



**An Ghníomhaireacht  
Tithíochta**  
The Housing Agency



# THE HOUSING PRACTITIONERS' CONFERENCE MOMENTUM IN HOUSING: PARTNERSHIPS FOR PROGRESS

RADISSON BLU HOTEL, ATHLONE,  
CO. WESTMEATH

10 & 11 APRIL 2025

**#HOUSINGCONFERENCE2025**



# CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

## DAY 1: THURSDAY 10 APRIL

TIME	TOPIC	SPEAKERS
8.30 - 9.20	REGISTRATION	
EVENT MC: SINEAD RYAN - BROADCASTER AND JOURNALIST		
CONFERENCE OPENING		
9.20 - 10.05	WELCOME & INTRODUCTION	MICHAEL CAREY - CHAIRMAN, THE HOUSING AGENCY
	MINISTERIAL ADDRESS	JAMES BROWNE TD, MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HERITAGE
	FIRESIDE CHAT WITH THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING	SINEAD RYAN - BROADCASTER AND JOURNALIST
SESSION 1: "SETTING THE SCENE" CHAired BY: SINEAD RYAN		
10.10 - 11.10	MARTIN WHELAN - CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, THE HOUSING AGENCY	
	DAVID KELLY - ASSISTANT SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HERITAGE	
	CAROLYNE GODKIN - DIRECTOR OF SERVICES, WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL	
	CATHERINE MCGILLYCUDDY - DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST, IRISH COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL HOUSING	



# DAY 1: THURSDAY 10 APRIL

11.10 - 11.40	TEA & COFFEE BREAK	
MORNING WORKSHOP SESSIONS		
11.45 - 13.00	1. COST RENTAL HOUSING – CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES 2. RCT, VAT AND STAMP DUTY FOR SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING 3. REGULATION OF OMCS: WHERE ARE WE NOW? 4. RESTRUCTURING THE HSE: TRANSITIONING TO A REGIONAL HEALTH MODEL 5. YOUTH HOMELESSNESS AND PREVENTION MEASURES 6. VACANT PROPERTIES – SUPPORTS AND OPPORTUNITIES	
13.00 - 14.00	LUNCH	
14.00 - 14.10	INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL HOUSING FESTIVAL UPDATE	AILBHE MCLOUGHLIN - DIRECTOR OF POLICY FOR THE IRISH COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL HOUSING
SESSION 2: "STATE AGENCIES: SUPPORTING THE SECTOR" CHAired BY: SINEAD RYAN		
14.15 - 15.20	ROSEMARY STEEN - DIRECTOR, RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES BOARD	
	DEARBHLA LAWSON - DIRECTOR OF PLANNING, THE LAND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY	
	NIAMH MCCARTHY - ASSISTANT NATIONAL COORDINATOR, HOUSING DELIVERY COORDINATION OFFICE, LOCAL GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT AGENCY	
	DEIRDRE COLLIER - CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, HOUSING FINANCE AGENCY	
	FERGAL O'LEARY - CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, APPROVED HOUSING BODIES REGULATORY AUTHORITY	



# DAY 1: THURSDAY 10 APRIL

15.20 - 15.50	TEA AND COFFEE BREAK
AFTERNOON WORKSHOP SESSIONS	
15.50 - 17.00	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. AFFORDABLE PURCHASE HOUSING IN PRACTICE</li><li>2. TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICE IN SOCIAL HOUSING - HOW DO WE GET THERE?</li><li>3. DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN HOUSING ADMINISTRATION</li><li>4. BUILDING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES IN MIXED TENURE ESTATES</li><li>5. DESIGN AND BUILD PUBLIC PROCUREMENT TO FACILITATE MMC</li><li>6. HOUSING INSIGHTS; CASE STUDIES ON DERELICTION, SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE AND OFFICE TO RESIDENTIAL CONVERSION.</li></ol>
17.00	DAY 1 CLOSE
19.00 - 20.00	PRE-DINNER RECEPTION
20.00	CONFERENCE DINNER



## DAY 2: FRIDAY 11 APRIL

TIME	TOPIC	SPEAKERS
<b>SESSION 3: "SHOWCASING DELIVERY: CHALLENGES &amp; ACHIEVEMENTS"</b> CHAIRER BY: JIM BANEHAM		
10.00 - 10.10	INTRODUCING DAY TWO	DAVID SILKE - DIRECTOR OF INSIGHTS AND OPERATIONS, THE HOUSING AGENCY
10.10 - 11.20	CHALLENGES AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN ATHLONE	JACKIE FINNEY - DIRECTOR OF SERVICES, WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL
	SHOWCASING CLÚID'S PROCUREMENT DELIVERY ROUTES	EIBHLIN O'CONNOR - CHIEF COMMERCIAL OFFICER, CLÚID
	INFRASTRUCTURE, LAND AND VIABILITY	PHELIM O'NEILL - DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT, THE LAND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
	DELIVERING AFFORDABILITY – IS IT POSSIBLE?	SEAN O'CONNOR - CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, TÚATH HOUSING ASSOCIATION
11.20 - 11.30	MIXED TENURE HOUSING DELIVERY – THE LOCAL AUTHORITY PERSPECTIVE	PAUL CARROLL - DIRECTOR OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL
	NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP IN SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND HOUSING SERVICES.	CLAIRE HARTLEY, SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER, HOUSING - WATERFORD CITY AND COUNTY COUNCIL & VICE CHAIR OF APPRENTICESHIP CONSORTIUM  ROSLYN MOLLOY, HEAD OF POLICY, PRACTICE AND COMMUNICATIONS, THE HOUSING AGENCY
11.30 - 11.45	TEA & COFFEE BREAK	



## DAY 2: FRIDAY 11 APRIL

TIME	TOPIC	SPEAKERS
<b>SESSION 4: "COMMUNITIES WE WANT TO LIVE IN"</b> CHAIRD BY: DAVID SILKE		
11.50 - 12.50	SUSTAINABILITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION	CATHERINE KEENAN - DIRECTOR OF HOUSING WITH DÚN LAOGHAIRE-RATHDOWN COUNTY COUNCIL
	EMBEDDING A CULTURE OF TENANT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	MARGARET HANRAHAN - TENANT ENGAGEMENT MANAGER, TÚATH HOUSING ASSOCIATION
	A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR HOUSING	NINA MURRAY - PRINCIPAL OFFICER, DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HERITAGE
12.50 - 13.00	CLOSING REMARKS	MARTIN WHELAN - CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, THE HOUSING AGENCY
13.00	LUNCH	



# SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

## MICHAEL CAREY



Michael Carey has been Chairman of the Board of The Housing Agency since 2018. Michael has extensive experience in overseeing state bodies and has been Chairman of Enterprise Ireland since October 2023, having served as Chairman of Bord Bia (2011-2018), and as Chairman of the Grow Dublin Tourism Alliance in 2016. He is the Chairman of The Company of Food (a specialist food investment business, providing equity to start-up and established high-growth food businesses) and is also Executive Chairman of East Coast Bakehouse, Ireland's only commercial scale biscuit manufacturer.

He has been involved in several not-for-profit initiatives: Chair of Soul of Haiti Foundation (2009-2015) and of Traidlinks Uganda (2013-2016); Member of the Clinton Global Initiative (2009-2015); and a judge on the EY Entrepreneur of the Year Awards (2013 to date).

## JAMES BROWNE TD



James Browne, TD, was appointed Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage in January 2025. He was elected to Dáil Éireann in the February 2016 general election as a representative for Wexford. In September 2020, he served as Minister of State at the Department of Justice with responsibility for International Law, Law Reform and Youth Justice.

He has served as the Fianna Fáil spokesperson on mental health, leading initiatives to reform mental health services in Ireland, including the Mental Health (Amendment) Act 2018 and served on the Oireachtas Committee on the Future of Mental Healthcare. He was born in Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford and attended college at Waterford IT, University College Cork and King's Inns. He is a qualified barrister and was called to the Bar in 2006.

## MARTIN WHELAN



Martin Whelan is the Chief Executive Officer of The Housing Agency. Prior to this, Martin was Head of Group Corporate Affairs and Communications at the National Treasury Management Agency (NTMA). He has previously served as a Non-Executive Director at Threshold Ireland and was a member of the senior leadership team at the National Asset Management Agency (NAMA) between 2011 and 2016.

He has prior senior leadership experience in national level employer representation, including at the CIF where he held executive responsibility for research, policy development and government affairs for the housing, property development and contracting sectors.



## SINEAD RYAN



Sinead Ryan has worked as a print and broadcast journalist for over 20 years writing on consumer, property and personal finance matters for the Irish Independent. Sinead presents 'The Home Show' on Newstalk and is an experienced MC, conference host, interviewer and keynote speaker, mainly on business, property and financial topics, including pensions.

In 2009 Sinead set up a not-for-profit organisation teaching teenagers about budgeting and personal finance. Her book, co-written with Frank Conway, 'Cents and Sensibility', was published in 2010. Sinead was appointed to the Pensions Council, a Government Advisory Board in 2015 and to the Probate & Conveyancing Expert Group of the Department of Housing in 2023.

## DAVID KELLY

David Kelly is Assistant Secretary in the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage with responsibility for Homelessness, the Rental Market and Social Inclusion. His previous roles in the Department include positions as Principal in the Homelessness Unit and in Social Housing Delivery.

## CAROLYNE GODKIN



Carolyn Godkin is the Director of Services in Wexford County Council with responsibility for Housing, Community, Libraries, Arts & Emergency Management. She holds a Bachelor of Science (Hons) Degree in Psychology from UCD and a Master of Business in Management & Organisation from the Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School, Dublin.

Carolyn began her career as a management consultant, specialising in marketing and strategy and has from 2003 held a variety of positions with South Dublin and Wexford County Councils. As Director of Housing with Wexford County Council, Carolyn has overseen a considerable increase in new housing delivery in line with Housing for All. She has also influenced policy and process changes locally, driving positive improvements in the county's social housing indicators.





## CATHERINE MCGILLYCUDDY



Catherine McGillycuddy is a Development Specialist with the Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH) and has worked in social housing for 20 years in both the AHB and local authority housing sectors. Her work with the ICSH has covered diverse areas of expertise and her current work is focused on supporting approved housing bodies through the delivery of a wide-ranging education and training programme, developing and overseeing member services for AHBs, the management of European programmes and supporting ICSH members on a range of policy, strategic and operational issues.

Catherine has a degree in Social Science and a Masters degree in Sociology, both from University College Cork.

## ROSEMARY STEEN



Rosemary Steen is Director of the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB), an independent public body which regulates Ireland's rental sector. Before joining the RTB in 2024, Rosemary served as Chief Executive Officer at Design & Crafts Council Ireland (DCCI). Her previous roles include six years as an Executive Director on the EirGrid leadership team, where she was responsible for regulation, customer relations and public affairs. She has had a wide range of business experience including working with global companies such as Vodafone and Shell. She also worked for the employers' group IBEC, and in that role served on the National Economic and Social Council.

Rosemary is a graduate of Trinity College Dublin with a degree in Economics and Philosophy and holds a Masters in Business from University College Dublin. She holds both a Certificate and Diploma in Company Direction from the Institute of Directors and a Diploma in Legal Studies.

## DEARBHLA LAWSON



Dearbhla Lawson leads the LDA's planning, public lands and sustainability function, working with partners to optimise state land usage, build the pipeline and progress plans to regenerate and deliver sustainable development. A key focus is on reimagining underutilised brownfield lands to unlock the potential and deliver compact and sustainable urban development.

Dearbhla leads a team progressing transformative projects working with partners in areas including Limerick Colbert, Sandy Road in Galway, and Inchicore in Dublin.

Prior to her current role, Dearbhla worked in public and private sector roles, most recently as Director of Services in Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council and before this as Head of Transport & Infrastructure and Strategic Planning in Cambridgeshire.



## NIAMH MCCARTHY



Niamh McCarthy is Assistant National Coordinator in the Housing Delivery Coordination Office (HDCO), which is one of four national coordination units located within the structures of the LGMA. The HDCO coordinates the local government social and affordable housing delivery. Previously she was the National Coordinator of local government's response to the war in Ukraine, which saw the setup of emergency rest centres, a refurbishment of vacant properties programme for use by DCEDIY, management and roll out of a national system for the *Offer a Home Pledge* and the coordination of the community response forums.

Niamh has over 30 years' experience in the LGMA having worked on engineering projects, housing and planning ICT projects, PMO, and the CCMA housing and planning committee.

## DEIRDRE COLLIER



Deirdre Collier is the Chief Executive Officer with the Housing Finance Agency. Deirdre is a respected Chief Finance Officer and banking and finance senior executive with 25 years' experience in the financial services sector. She was previously a Non-Executive Director with the Housing Finance Agency from May 2022 to May 2023, her most recent role was as Chief Finance Officer of Clúid Housing.

Previously she was Head of Commercial Real Estate and Large Corporates at KBC Bank Ireland plc. Deirdre is a Chartered Accountant (FCA) and holds an MBA from UCD and a Diploma in Corporate Governance from the Institute of Directors.

## FERGAL O'LEARY



Fergal O'Leary was appointed CEO of AHBRA in September 2024. An experienced public sector leader, Fergal has in-depth knowledge of governance, regulation and enforcement, research and policy development as well as corporate and consumer communications.

Prior to joining AHBRA, Fergal led the development of a new statutory registration regime for short-term tourist accommodation with Fáilte Ireland as part of the Housing for All strategy. Previously he was a Commissioner with the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission.

Fergal holds a Masters in Applied Governance and a Masters in Economics.



## ROSLYN MOLLOY



Roslyn Molloy is the Head of Policy, Practice and Communications at The Housing Agency where she has responsibility for communications, training, and policy. She has extensive experience in strategic housing communications, developing training and designing and evaluating public policy.

Prior to this position, Roslyn was a senior researcher for The Housing Agency, working on a number of key projects including the National Study of Housing Experiences, Attitudes and Aspirations and Thinking Ahead, the research series on housing for older people.

## AILBHE MCLOUGHLIN



Ailbhe McLoughlin is the Director of Policy for the Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH). She is also currently the Director of the International Social Housing Festival (ISHF) Dublin 2025. Ailbhe joined the ICSH in June 2022 after almost 10 years working in politics, predominantly as senior housing policy adviser in Sinn Féin. In the ICSH Ailbhe is responsible for supporting members' policy requirements while proactively engaging with stakeholders to promote the role of the ICSH in assisting AHBs in the delivery of social and affordable homes.

Ailbhe has a degree in Law and Spanish from the Queens University in Belfast. She also has a Professional Diploma in Housing Studies from the Institute of Public Administration and was awarded a Msc in Politics and Data Science from University College Dublin.

## CLAIRE HARTLEY



Claire Hartley is a Senior Executive Officer in the housing section of Waterford City and County Council. She has worked in the Local Government sector since 2005, having first joined Waterford City Council as a Community & Enterprise Development Officer and has more than 10 years' experience as a Housing Practitioner in areas including Regional Homeless Management, Housing Operations and Housing Delivery.

During her career in Local Government, Claire has delivered a number of Change Management projects in Waterford City and County Council including the development of a Customer Service & Motor Tax Desk, a Communications, Marketing and PR team and more recently a flagship Age Friendly City Centre development in the heart of Waterford City under the Repair and Lease Scheme.



## DAVID SILKE



David Silke is the Director of Insights and Operations at The Housing Agency. He previously worked in several state bodies in research and policy roles, including: the Centre for Housing Research, the National Economic and Social Forum, the Combat Poverty Agency, and the Department of Social Security (UK).

David has a Master's Degree in Business Practice from the IMI, a Master's Degree in Social Policy and Planning from the London School of Economics and a Professional Diploma in Governance from the IPA. His primary degree is in Social Science from UCD. David is a Chartered Member of the Chartered Institute of Housing.

## JACKIE FINNEY



Jackie Finney is Director of Services with Westmeath County Council with responsibility for Housing, Community Development, Culture including Libraries & the Arts and the Municipal District of Athlone-Moate.

Jackie has worked in the Local Authority Sector for 20 years in a variety of areas including Community & Enterprise, Economic Development, and Housing and Planning with Offaly County Council. More recently Jackie was District Manager for the Municipal District of Athlone-Moate with Westmeath County Council. She holds an MSc in Food Business & Development from University College Cork and an Advanced University Diploma in Export Marketing and French. Prior to joining the Local Authority Sector, she worked in overseas development in West Africa and in international logistics.



## EIBHLIN O'CONNOR



Eibhlin O'Connor is Chief Commercial Officer with Clúid Housing Association. She is a chartered member of the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland and holds a master's in Construction Law and Dispute Resolution from King's College, London. With over 25 years' experience working in the construction industry, Eibhlin has worked at a senior level with key stakeholders, Local Authorities, and developers in the delivery of social and affordable housing. She oversaw Clúid's largest delivery of 1,525 homes in 2024. Eibhlin is a voluntary Director of Lean Construction Ireland and is a strong advocate of lean methodologies in the better, faster, and more collaborative delivery of housing.

## PHELM O'NEILL



Phelim O'Neill is Director of Development of the Land Development Agency since its inception in September 2018 and has significantly developed and grown the scale and range of projects of the Agency in that time. As part of his role, he is responsible for the sourcing, acquisition, planning and pre-construction of a wide range of projects across the GDA and all the regional cities.

Phelim has over 20 years' experience in senior property and development roles in both the public and private sector as well as delivery of large scale infrastructure programmes. Phelim is a graduate of University of Galway (BEng) with post graduate qualifications in project management, construction law and corporate finance.

## SEAN O'CONNOR



Sean O'Connor is Chief Executive of Túath Housing Association, the fastest growing AHB in Ireland with over 15,000 social and cost rental rent homes.

Sean is a Chartered Surveyor and member of the Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland, the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and the Chartered Institute of Housing. Sean's life-long interest in housing was strengthened with a Master's degree in Housing from South Bank University, London.

Sean was a former Chair of the Housing Alliance and ICSH Board member. Working in housing at a senior level for over 35 years in the private, public and not-for-profit sectors in Ireland and the UK, Sean has delivered several award winning schemes and has a proven track record of working with communities to deliver positive change.



## PAUL CARROLL



Paul Carroll is Director of Housing & Community Development at Fingal County Council, with responsibility for leading the local authority's response to the Government's Housing for All strategy. This includes working with government agencies, industry stakeholders and delivery partners in the ongoing successful implementation of large-scale, mixed-tenure developments of affordable, cost rental and social housing at a number of sites across the county. Under Paul's leadership, Fingal County Council brought over 480 affordable homes to market in 2024.

A graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, Paul also holds post-graduate qualifications in Strategic Procurement, Engineering and Local Government Studies. Paul's previous position was Senior Engineer in the Planning & Strategic Infrastructure Department in Fingal County Council where he led the planning and delivery of significant infrastructure projects. Before joining Fingal County Council, Paul worked in local authority, central government and private consultancy.

## JIM BANEHAM



Jim Baneham is the Director of Delivery and Innovation at The Housing Agency and has responsibility for a number of funding programmes managed by the Agency aimed at the delivery of affordable housing including the Cost Rental Equity Loan (CREL) scheme and the Secure Tenancy Affordable Rental (STAR) scheme. Jim is also responsible for the Croí Cónaithe (Cities) scheme in the Agency. Jim has also worked on the delivery of social housing, particularly with the AHB sector under the P&A and CALF scheme.

## CATHERINE KEENAN



Catherine Keenan is Director of Housing with Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council since 2015 with an overarching leadership role in all aspects of social and affordable housing delivery, the provision of housing support services and the management of the Council's Housing stock of over 5,000 properties. Prior to taking up this role, Catherine was Chief Executive Officer of DLR Leisure Services and she has worked in senior roles in Corporate Services and Environment Departments.

Catherine was particularly involved in progressing the Enniskerry Road pilot cost rental scheme and was pivotal in progressing the largest social and affordable scheme in the country at Shanganagh, in collaboration with AHB and LDA partners.



## MARGARET HANRAHAN



Margaret Hanrahan is the Tenant Engagement Manager at Túath Housing Association, a leading Approved Housing Body (AHB) in tenant engagement. She has been instrumental in implementing Túath's Tenant Engagement Strategy, resulting in impactful initiatives that embed a culture of providing excellent tenancy experiences and fostering community engagement for residents. Margaret brings valuable experience from her previous role as a Development Officer with the Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH). She is also an establishing member of the Irish Tenant Engagement Network (ITEN) which works with colleagues in the AHB sector to share best practice and develop tenant engagement research for the sector.

Her academic achievements, include a Bachelor's degree in Property Studies with post graduate qualifications in Strategic Project Management, and most recently a professional Diploma in Customer Experience and Behaviour from University College Dublin (UCD).

## NINA MURRAY



Nina Murray is a Principal Officer and the Head of the Social Housing Policy Unit in the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. She has responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the social housing system and progressing the Programme for Government.

Prior to her current role, Nina was a member of the Social Housing Delivery Division in the Department of Housing where she led the development and management of new and innovative governance and delivery structures within the Department and at local authority level. These included the rollout and implementation across local authorities of the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP), Social Housing Current Expenditure Programme (SCHEP), Capital Advance Leasing Facility (CALF), Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS), Mortgage to Rent schemes and Social Housing Leasing schemes.