headwinds and Ireland's domestic housing supply issues.

- English noted completions are currently high, but they reflect past activity and that the sharp decline in housing commencements in 2025 could result in a significant supply gap by 2027.
- She emphasised that housing delivery is not just a construction issue—it's central to economic competitiveness, social stability and population planning.
- According to English, momentum is not just a desirable attribute; it's an essential input to the housing system. With the population continuing to grow and housing needs remaining acute, delivery must be maintained and ideally accelerated.
- On positive note, she noted zoning reforms could boost delivery by up to 70%, but actual commencement and completion rates must follow for this to be achieved.



Top Image: Stephen Garvey, CEO, Glenveagh; Brian Tapley, Head of Customer & Project Delivery, South, ESB Networks; Martin Whelan, CEO, The Housing Agency; Kate English, Chief Economist, Deloitte Ireland; John White, Managing Partner, Beauchamps; Conference Chair Fidelma McManus, Partner & Head of Housing, Beauchamps; Angela Ryan, Senior Manager in the Asset Management & Sustainability Directorate, Uisce Éireann; Paul Sheridan, Director, Main Contracting, Construction Industry Federation; Pat Farrell, CEO, Irish Institutional Property and Aoife Watters, CEO, Respond.

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: Minister Jack Chambers T.D., Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation.

Beauchamps Head of Housing, Fidelma McManus, then chaired two panel discussions tackling the most urgent questions facing the sector today.



Panel 1 From Policy to Progress - Making Viability Central to Delivery, featured Stephen Garvey (CEO, Glenveagh), Aoife Watters (CEO, Respond), Martin Whelan (CEO, The Housing Agency) and Pat Farrell (CEO, Irish Institutional Property) who examined recent policies, how they impact viability and how to overcome economic and policy barriers to delivery.



Aoife Watters (CEO, Respond), highlighted the critical role of AHBs and the need for multi-annual funding and faster approvals.

- She stressed the importance of policy stability and funding certainty through 2030 to sustain delivery.
- Watters praised the single-stage approval process for accelerating delivery and urged similar reform for cost rental.

Stephen Garvey (CEO, Glenveagh) noted apartment viability remains the key challenge, but recent policy changes, such as the removal of mix requirements and revised apartment standards, have narrowed the viability gap by €50 - €60k per unit.

- Garvey argued that private capital will only engage if returns are viable - pointing to an unsustainable level of state dominance in supply.
- He emphasised the need to address the "three Cs": Cost, Capital, Capacity, as prerequisites to scaling up supply.
- He posed an important question - should the new housing targets be treated as floors rather than ceilings to ensure delivery?

Martin Whelan (CEO, The Housing Agency) stressed that apartments and cost rental must be central to future delivery targets and reported strong demand for cost rental.

- Whelan argued that legacy structural issues from the financial crisis still undermine development sector viability.
- He showcased progress with initiatives like Croí Cónaithe Cities (with 6,000 apartments in the pipeline) and cost rental, but noted they require time and scale to have a broad impact before commenting on how a revised STAR scheme is expected to resolve earlier investment barriers.
- Whelan concluded that momentum has started in some areas, and that rather than invest in new schemes, policymakers should scale up what's already working.

Pat Farrell (CEO, Irish Institutional Property) acknowledged the recent policy reforms as positive but highlighted the disconnect between national ambition and local implementation, noting that some local authorities are "picking and choosing" which guidance to follow.

- Farrell urged consideration of emergency planning powers to speed up infrastructure and delivery.
- He emphasised that 25% of new supply must be apartments, with incentives (e.g. VAT and levy reductions) to make this viable.
- He pointed to growing investor interest, including pension funds, in the Irish residential market – provided the framework is stable.



Panel 2 examined How Transformative is the National Development Plan (NDP) Review 2025? and focused on how the revised NDP can become a true delivery enabler. This discussion featured John Coleman (CEO, The Land Development Agency), Angela Ryan (Senior Manager in the Asset Management & Sustainability Directorate, Uisce Éireann), Martin Whelan (CEO, The Housing Agency) and Paul Sheridan (Director, Main Contracting, Construction Industry Federation).

John Coleman (CEO, The Land Development Agency) praised the NDP's scale but stressed that implementation and system reform is the critical gap in housing delivery.

- Coleman highlighted that planning delays, judicial reviews and risk aversion remain major blockers and argued for performance-driven delivery models, citing the 2012 Action Plan for Jobs as a template.
- He suggested legislative reform may be necessary to override repeated judicial review challenges and called for strong political leadership to shift public opinion and unlock stalled projects.
- Coleman noted The Land Development Agency's expanded mandate to lead land assembly and urban development zones, making cross-agency collaboration essential.

Angela Ryan (Senior Manager in the Asset Management & Sustainability Directorate, Uisce Éireann) emphasised the urgent need to link infrastructure and housing policy more effectively.

- She called the €2 billion equity injection into Uisce Éireann a game-changer. It enables connections for 50,000 homes per year, moving beyond the previous ceiling of 30,000.
- Ryan called for regulatory streamlining and standardisation, especially around planning appeals and judicial reviews.
- She warned that planning delays (e.g. 6-year delay to Dublin drainage) can derail infrastructure readiness and urged a focus on process efficiency, rather than simply increasing spend.

Brian Tapley (Head of Customer & Project Delivery, South, ESB Networks) described how the NDP's €3.5 billion equity injection allows them to finance a €10 - €13 billion grid investment plan through 2030.

- He warned of infrastructure bottlenecks if multiple large projects proceed without coordination.
- Tapley flagged a significant structural constraint: electricity grid connections are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis, with no discretion to prioritise housing schemes—even when national policy demands it. This, he said, requires policy reform.
- He also emphasised the importance of building a resilient and climate-aligned energy network.

Paul Sheridan ((Director, Main Contracting, Construction Federation Ireland) emphasised that NDP capital investment alone isn't enough.

- He noted the equity term used in the NDP should translate into actual ring-fenced capital projects, not ambiguous "support" language and called for greater clarity in project prioritisation and funding timelines under the NDP.
- Sheridan argued that current public procurement processes deter contractors, especially SME's, and warned that without confidence in pipeline and funding, contractors will continue to shift focus overseas.
- He also challenged why environmental observations are stalling projects that would, in fact, deliver positive environmental outcome.



Key Reflections:

- Policy consistency, streamlined planning and multi-annual funding are essential for both public and private actors.
- A clear pipeline, focus on apartment viability and collaborative delivery models are necessary to scale supply.
- Judicial review reform, infrastructure coordination and planning simplification are recurring recommendations.
- Implementation, not intention, is now the biggest challenge.

In all discussions, the message was clear: policy momentum and investment exist, but execution delays and planning complexity threaten delivery. The panels were aligned in calling for streamlined planning, better coordination, and clarity on project prioritisation. While funding and frameworks have improved, systemic reforms and fast-tracked implementation are essential to translating policy into homes. There was consensus that we now know what has to be done but it's time for implementation, reform and action to ensure we regain momentum in housing delivery.



Top Image: Stephen Garvey, CEO, Glenveagh



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

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.