

Housing Proposals

On Your side

Sinn Féin Alternative Budget 2018



On YOUR side

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Capital Expenditure

Housing, Planning and Local Government

Sinn Féin believes that access to affordable, stable and adequate housing should be a right. It is the responsibility of Government to ensure a functioning housing system that meets the accommodation needs of all.

The current housing crisis is due to decades of over reliance on the private sector to meet social and affordable housing need; an underinvestment in public housing; weak regulation of the private rental sector and; failure to address housing disadvantage for excluded or marginalised sections of society.

The Government claims that it will meet the 'social housing needs' of 21,050 households in 2017. But only 4450 households will have their needs met through real social housing (new build, acquisitions and refurbs by local authorities and approved housing bodies). The remaining 16,600 households are to be accommodated in leased private sector properties, the vast majority for just two years under the Housing Assistance Programme, leaving them insecure.

Meanwhile, the Government has not delivered a single affordable rental or purchase unit in 2016 or 2017.

Any government that wants to address the housing crises must dramatically increase capital investment in good quality, well planned and serviced social and affordable housing.

In 2018, Sinn Féin would ensure an investment of €1.918 billion in social and affordable homes by increasing the Government's capital plan commitment of €788 million with an additional €1.13 billion.

€1.49 billion of the total would be invested to deliver 10,000 real social houses, owned by local authorities and approved housing bodies.

The remaining €428 million would be invested to kick start a new affordable housing programme that would deliver 2,000 affordable rental and 2,500 affordable purchase homes. These affordable homes would be made available to households who are struggling to meet the cost of rents in the private market or to purchase a home but whose incomes exclude them from social housing.

Additional Social Housing - Cost €702 million

Sinn Féin would deliver 4,131 social homes in addition to the Government's 2018 target

of 5,869 with an increased capital allocation of €702 million on top of the Government's proposed €788 million. This would allow for the delivery of 10,000 social homes.

We propose to give an additional €378 million to local authorities in 2018 to build 2,000 extra Council homes.

We propose to make a further €223 million available to local authorities to purchase 1,311 homes from vacant and abandoned private housing stock. The local authorities would deliver these homes using a larger Buy and Renew Scheme.

The Housing Agency have a fund which acquires vacant private housing stock that is not on the open market in order to deliver social homes. We are also proposing to double this fund in 2018 at a cost of €70 million. This would fund the delivery of an additional 420 Council homes.

Finally, we propose to restore funding for Traveller Accommodation Programmes to its 2008 levels by increasing the budget by €31 million in order to deliver 400 traveller specific family units. In the past, Councils

have failed to spend their budgets for traveller accommodation with devastating consequences. To ensure that these funds are spent, Sinn Féin would give the Minister of Housing new powers to ensure that all funding allocated to local authorities for their traveller accommodation programmes is drawn down and spent within the allocated year.

	Social Housing Units	Capital Investment (millions)
SF additional new build council homes	2,000	€378
SF additional Buy and Renew	1,311	€223
SF additional Housing Agency purchase of vacants	420	€70
SF additional traveller accommodation	400	€31
Total Sinn Féin additional	4,131	€702
Government social housing target	5,869	€788
Total SF plus government target	10,000	€1,490

New Affordable Housing - Cost €428 million

Sinn Féin are also proposing that a new affordable housing programme be introduced commencing with 4,500 homes in Budget 2018. These homes, which would be built on public land would be made available to single income households earning less than €58,000 and to joint income households earning less than €75,000 gross. This novel programme has the potential to be both an effective supply side intervention in the housing market and to deliver greater social mix in our housing developments.

We propose to allocate an additional €378 million to local authorities so that they can build 2,000 affordable units which they would then rent to qualifying households. The rent levels would be set at the economic cost of delivering and maintaining the unit and index linked to the consumer price index rather than based on market prices.

In addition, we propose to allocate €50 million to Councils so that they can work with not-for-profit housing providers to build 2,500 affordable housing

units which would be purchased by qualifying households. This €50 million would cover site development costs on public land. The model for the development of the units would be based on the Poppintree Ó Cualann development in Ballymun. The remaining revenue required to build these homes would come from private finance secured by the not-for profit housing agency for construction and from the mortgage secured by the purchaser. In addition to funding the site servicing costs the Council would waive development levies and commercial land costs allowing the houses to be sold at prices ranging from €170,000 to €260,000, depending on the accommodation size and type.

SF New Affordable Housing Programme	Affordable housing units	Capital Investment (millions)
For rent	2,000	€378
For purchase	2,500	€50
Total	4,500	€428





Current Expenditure

Housing

Sinn Féin would increase Current spending in Housing by €44 million to address issues including homelessness, housing supports for people experiencing domestic violence, housing access for people with disabilities and improved fire safety regulations.

Sinn Féin's major capital investment programme for the delivery of social and affordable homes is outlined in this document in 'Capital Investment Plan - Fighting Brexit'.

Homelessness - Cost €10 million

This fund would be used in part to roll out a Quality Standards Framework for all homeless emergency accommodation and an independent inspection regime. The remainder of the allocation would be held as a contingency fund to meet day to day requirements of providing emergency accommodation.

Domestic Violence - Cost €9.4 million

Increase funding for domestic violence refuge and step-down support services to €60m by 2021 with a budget increase for 2018 of €9.4 million bringing the total allocation to €31.5 million.

Disability Accessible Housing - Cost €23.9 million

Increase the central government allocation to local authority disability and mobility adaptation grants for council tenants and private home owners by 50% at a cost of €23.92 million.

Fire Safety - Cost €829,000

Create a fire safety risk inspection team to work in local authorities at a cost of €829,000. This would ensure that all new multiple occupancy residential developments are subject to mandatory local authority fire safety inspections.