

**Opening Statement by Mr. John Coleman, Chief Executive of the Land Development Agency, to the Joint Committee on Housing, Local Government and Heritage (the ‘Committee’)**

Chair, Deputies and Senators, we are grateful for the opportunity to engage with you today.

I am joined by my colleagues Director of Development Phelim O’Neill, Director of Asset Management Enda McGuane, and Director of Planning Services Dearbhla Lawson.

We were last before the committee in June where we addressed some of the challenges facing housing delivery in the country. Today, we are discussing affordable housing in general, and I would like to begin by assuring you that the LDA’s delivery of affordable housing is ramping up significantly.

Our latest figures show we are on course to reach an annual output of more than 2,500 homes by 2027 and we will become the country’s largest producer of homes by 2028.

In addition to the more than 2,000 homes we have already delivered, and based on current funding commitments, we are working on a pipeline of a further 27,000. This includes a further 11,600 homes through our Project Tosaigh/homebuilder partnerships channel.

While we are fully aware that the country’s housing need is both urgent and substantial, we are confident that this level of delivery will amount to a significant contribution to the overall requirement, which ultimately will need to be met by providers in both the public and private sector.

There remains a major focus on the country’s housing targets and data. This is understandable and welcome, but it is important to recognise where we are making progress and to consider the medium to longer-term outlook.

At the LDA, we are solely focused on the delivery of new, high-quality affordable homes in sustainable and vibrant communities. And I want to acknowledge the commitment of my colleagues who are working tirelessly to achieve this goal.

Since the LDA was established, we have focused on developing a strong pipeline of projects and we are now active on over 40 sites with a series of projects at every stage from design and planning through to construction.

To illustrate the scope, impact and level of our activity, it might prove useful for me to zone in on the period between our last appearance at this committee in June of this year to now.

Just before we appeared before the committee in June, we reached an agreement with Horse Racing Ireland on the transfer of state-owned land in Leopardstown in Dublin with the potential for more than 800 homes.

In the same month we announced the purchase of another site in Cherrywood in Dublin with the potential for over 350 homes. And in July we added to our growing portfolio of development land by acquiring a site in Cookstown in Tallaght from the private market with the potential for 700 homes.

In late June, we launched a public consultation process on our plans to deliver more than 2,000 homes on a site in Clongriffin in North Dublin, where construction is already under way on the delivery of more than 400 homes.

The Clongriffin Central site was acquired by the LDA in late 2023 and in March of this year, the Agency announced the purchase of a neighbouring site in Baldoyle.

The two sites are located either side of the Dublin to Belfast train line and we now have the ability to deliver about 4,000 homes in the area surrounding Clongriffin train station in addition to new infrastructure, streets and parks.

In late June, we sought new expressions of interest from homebuilders for a new phase of Project Tosaigh as part of our plans to continue to utilise this delivery channel to ensure the development of much-needed apartments in key urban areas.

In July, we opened applications for affordable purchase apartments in Shanganagh Castle Estate where we have completed the direct delivery of 597 homes in partnership with Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown County Council. In August we lodged a planning application for over 285 homes at The Gasworks site on the Dock Road in Limerick, which was transferred to the LDA by Gas Networks Ireland.

In late August, we received planning permission for a 350-home development in Wilton in Cork on land transferred to the LDA by the ESB and we are currently expecting planning decisions on applications for over 380 homes in Bluebell Waterways in Dublin and 852 at Dundrum Central.

Just this week, we submitted a planning application for 345 homes at Galway Harbour, and earlier this month we launched the start of construction on over 1,100 homes across two sites in Balbriggan and Skerries in North County Dublin.

Next month, we will be in Cork to attend the topping out ceremony of a 302-home apartment block at Horgan's Quay in the Cork Docklands. We will also examine the ongoing progress at Marina Depot in Cork's South Docks where work is ongoing on 337 new homes and at St Kevin's in Cork where we will soon complete the first phase of this 267-home development.

Later this year, we will mark the completion of the first of 219 new homes being developed at Barracksfield West in Naas in Kildare and we are expecting to near completion on 392 apartments being delivered as part of Project Tosaigh at The Crossings in Adamstown.

These are just some of the transformative projects behind the data and they are just part of an always growing pipeline that includes similar developments in cities and commuter belts throughout the country.

In time, they will all become vibrant communities offering households the means to enjoy a high quality of life in a new and sustainable home that they can afford to rent or own.

I am pleased to report that there are already more than 5,000 people living in an LDA-delivered home. Our surveys of residents show high level of satisfaction with our developments and our affordable housing rents and purchase prices.

As our development pipeline has expanded, so too has our experience, know-how and contribution. We are well-capitalised, our employee numbers are increasing with capacity demands, and we are attracting colleagues of an extremely high calibre and competence.

Over time, the LDA's remit has expanded and developed, but we continue to be well-placed to deliver on all aspects of it.

We are currently engaged in the following activities:

- Direct delivery on state and acquired land
- Homebuilder partnerships through Project Tosaigh
- The management of rental properties
- Land assembly

We are confident that we can maintain this level of activity and that we can adapt further if required to, by the Government and in line with Government policy.

The Government has also recently announced an expanded remit for the LDA in the provision of active land management and a greater geographical area of operation. We believe this will further support the Agency in the execution of our mandate to accelerate housing delivery across Ireland, and is a clear endorsement of our substantial progress to date.

We stand ready to assist in this and, indeed, in certain cases we are already involved in such work.

Thank you.