



Press Release

LOCATION OF HOUSING IS KEY TO ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE HEARS

- **Housing Agency host Annual Conference on Housing and Sustainability**
- **Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government Eoghan Murphy TD opens conference**

06 November 2019: *“Ireland is facing a climate emergency and housing has a major role to play in addressing climate change and in ensuring Ireland meets its targets.”* This was the message from the Housing Agency today as they hosted their Annual Conference which explored the theme of ‘Housing and Sustainability’.

Ensuring existing homes are more energy efficient, and that new homes produce less emissions, both during construction and over their lifetime, is critical to achieving climate targets. However, the location of these homes is even more important in addressing climate change and creating sustainable communities into the future.

Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government, Eoghan Murphy TD opened the conference by saying:

“Under Rebuilding Ireland we are seeing a big increase in the number of homes being built. Based on current output we are forecasting between 27,000 and 29,000 new homes will become available for use next year.

However, if we are to address the climate crisis we must move towards compact growth and concentrate the delivery of housing within the current built up areas of our towns and cities. Providing more homes within these areas will increase population densities and allow for more public infrastructure, public transport and facilitate more people to walk and cycle.”

Compact growth minimises car usage, reduces associated costs and frees up space for other uses such as public parks, playgrounds and community facilities.

Speaking at the conference, Michael Carey, Chairperson of the Housing Agency said;

“Careful planning, good design, quality construction, and good density are the key pillars to meeting current and future housing needs in Ireland. One of the main objectives of the Housing Agency is to ensure that sustainable communities are at the heart of housing policy. Sustainable communities are ones that last – they are places that are well planned, with good quality housing, where people have the opportunity to work, learn and play, and where people want to live for future generations.”

Almost 200 delegates were in attendance at the conference. Among the speakers was Sorcha Edwards, Secretary General of Housing Europe. Housing Europe is the European Federation of Public, Cooperative and Social Housing representing a network of national and regional bodies across 24 countries. Sorcha Edwards, explored the current state of social housing in the EU and

presented on the innovative solutions to delivering affordable, sustainable, housing that are currently being developed and adopted by Housing Europe members.

Commenting on the work of Housing Europe and what is now required from policy makers, Sorcha Edwards said;

“The eyes of the world will be on the EU’s ‘New Green Deal’ to be announced before the end of this year. If this green deal is not based on a fair energy transition which brings all citizens and all neighbourhoods along, it will fall through and will increase anti-EU sentiment. The deal must focus on providing people with energy efficient, affordable, adequate housing now and in the future.

Public, cooperative and social housing providers that Housing Europe represents have already proven through a number of innovative initiatives, such as Energiesprong, that they are in position to be the brokers of this deal. It’s now time for the European Commission to deliver its side of the bargain putting the right mix of incentives and political will on the table.”

Other speakers at today’s conference were; Laura Burke, Director of the Environmental Protection Agency, who provided an overview of the contribution of housing to climate action; Dr Nessa Winston, from the School of Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice at University College Dublin (UCD) who presented on sustainable housing and communities. Amanda Ziegler Dybbroe, showcased the work by Copenhagen City and Port Development, the agency responsible for driving the regeneration of the capital city of Denmark. Providing an industry perspective was Krystyna Rawicz, Managing Director of KRA Visionary Project Partners; and Mark Scott, Professor of Planning in UCD School of Architecture, Planning and Environmental Policy provided insights on the rural dimension of environmental planning policy.

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For more information or to arrange an interview with a Housing Agency spokesperson or conference speaker, please contact:

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Notes to Editor

About the Housing Agency

The Housing Agency was founded in 2010 and its vision is to promote the building of sustainable communities. Its role is to promote the supply of housing to meet current and future needs and demands. We do this by building expertise and expert knowledge on housing, supporting housing policy development and implementing effective housing programmes in collaboration with key stakeholders.

The Agency works with the Department of Housing Planning and Local Government, Local Authorities, Approved Housing Bodies, the private sector and others in the housing sector to build sustainable communities.

