**For WRITTEN answer on Tuesday, 21st April, 2015.**

Ref No: 1574 6 /15, 157 55 /15, 1575 6 /15 and 15757/15

**REPLY**

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Alan Kelly)

I propose to take Question Nos. 647,655,656 and 657 together.

Social housing is a key priority for Government, as evidenced by the increased provision made for the area in Budget 2015. The Social Housing Strategy 2020 targets the supply of 35,000 additional social housing units at a cost of €3.8 billion over the next 6 years, as well as meeting the housing needs of some 75,000 households through local authority provision via the private rented sector , using the Housing Assistance Payment and the Rental Accommodation Scheme s .

The overall targets in the Social Housing Strategy were developed having regard to the nature and scale of social housing need, taking account of analysis of the most recent statutory Assessment of Housing Need , which was carried out by the Housing Agency .   The social housing targets for each local authority area out to 2017 that I recently announced are fully in line with the targets of the Social Housing Strategy . T argets identified for individual local authorities were determined   in consideration of the potential impact that delivery over 2015–2017 would have on social housing need as evidenced by local authority waiting lists recorded in the most recent statutory Assessment of Housing Need . The target setting process also took account of specific   h ousing unit targets and building projects out to 2017 proposed by each local authority.

A key reason for the variation in regard to the impact on l ocal h ousing l ist s lies in the variation in the level s of housing need locally . Certain areas have relatively lower numbers on local housing lists , with a consequence that the targets set for such authorities have a relatively high percentage impact on the lists. Conversely, while other authorities have had considerably higher targets set for them, the impact is proportionally not as high given the higher number on the housing lists of those areas.   It is the case, however, that t he targets that I have announced illustrate once again that housing is of the highest priority for the Government. A mbitious targets have been set for each local authority and they will have a major impact for those on the housing waiting lists, with a national reduction of 25% targeted over the period through these targets alone.

In terms of monitoring progress against these targets into the future, including the impact on housing need, it is important to note that t he governance of the Social Housing Strategy include s m onitoring and r eview arrangements . S pecifically, a review of the Strategy will take place in 2017 to assess overall progress. In addition , we will carry out h ousing n eeds a ssessment s on an annual basis from 2016 which will support the continuous monitoring of social housing delivery against need .

   Question Nos 648,649,650,651,652,653,654,658,659,660,661,662,663,664 and 665

Chun an Aire Comhshaoil, Pobail agus Rialtais Áitiúil:
To the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government:

To ask the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government further to their requests, and in view of the publication of his Social Housing Targets for Local Authorities, if he plans to meet with the Housing Strategic Policy Committee of Louth County Council.

To ask the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the number of the 35,000 additional units of social housing under the Social Housing Strategy 2020 that will be new units; the proportion that will be newly built homes, refurbished long-term voids, leasing agreements with private landlords under the Rental Accommodation Scheme or long term leasing arrangements with landlords or developers .

To ask the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he will provide a break down of the number of new social units to be constructed by Louth County Council and Meath County Council year-on-year under the Social Housing Strategy 2020 and the Social Housing Targets for Local Authorities .

To ask the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he will provide a breakdown of the number of new social units to be constructed by private developers year-on-year in County Louth and County Meath under the Social Housing Strategy 2020 and the Social Housing Targets for Local Authorities .

To ask the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he will provide a breakdown of the number of new social units to be constructed by public-private partnerships for County Louth and County Meath year-on-year under the Social Housing Strategy 2020 and the Social Housing Targets for Local Authorities .

To ask the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the number of the 778 additional units of social housing to be provided in County Louth under the Social Housing Targets for Local Authorities that will be new units; the proportion that will be newly built homes, refurbished long-term voids, leasing agreements with private landlords under the Rental Accommodation Scheme or long term leasing arrangements with landlords or developers .

To ask the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the number of the 519 additional units of social housing to be provided in County Meath under the Social Housing Targets for Local Authorities that will be new units; the proportion that will be newly built homes, refurbished long-term voids, leasing agreements with private landlords under the Rental Accommodation Scheme or long term leasing arrangements with landlords or developers .

To ask the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he will provide a breakdown of the location of planned new housing units to be provided in County Louth .

To ask the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he will provide a breakdown of the land banks that have been identified as suitable for the planned new social housing units in counties Louth and Meath; the number of units that will be constructed on each land bank; and the commencement and completion date for same .

To ask the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government the number of the planned 778 housing units for County Louth that will be constructed on the eight land banks zoned for social housing in County Louth .

To ask the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he will provide start and completion dates for proposed new build schemes for social housing units for counties Louth and Meath under the Social Housing Strategy 2020 and the Social Housing Targets for Local Authorities .

To ask the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he will provide a breakdown by local authority of the number of new social units to be constructed by local authorities year-on-year under the Social Housing Strategy 2020 and the Social Housing Targets for Local Authorities .

To ask the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he will provide a breakdown by local authority of the number of new social units to be constructed by private developers year-on-year under the Social Housing Strategy 2020 and the Social Housing Targets for Local Authorities .

To ask the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if he will provide a breakdown by local authority of the number of new social units to be constructed by public-private partnerships year-on-year under the Social Housing Strategy 2020 and the Social Housing Targets for Local Authorities .

To ask the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government if County Managers and Directors of Services in Local Authorities have been briefed on the implementation of the Social Housing Strategy 2020 and the Social Housing Targets for Local Authorities; if they have been instructed as to the number of housing units he expects will be provided by newly built homes, refurbished long-term voids, leasing agreements with private landlords under the Rental Accommodation Scheme or long term leasing arrangements with landlords or developers..

- Gerry Adams.

For WRITTEN answer on Tuesday, 21st April, 2015.

Ref No:   15748/15, 15749/15, 15750/15, 15751/15, 15752/15, 15753/15 , 15754/15, 15758/15,   15759/15, 15760/15, 15761/15,   15762/15 ,   15763/15 , 15764/15 and 1576 5 /15

**REPLY**

Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (Deputy Alan Kelly)

I propose to take Question

nos  648,649,650,651,652,653,654,658,659,660,661,662,663,664 and 665 together.

The Government’s Social Housing Strategy 2020 targets the delivery of over 35,000 new social housing units over the period to 2020.   These targets are broken down in the Strategy between those that are current-funded, at 23,400 units, and those that are capital-funded, at 12,173 units.

The targets that I recently announced for all local authorities are for the period 2015- 2017 and include 7,483 units that will be capital-funded. These units will include those that will be constructed or acquired by local authorities through various means. Each local authority has responsibility for identifying their area’s social housing need and responding as required, including planning and undertaking new social housing developments to meet this need. Accordingly, the location and specific number of the units to be constructed through local authority managed contracts, the number to be acquired, the number to be constructed by private developers or public-private partnerships, the location of these developments, including land banks to be used, and the specific commencement and completion date for construction projects, are all matters in the first instance for the local authorities concerned.

Under the Social Housing Strategy, the opportunity to bring vacant or boarded-up social housing units back into productive use will continue to be supported, as a common-sense and value for money approach to the delivery of social housing units. The exact breakdown of such units that will be tackled out to 2017 cannot be specified at this point, as assessments of such stock are submitted annually by each local authority and vacant units to be remediated and brought back to use are quantified across all authorities at that point. For 2015, the number of such units targeted for Counties Louth and Meath, respectively, are 9 and 27 .

Of the 778 units announced for County Louth for the period 2015 to 2017, a target of 288 units has been set for delivery under capital programmes and 490 units under current programmes. Of the 519 units announced for County Meath, the equivalent figures are 134 units under capital programmes and 385 units under current programmes. These breakdowns have been notified to the local authorities.

The number of additional social housing units that are targeted under the Social Housing Current Expenditure Programme, previously referred to as the Social Housing Leasing Initiative, to 2017 nationally under the Social Housing Strategy is 11,400. The number targeted in respect of Counties Louth and Meath are 443 and 284, respectively. However, it is important to highlight that the Social Housing Current Expenditure Programme is a national fund without individual authority funding allocations. Where a local authority can exceed its target it should be possible to fund such additional units with the agreement of the Department.

The number of additional social housing units targeted under the Rental Accommodation Scheme nationally to 2017 under the Social Housing Strategy is 4,000. The number of such units targeted in respect of Counties Louth and Meath are 47 and 101, respectively.

Proposals already made by local authorities for the development of social housing units have been assessed and a first phase of announcements of initial project approvals will be made shortly. We are working with all local authorities to ensure that the projects proposed represent value for money and, in the case of capital-funded projects, are developed in compliance with the Capital Works Management Framework. I will be monitoring progress on delivery of units under the Social Housing Strategy and if satisfactory progress is not being made, I will reallocate funding between local authorities in order that national targets are achieved.

T he targets that I announced illustrate once again that housing is of the highest priority for the Government. The re are ambitious targets for each local authority and these will have a major impact for those on housing waiting lists, with a national reduction of 25% targeted over the period through these targets alone. I have met with representatives of a number of local authorities in recent months, as has my colleague Minister Coffey, in relation to social housing issues and I will continue that dialogue with other authorities in the months ahead .