

MOVING FORWARD. TOGETHER.
AG BOGADH AR AGHAIDH. LE CHÉILE.

OLD BUILDINGS, NEW HOMES

The Fianna Fáil plan to keep
reducing vacancy & dereliction



Introduction

Fianna Fáil in Government have placed a special emphasis on tackling vacancy and dereliction all across the Country. We've introduced Vacant and Derelict Property Grants, extended planning exemptions when converting a vacant premises from commercial into residential, ensured full time vacant homes officers are in Local Authorities across the country, increased funding to bring vacant social homes back into use and removed disincentives to selling or renting unused homes.

The geodirectory report shows that 82,031 residential properties were recorded as vacant in June 2024, with vacancy rates decreasing in 19 counties over the previous twelve months.

Despite progress in this area we believe we can do much more. We will:

- ✓ ***Establish a special Above the Shop Living Grant of €100,000***
- ✓ ***Increase the Derelict Property Grant to €80,000***
- ✓ ***Increase the Vacancy Property Grant to €60,000***
- ✓ ***Roll out the €150m revolving vacant property purchasing fund across each local Authority***
- ✓ ***Ensure the expansion of the new Local Authority Purchase and Renovation Loan***
- ✓ ***Pass a new Compulsory Purchase Order Bill within six months***
- ✓ ***Extend Planning Permission exemptions until 2030 on vacant commercial property conversions***
- ✓ ***Increase the Vacant Property Tax rate year on year***
- ✓ ***Ensure every Local Authority has an expanded Vacant Property Team***
- ✓ ***Fully implement Buy and Renew and Repair and Lease schemes across every local authority***
- ✓ ***Include Adaptive Reuse in Affordable Purchase and Cost Rental Schemes***

Increase and extend Vacant & Derelict Property Grants

- The Vacant and Derelict Property Refurbishment Grant has been a game changer. Since its launch in 2022, over 10,000 applications have been received by local authorities across the county, with some 7,000 approved and almost 1,000 grants paid. The grant was expanded to include rental properties as well as principal private residencies to help boost all housing stock across the country.
- We will invest over €635m in our plan to turbo charge these hugely successful grants with a €10,000 boost to each.

Grant	Currently	If re-elected to government
Vacant Property Grant	€50,000	€60,000
Derelict Property Grant	€70,000	€80,000

Establish an Above the Shop Grant

- We will invest €250m in a special €100,000 Above the Shop living Grant that will help assist with the costs of converting premises into homes.
- The grant will help breathe fresh life into our towns and city centres as well as complement other measures like the Town Centre First policy. In addition we will implement reformed Part B Fire Regulations to make Above the Shop premises both safe and viable to convert and live in.

Roll out a €150m revolving vacant property purchase fund

- Local authorities will acquire long term vacant (>2yrs) properties through this €150m fund and then offer them for private sale to individuals who in return will commit to bringing the property into use as a home. Proceeds from the sale of these properties will be used to replenish the fund and then used to buy more properties.
- Purchasers of these properties will be able to defray the costs of returning them to use by accessing, subject to eligibility the new Croi Conaithe Vacant Homes Grant, SEAI energy efficiency grants or the Repair and Leasing Scheme. Over 5,500 homes are expected to be created through then fund by 2030.

Implement the Local Authority Vacant Property Mortgage

- Under the new Local Authority Purchase and Renovation Loan launched in July, a first-time buyer or fresh start applicant who wishes to purchase and renovate a Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant eligible home but cannot get sufficient funding from commercial lenders can now apply to their local authority for a loan.
- The new Loan has the potential to help these buyers secure the necessary finance to make their project viable and it can be repaid on the payment of the grant. We will fully implement this innovative new mortgage. €250m is available every year for through the Local Authority Mortgage scheme.

Pass new CPO legislation within six months

- We will prioritise new CPO legislation based on the Law Reform recommendations and draft bill in 2023 to streamline and simplify the CPO process, bringing more properties back into productive use. This will introduce a simplified system of acquisition and compensation that fairly balances the rights of owners whose land is being acquired and the acquiring authorities' requirement to quickly and efficiently acquire land so that projects, which serve the public interest, can be progressed.

Fully implement Buy and Renew and Repair and Lease schemes across every local authority

- We will invest €120m on Buy & Renew and Repair & Lease schemes to bring back over 1,000 properties through the new plan. These schemes target unused properties and bring them back into use to reduce social housing waiting lists.

Extend Planning Permission exemptions for Vacant and Derelict commercial premises to 2030

- Extending this planning regulation to 2030 will ease the planning burden for those who want to convert small and medium-sized pubs that are no longer viable and have ceased to operate, into residential housing.
- The regulations will also continue to make it easier to get other forms of vacant commercial premises, including vacant spaces over ground floor premises, back into use for residential purposes such as 'over the shop' living.

Ensure each LA has an expanded Vacant Property Team

- We will ensure funding of €60,000 for a Vacant property officer and support for Town Centre Regeneration officers in every single Local Authority is fully continued. People with on the ground knowledge are vital in shaping informed and practical local responses to vacancy problems. These staff will lead the way in identifying vacant properties and putting them back to the best use.

Increase the Vacant Property Tax rate year on year

- Our €1.7bn plan sets out a range of attractive measures that make it worthwhile investing in refurbishing vacant properties. We are putting in place the regulatory supports and legal means to get moving on properties that have been vacant for a long time.
- However, we need a carrot and stick approach. We introduced a Vacant Property tax as part of Housing for All. The tax aims to increase the supply of homes for rent or purchase to meet demand by penalising hoarding.
- We will increase the tax year on year from its current level of seven times the LPT rate, sending a clear signal to people to take action to use or sell their properties.

Adaptive Re-use in Affordable Purchase and Cost Rental schemes

- Dublin City Council have utilised an 'Adaptive Reuse Unit' to target properties for refurbishment. We will build on that model by expanding the eligibility of Adaptive Reuse into all new affordable and cost rental schemes. This means empty or derelict properties being brought into residential use will benefit from these multi-billion euro schemes.

Pilot a Commercial Rates rebate scheme for Above the Shop living

- We will pilot a new scheme for town centres where commercial properties will benefit from a rates rebate where they allow the above the shop space to be converted into a residence.



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Head Office 65-66 Lower Mount Street,
Dublin 2, D02 NX40

Tel: 01 664 9209

Email: info@fiannafail.ie

www.fiannafail.ie

