



## Meeting of Limerick City and County Council to be held on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> July, 2025.

### Question submitted by Councillor S. Kiely

Given the recent information on your SMART housing , I would like to know what the route to planning is for this proposal and what consultation has taken place with the Executive and the communities at your proposed locations.

### **Response:**

#### **Route to Planning**

The SMART Housing programme is being advanced in accordance with the provisions of the *Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended)*. In particular, the initiative aligns with:

- Section 15(1) of the Act places a statutory obligation on Limerick City and County Council to take the necessary actions to implement the objectives of its Development Plan. The SMART Housing programme fully supports this duty by seeking to fast-track the delivery of new homes on Council-owned lands designated for residential use under its land use zoning objectives as democratically adopted in the Limerick Development Plan 2022–2028.
- The initial locations for SMART Housing are all Council-owned lands that are already zoned for residential development, ensuring alignment with existing planning policy and enabling streamlined progression through the planning system.
- We anticipate that the proposed sites will proceed via Part 8 or Part 10 (should an EIAR be required). A final planning consent strategy will be determined on a case by case basis and is subject to final determination once feasibility and detailed design is concluded. This work will be progressed by the Design Teams once appointed in the next 2 weeks.

#### **Consultation to Date and Next Steps:**

The proposal was brought to a Private Councillor Briefing in November 2024 where the initiative was welcomed, clarifications responded to and in general no objection was raised to proceed.

After more weekly workshop calls with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage officials, the proposal was advanced further and next brought to a Private Councillor Briefing in early June 2025 and the recent Housing Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) to:

- Introduce the current SMART Housing concept and outline the proposed programme scope.



- Explain Modern Methods of Construction (MMC), particularly volumetric and 3D modular solutions, and demonstrate time and cost efficiencies of this construction method compared to Traditional Build - which is more expensive and takes longer.
- Show successful case studies of this type of construction achieved in other jurisdictions closeby - Cardiff, Bristol, London for example - who have been delivering 3D Modular solutions for more than 20 years as part of their housing capital programmes.
- Provide qualitative feedback from key civic stakeholders on the need for this type of housing acceleration programme.
- Highlight the strategic rationale for selecting site locations in the City, which is based on the availability of suitable, zoned, and Council-owned land capable of early delivery to meet Limerick's severe structural housing deficit.

These preliminary briefings were designed to facilitate further engagement with Elected Members and Sectoral representatives to get their further feedback in advance of more advanced site selection and the further engagement with local stakeholders and communities which would then naturally follow for any particular site. Once observations from these meetings had been fully considered by newly appointed Design Teams, more detailed design documents were to have been prepared to facilitate any discussions with the public.

We are committed to a comprehensive programme of engagement from August to October 2025. This engagement will take place once Design Teams have been appointed to initiate feasibility work and will include:

- Continued Briefings with elected members.
- Further ongoing weekly engagement with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
- Ongoing engagement with executive in the Regeneration Directorate, Forward Planning and Development Management Directorate.
- Early engagement with local stakeholders and communities in the identified areas to share emerging concepts and listen to feedback. This will take place between August and October 2025.
- Ongoing consultation throughout the design and planning stages to ensure concerns are addressed and local perspectives are reflected in the final proposals.

It is important to recall that the SMART Housing programme is being developed as an additional housing capital delivery programme to respond to urgent housing needs and to test innovative approaches that can deliver high-quality, affordable homes at greater scale and speed. This is in accordance with the objectives under the Programme for Government and Housing for All. Other programmes are nonetheless continuing apace, especially those focused on units for larger households and for affordable purchase by households. The need for an additional innovation, especially in the rental sector, is seen in the huge increase in rental costs in the Limerick area caused by the wide gap between prior annual overall housing delivery totals



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(across public and private sectors) of some 800-1000 units against an annual demand need of 2,500-4,000 units

It is important to build greater public confidence and local support that a much more significant step up in delivery than seen in previous years can now be achieved in Limerick to make housing costs more affordable for all and for this important housing and economic intervention for the benefit of not only the City but the entire Mid-West region.

We welcome continued dialogue as the programme progresses and will keep members and communities fully informed throughout.

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John Moran,  
Mayor of Limerick.



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**Question submitted by Councillor E. O'Donovan**

I will ask the Mayor at the next meeting of Limerick Council for the membership of the Community Liaison Committee due to have been established by this Council as is stipulated in the planning conditions in respect to Irish Cement and for the amount of the community fund that is due to be distributed that has been accumulating since 2023.

**REPLY:**

I have confirmed that the Community Development section of the Council's Rural, Community, Culture & Tourism Directorate is responsible for the formation of the Community Liaison Committee as stipulated in the conditions attached to planning permission granted to Irish Cement Ltd.

As the Councillor will be aware, staffing and day-to-day operations are not the direct responsibility of the Mayor, but I have confirmed that the section has now engaged with representatives of Irish Cement on the setting up of the Community Liaison Committee and their estimated timeline, Irish Cement has also advised us is that the total amount accumulated and available in the Community Gain Fund as of 30 June 2025 is €38,000.00.

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John Moran,  
Mayor of Limerick.