

Session 3: Accelerating Infrastructure Delivery



Chair: Emer Concannon, Director of Services, Sligo County Council

2.15 pm	Building Skills Capacity	Damien Owens, Director General of Engineers Ireland
2.35 pm	Accelerating Infrastructure Taskforce: Implementation	Sean O’Driscoll, Member of the Government’s Accelerating Infrastructure Taskforce, Chair ESRI
2:55 pm	Housing Activation Office: Co-ordinating Infrastructure Delivery to Support Housing	Garrett Doocey, Deputy Secretary General, DOHLG with responsibility for the Housing Activation Office
3:10 pm	Panel Discussion	
3.30 pm	End of Session 3, Tea & Coffee Break	

ENGINEERS IRELAND

Building Skills Capacity: Supporting Large Infrastructure Delivery

Damien Owens, Director General

Building Skills Capacity

Supporting Large Infrastructure Delivery

Damien Owens
Engineers Ireland
1st October 2026

Engineers Ireland Barometer Survey 2026

-6,000 additional engineers needed every year

69%

of engineering employers expect their financial position to improve

80%

of the public agreed that there are plenty of job opportunities in engineering

79%

of engineers agreed that engineering is a rewarding career

69%

of those surveyed expect a hybrid model of working going into 2026

42%

of employers stated it took 3 – 6 months to fill a vacant engineering position

93%

of the public stated that they view engineers as competent, the highest of any profession

63%

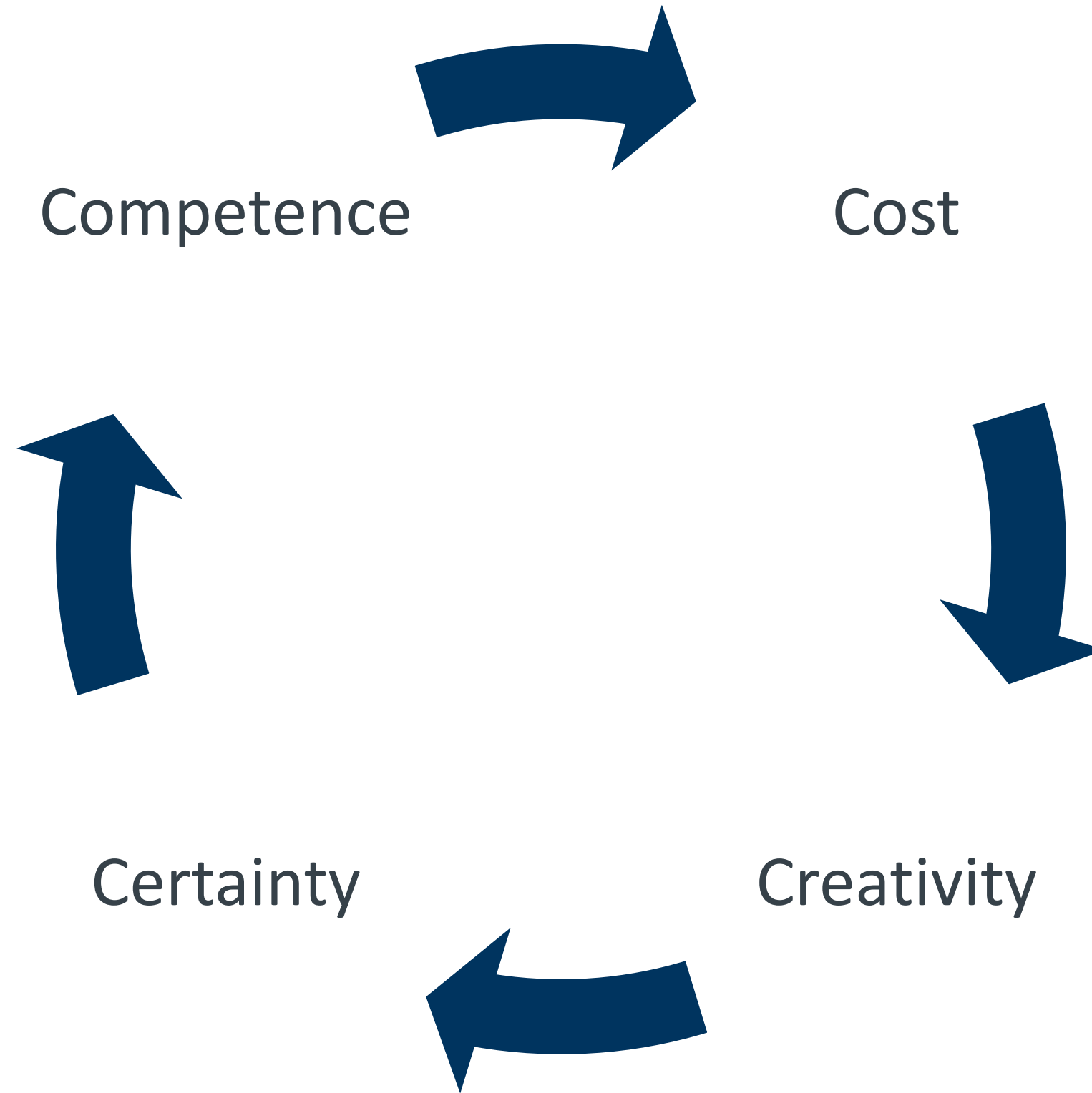
of members agreed apprenticeships are an attractive pathway into the engineering profession

66%

of employers plan to recruit in 2026

72%

of engineers agree that AI improves efficiency and workflows



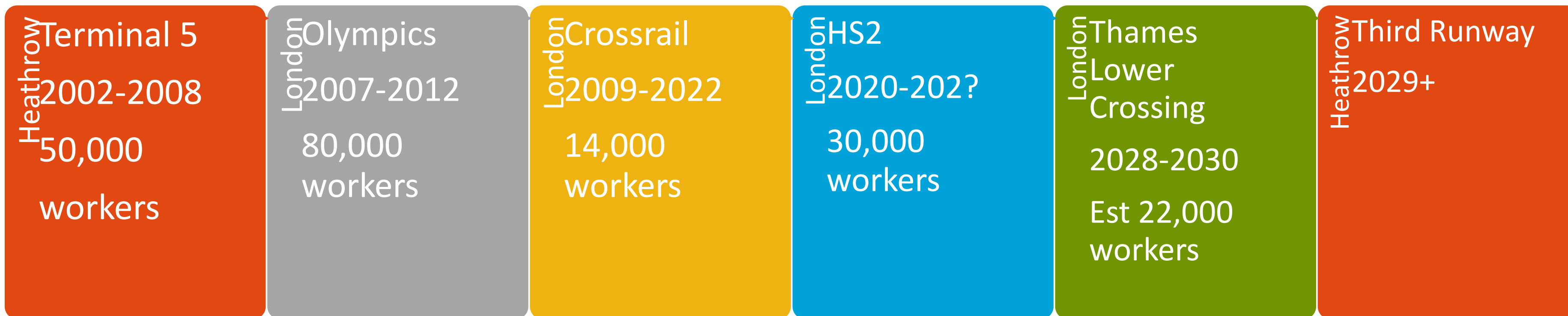
What do these companies have in common?

Nicholas O'Dwyer
Jennings O'Donovan
JB Barry and Partners
RPS
Excelsys Technologies
Jones Engineering

Atkins
DPS Engineering
Byrne Looby
Evolution Innovation
Dornan Engineering
Punch

These Irish engineering consultancies have been subject of mergers or acquisition in recent years.

Certainty provides confidence to develop supply of skills



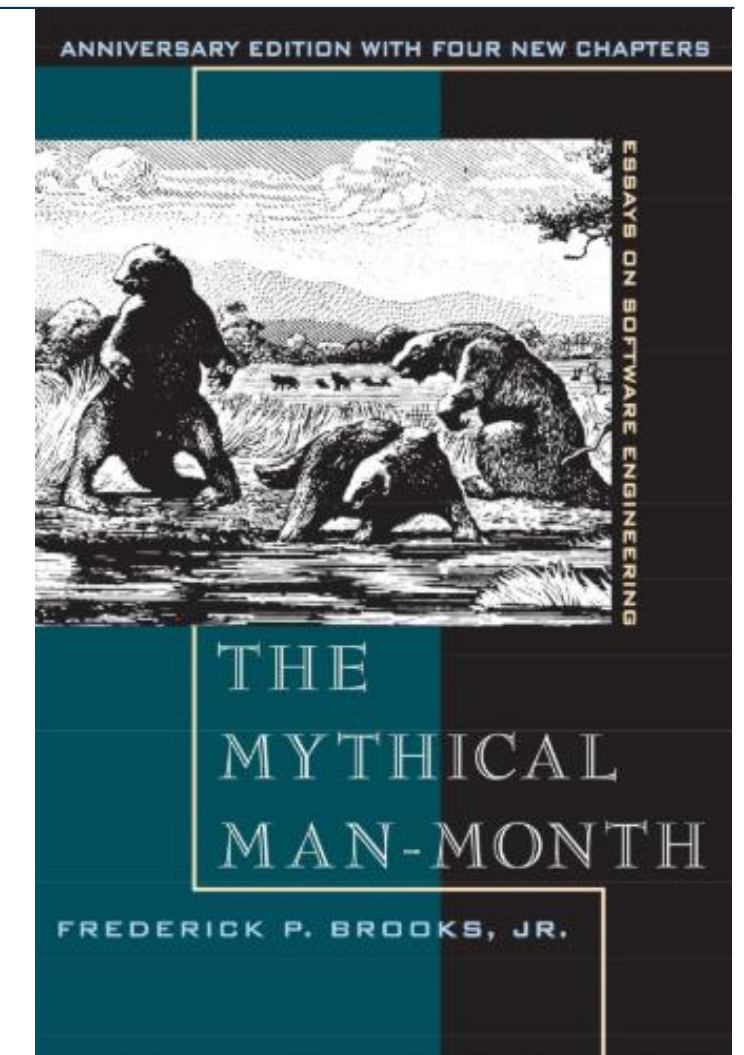
30 year career Horizon

What is the equivalent future roadmap for Ireland?
Requires clear communication!

Project	Status	Budget	Cost	Length	Cost/km (€m)
Crossrail (London)	Completed 2022	£14.8bn	£18.9bn (€23bn)	118km	19.5
Eysturoyartunnil (Faroe Islands)	Completed 2020	DKr1bn	DKr1bn	11.2km	11.1
Lansimetro (Helsinki)	Completed 2018	€1.4bn	€1.6bn	13.9km	115
Brenner Hi-speed (Austria-Italy)	Started 2018 – due 2032	€8.4bn (2018)	€11bn est.	64km X2 of which 55km tunnel x2	85
Metrolink	Starting	€16bn est	?	18.8km	850

- Comparisons are dangerous! – many cost factors are location specific
- Using acquired expertise can lower subsequent project costs

- Let us manage the cost components that are manageable – people, time and risk.
- How does a project become one year late?
 - One day at a time...
 - Adding components or a person to a project multiplies complexity
 - 5 people = 10 ways to communicate
 - 100 people = 4950
- The most dangerous project is the second one – *Second system effect*.



Opinion

This is how I got three Irish hospitals built on time and on budget

National Children's Hospital is an ongoing example of how not to approach any major construction project

James Sheehan

Thu May 07 2026 - 16:48 • 4 MIN READ



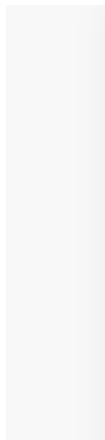
Irish Times, September 2026 -

Ireland

Closure of five level crossings in south Dublin a ‘goal’ for Irish Rail

Campaign group says Dart passengers have ‘suffered for 42 years’ as cars are prioritised

How do other countries address this issue?



Melbourne’s Elevated Rail: A Level Crossing Success Story

[Home](#) » [News](#) » [Infrastructure](#) » Melbourne’s Elevated Rail: A Level Crossing Success Story

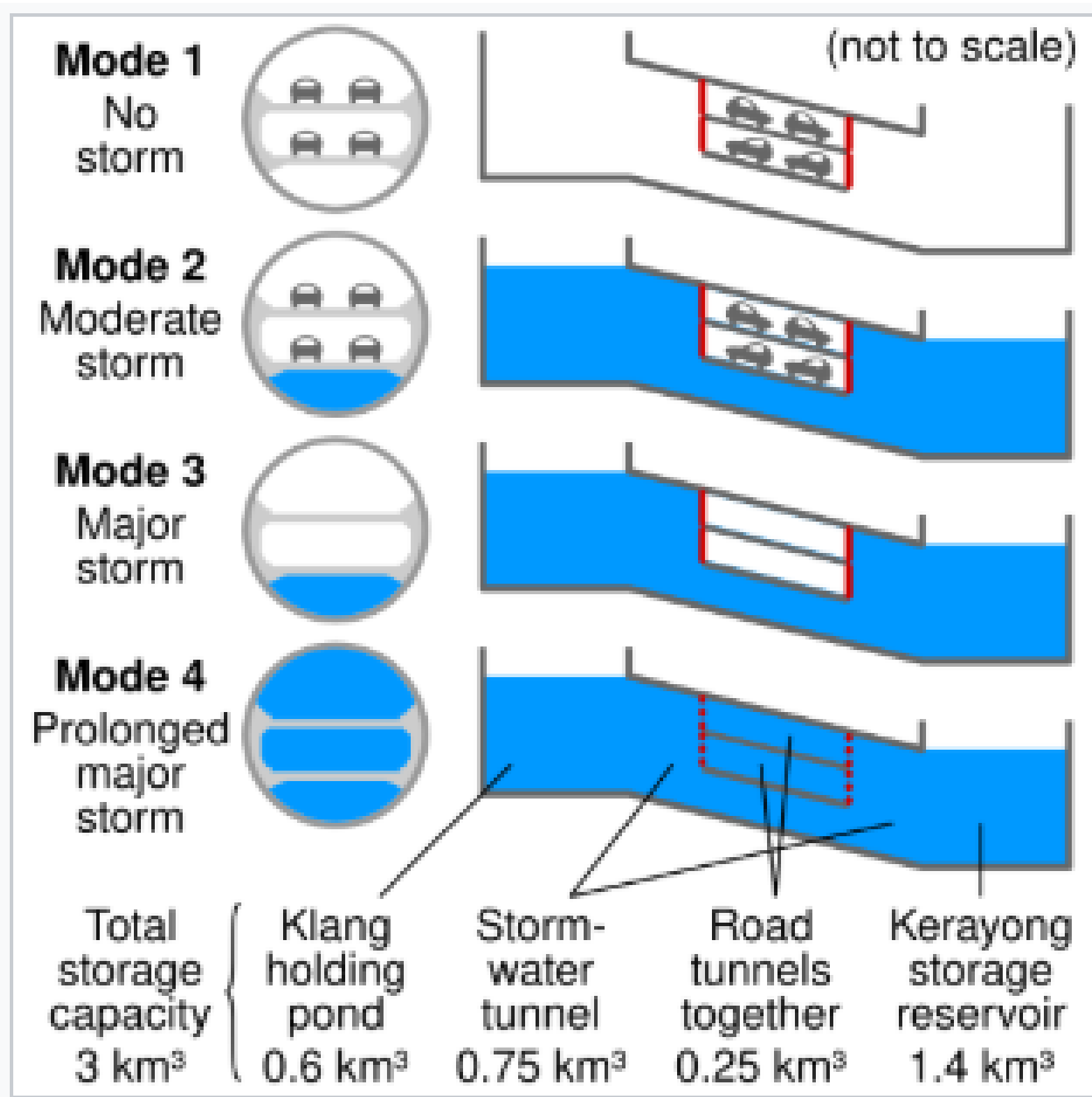
Melbourne also lowered rail lines to remove crossings and allow for stacked trains (double –decker).

Tsing-Ma Bridge Hong Kong – source acknowledged

Top deck – six lanes, lower deck train and traffic. In turbulent weather top deck is closed and cars move to lower deck.



S.M.A.R.T. Tunnel Kuala Lumpur (2007) (Stormwater Management And Road Tunnel)



The four modes of operation and storage capacity.

Quality public infrastructure delivers visible and tangible evidence of the progress of the nation and increases the sense of national pride and well-being and confidence.



Empowering Innovation.
Engineering The Future.

ACCELERATING INFRASTRUCTURE TASKFORCE

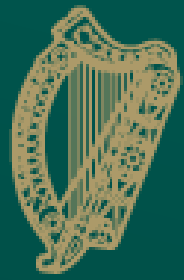
Accelerating Infrastructure Taskforce: Implementation

Sean O'Driscoll, Chair of ESRI

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING, LOCAL GOVERNMENT & HERITAGE

Housing Activation Office: Co-ordinating Infrastructure Delivery to Support Housing

Garrett Doocey, Deputy Secretary General



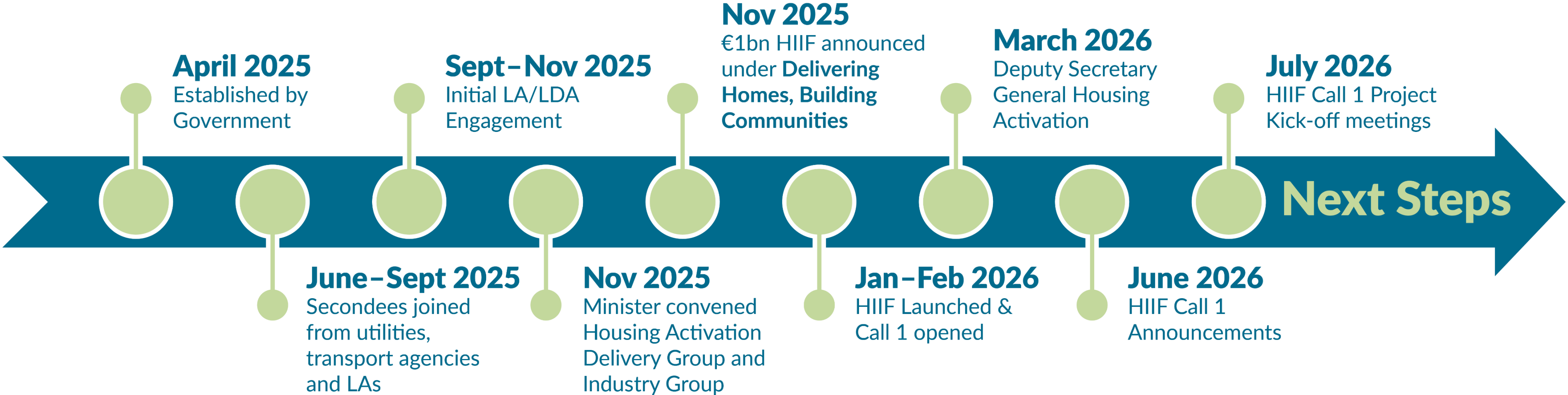
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Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage

Housing Activation Office

Co-ordinating Infrastructure Delivery To Support Housing

Garret Doocey, Deputy Secretary General, D/HLGH
Presentation at TII Annual Conference October 2026

Housing Activation Office – Timeline



Housing Activation Office – Policy Context



DHBC has two pillars - **Pillar 1: Activating Supply** and **Pillar 2: Supporting People** which frame the 8 priorities of Government in relation to housing

Work of the HAO sits within **Pillar 1: Activating Supply**, specifically supporting the '**Activating Land, Delivering Infrastructure**' priority

State has a critical role to play in the delivery of enabling infrastructure needed to meet housing target



Housing Activation Office – Establishment



Government agreed to establish the Housing Activation Office (HAO) in April 2025 to:

- accelerate delivery of critical infrastructure and unlock housing
- unblock structural and procedural issues on the ground
- engage and align key stakeholders, including infrastructure agencies, local government and industry

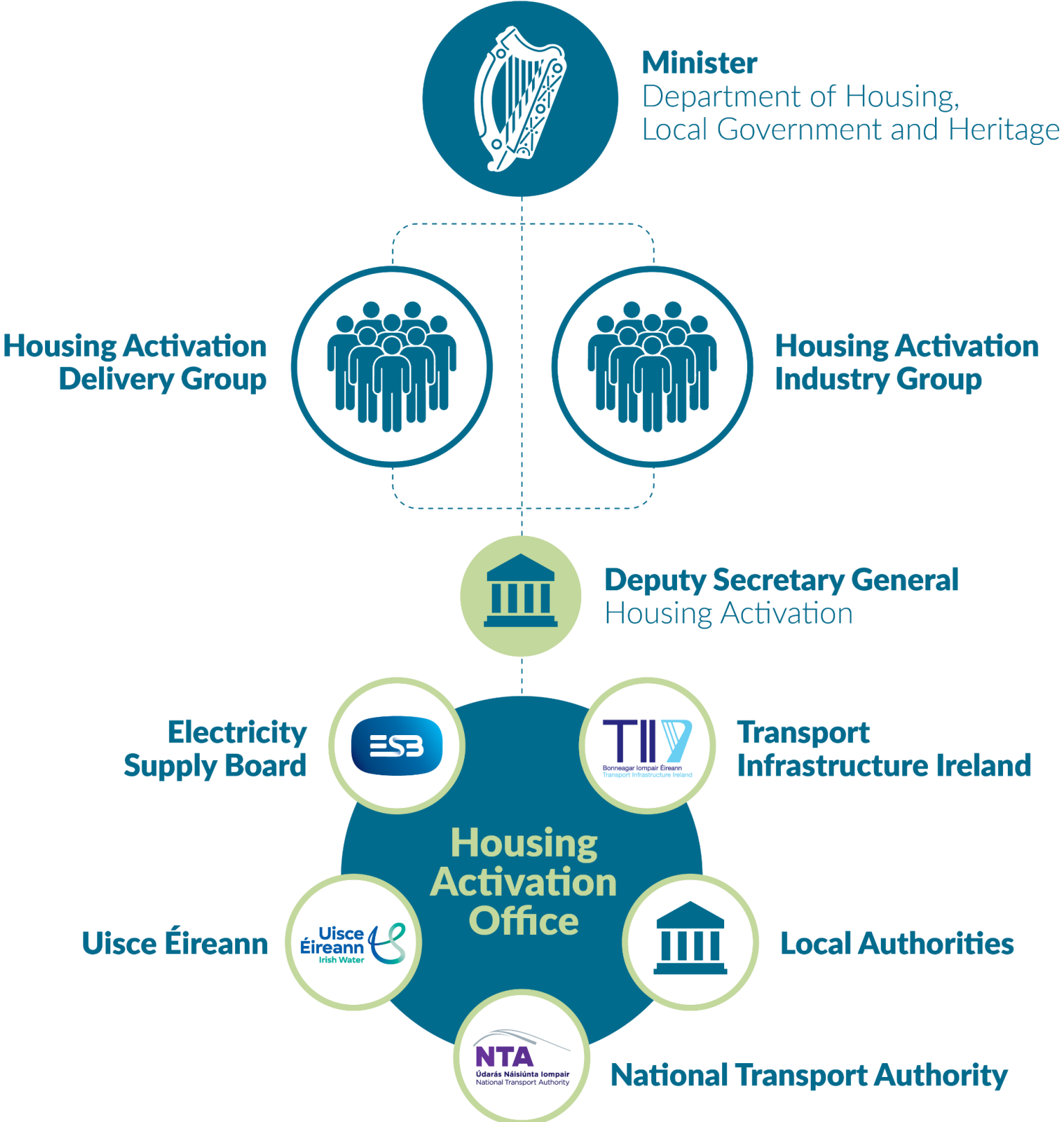
Two areas of key focus assigned by Government:

- **Local Activation:** Develop a coordinated programme of public infrastructure investment, to address infrastructure barriers and oversee / coordinate delivery of that investment programme
- **Strategic Activation:** Support public infrastructure planning and investment for the delivery of large-scale strategic sites and develop a coordinated programme of public infrastructure investment to support housing delivery

Housing Activation Office - Structure

Two Groups, chaired by Minister,
established and meeting quarterly:
Housing Activation Delivery Group &
Industry Group

Multi-agency team includes Civil
Servants as well as specialists from
UÉ, ESB, NTA, TII and the local
government sector

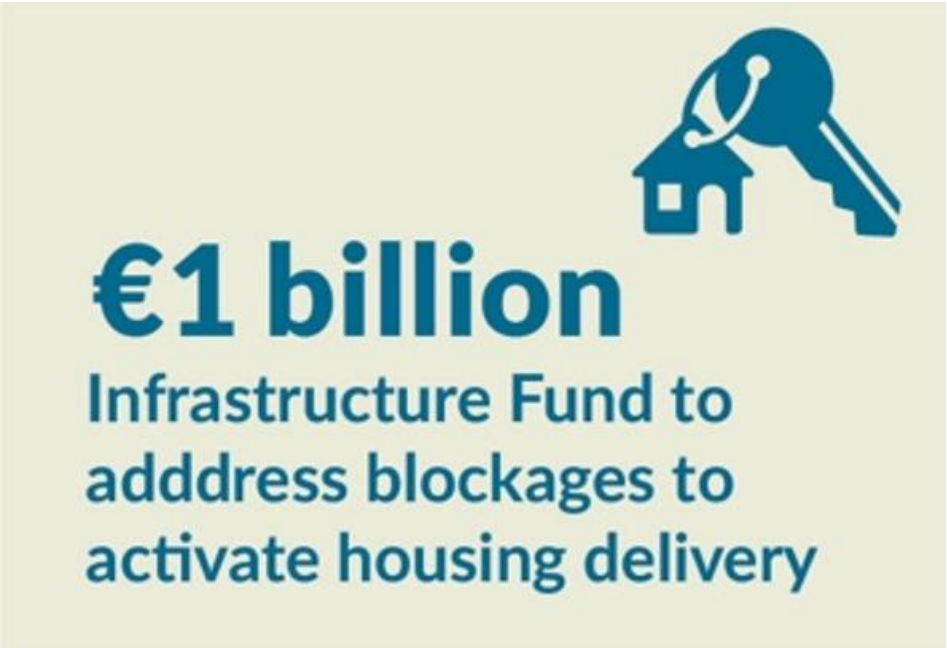
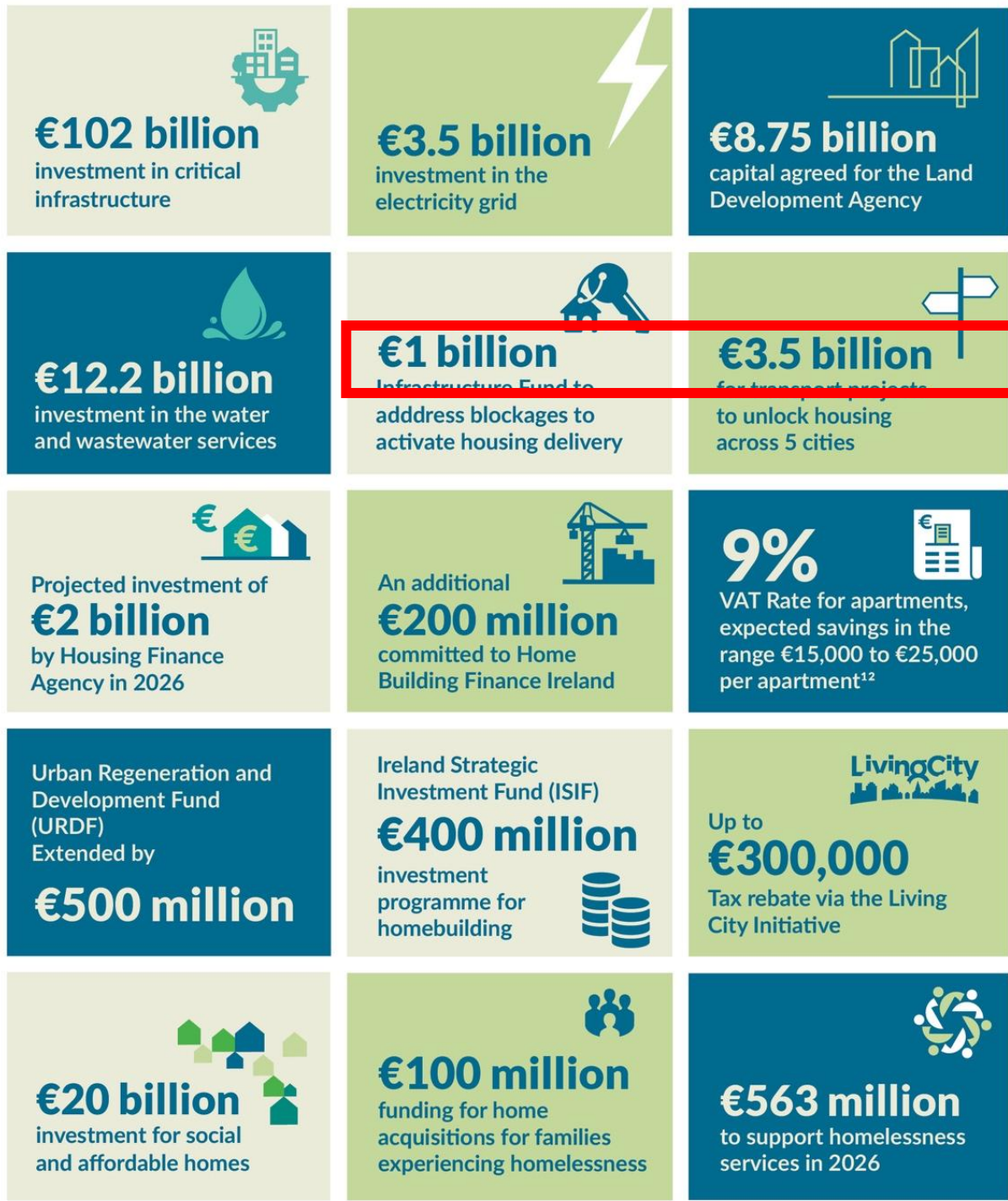


Housing Activation Office – Funding



Funding Committed to Drive Delivery

Under *Delivering Homes, Building Communities*, Government is prioritising record levels of investment.



Housing Infrastructure Investment Fund (HIIF) managed by the HAO

Supports direct investment in infrastructure needed to unlock housing in towns and cities nationwide

To complement (not replace) investment by other Government Departments and agencies

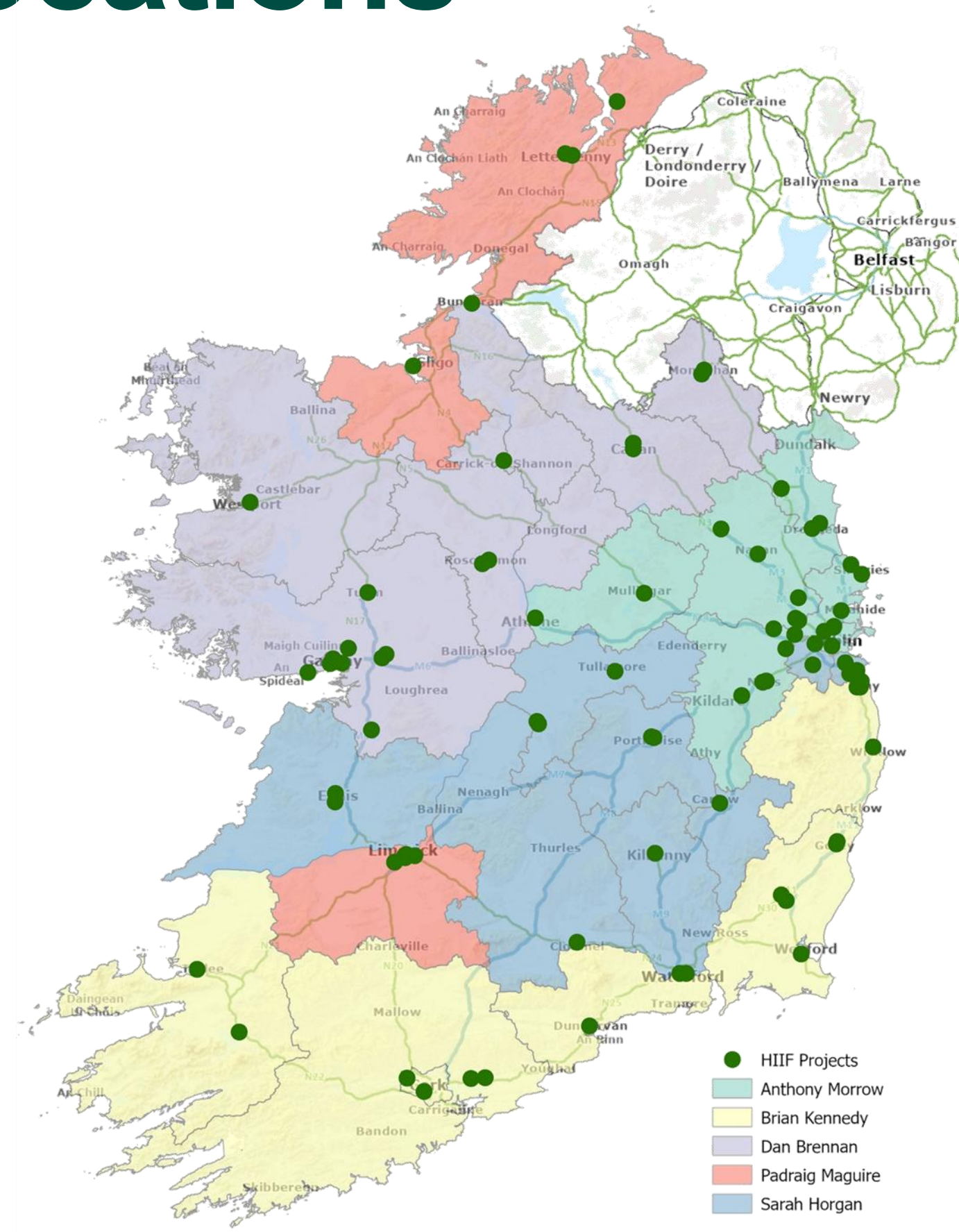
Housing Infrastructure Investment Fund – Call 1



- Call 1 Jan 2026 - 138 applications - 30 Local Authorities and LDA
- Roads, water, energy and parks
- 82 projects accepted onto HIIF programme in June 2026
- Potential to unlock lands for up to 200,000 homes - directly 86,000 and indirectly 113,000

- Project Cost Bands: 50 in < €10 m band; 18 in €10-€20 m band; 14 in > €20 m band
- 83% under €20m
- Complementary investment in water, energy and transport
- Funding managed at a programme level, allocated annually taking account of delivery progress

Project Locations



Housing Activation Office – Addressing Barriers to Infrastructure Delivery



2.

Increased Regulatory Burden
Multiple, distinct and often overlapping regulatory processes increase complexity without necessarily improving outcomes
3.

Risk Aversion
Threat of judicial review on procedural matters drives a culture of caution, limiting the scope for coordination and engagement that could lead to improved outcomes
6.

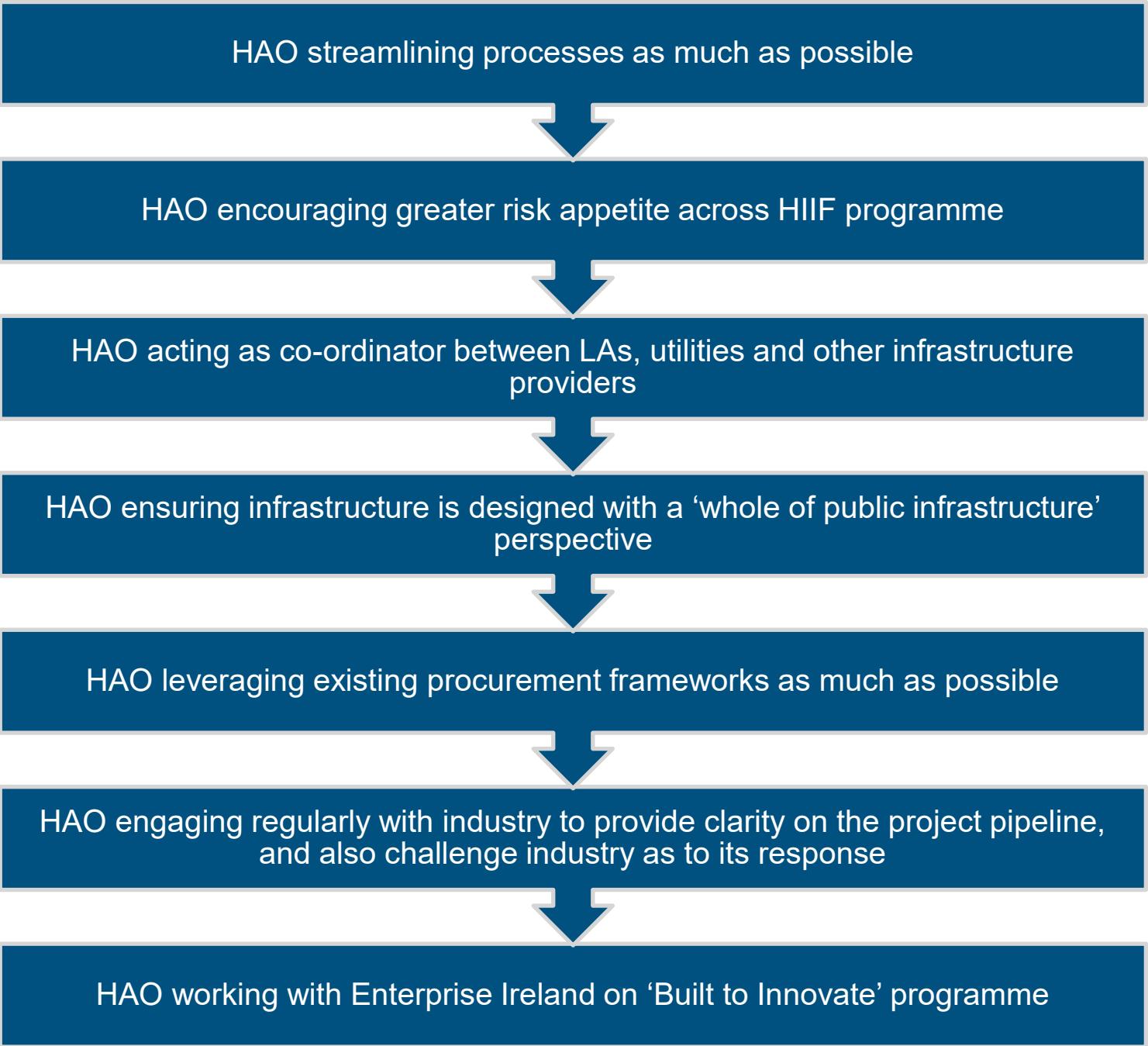
Insufficiently Co-ordinated Approvals
Limited coordination on licences, consents and permissions leads to duplication of effort and sequential processes that could be conducted in parallel, saving time/money
9.

Prioritisation and Co-ordination of Infrastructure
Semi-state companies and regulatory agencies are often limited in their ability to prioritise and to consider wider societal aims in decision making
10.

Procurement Challenges
Current processes are leading to falling competition in public tenders, impacting value for money and incentives for investment in skills/capability
11.

Uncertainty of Funding and Project Pipeline
Uncertainty around the timing and feasibility of Govt investment plans is limiting interest in the Irish infrastructure market among potential developers
12.

Construction Sector Capacity and Productivity
Construction Sector capacity and productivity is a constraint



HIIF Programme Call 1 – Current Project Status



Going to Approval Gate 1

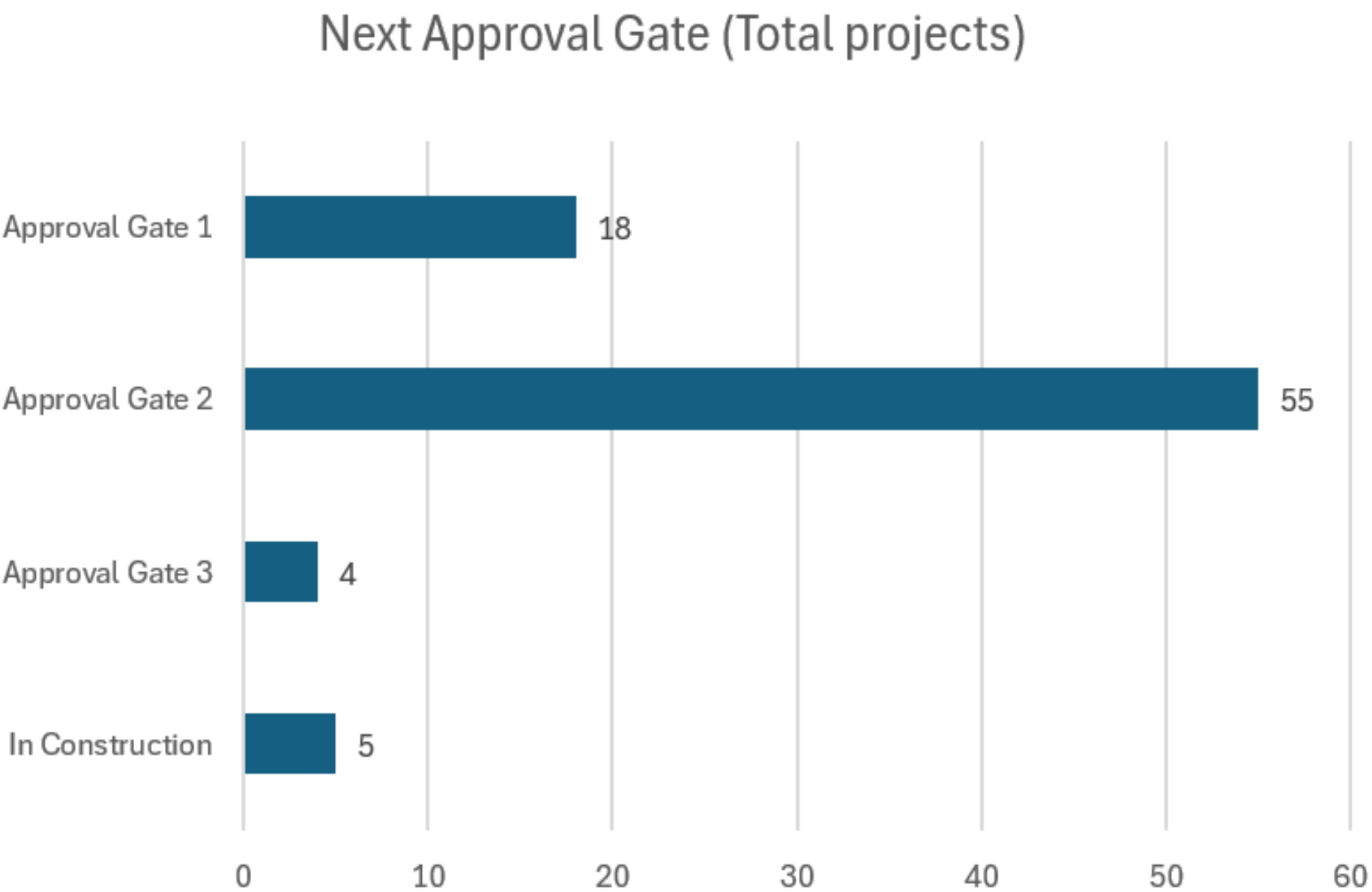
Strategic Assessment & Preliminary Business Case
(approval in principle)

Going to Approval Gate 2

Pre-tender; Project Design; Planning and
Procurement Strategy

Going to Approval Gate 3

Post-tender - Final Business Case
(award construction contract)



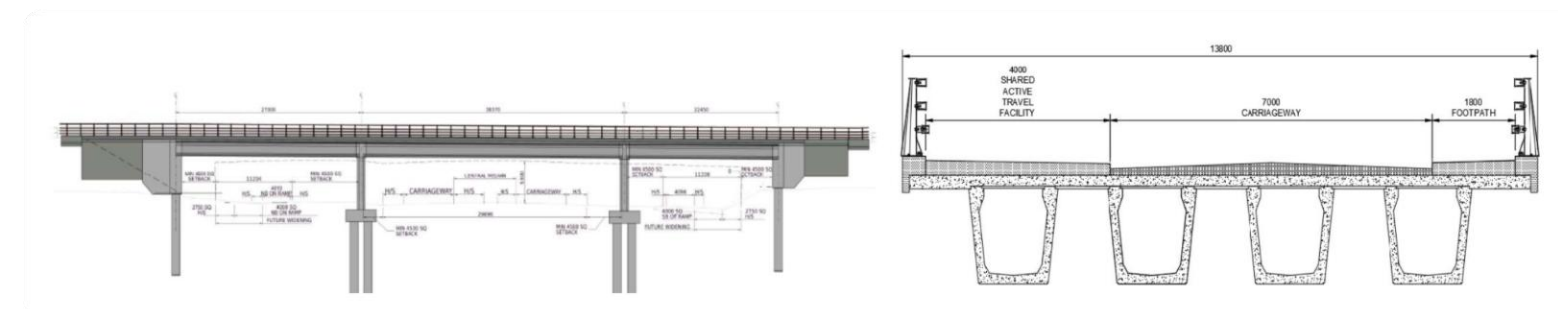
Local Activation Example :

Old Conna M11 Bridge

Directly unlocks lands for 3,690 new homes and indirectly unlocks lands for a potential further 6,000 new homes.

National Roads Interaction:

- New over bridge and link roads connecting the Old Connaught LAP area to Woodbrook/Shankill across the M11
- Bridge design proposal:
 - *comprises 3 no. spans over the M11.*
 - *approximately 5.3m clearance above the motorway*
 - *cross-section includes vehicular carriageway, cycleways & footpaths*
- Ongoing engagement between Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council and TII
- Current stage: Phase 3 Preliminary Design



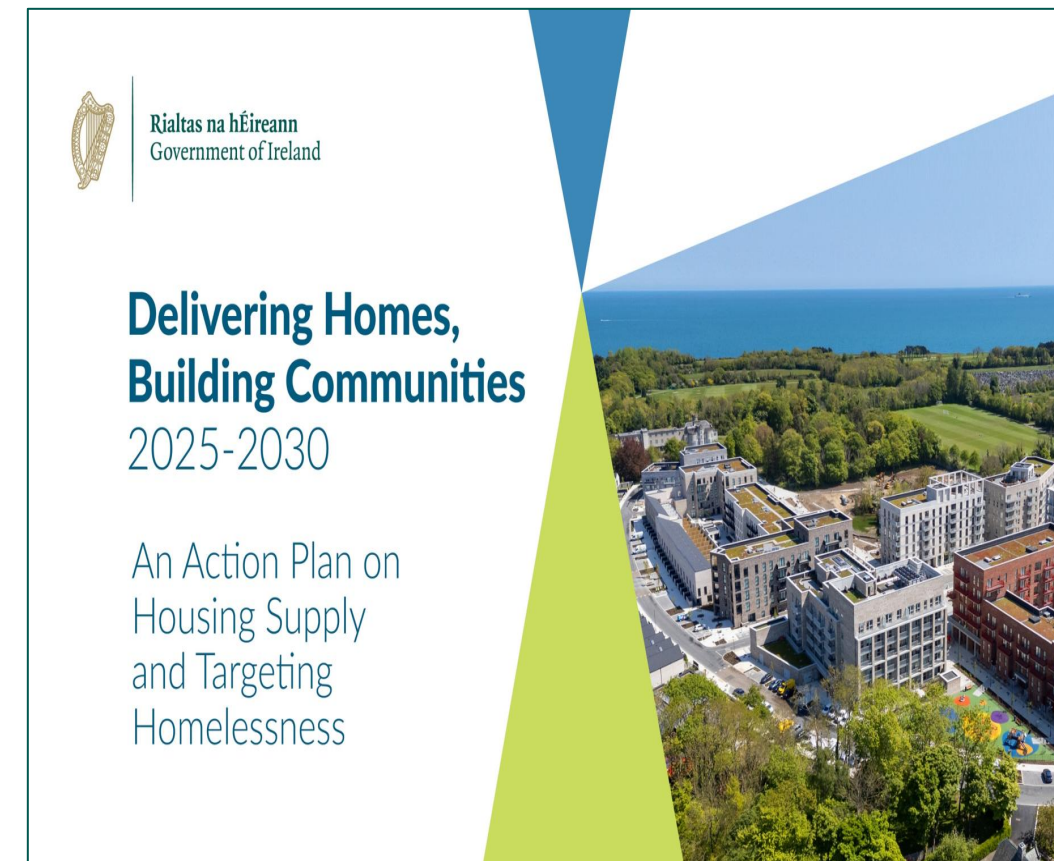
Strategic Activation

Initial focus has been on local activation

Broadening approach to include strategic landbanks in and around the five cities with capacity to deliver housing at scale

‘New Urban Communities Taskforce’ will be convened in the Autumn

Identify locations for large-scale housing growth so that Government can prioritise infrastructure investment



Strategic Activation & NDP Sectoral Plans



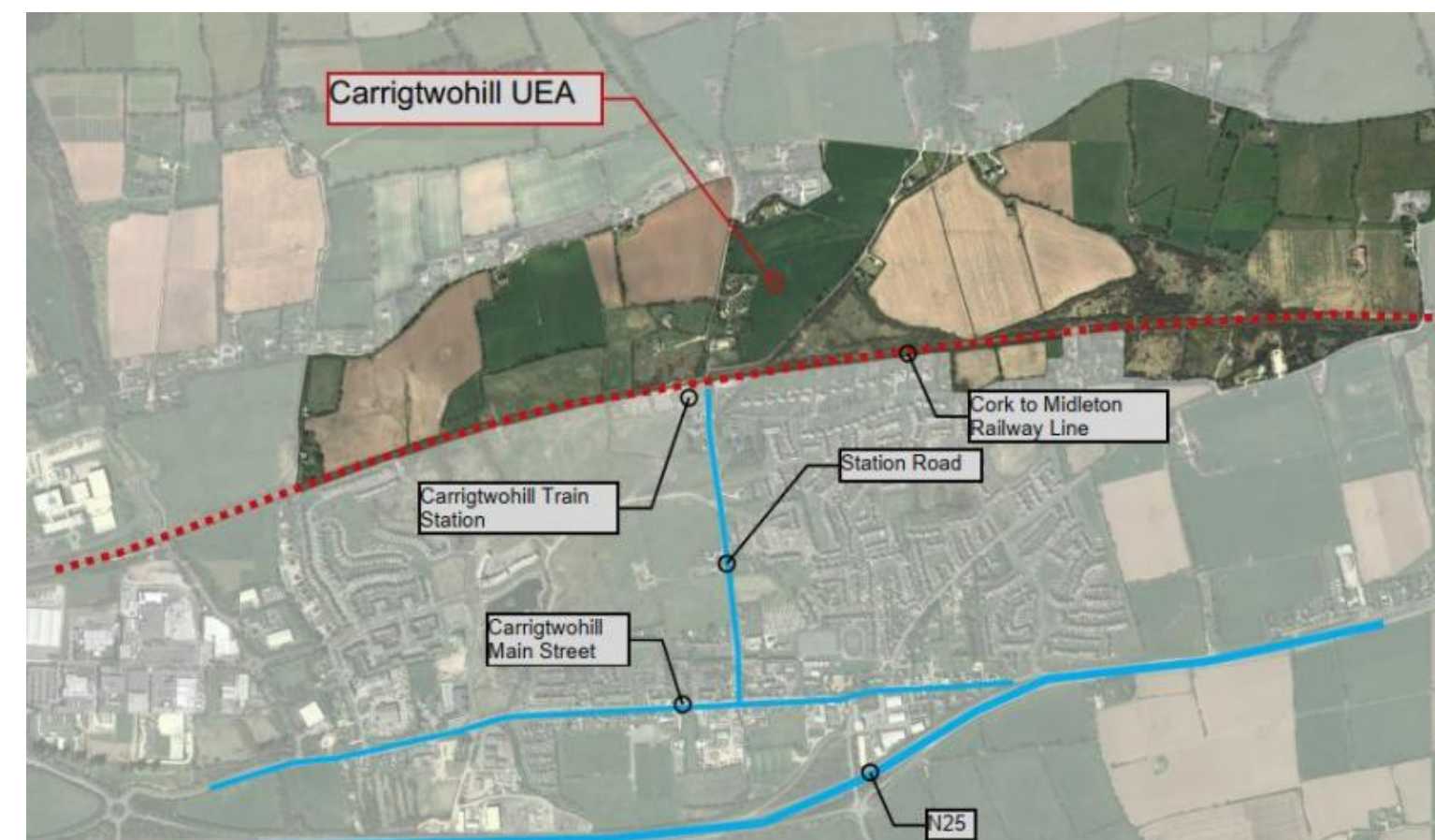
Location: Dunsink		
Framing of site in the Opportunities for Transport Orientated Development report (2023)		
Land Use Zoning / Planning Framework	Housing Capacity Remaining	Relevant TOD Report References
Major greenfield lands located within the M50 and adjacent to existing commuter rail (near Ashfield and Navan Road parkway Stations). Suitable for medium-higher density residential development with mixed use/commercial development around transport nodes	7,000+	Transport Currently served by two rail stations (Navan Road Parkway and Ashtown Stations on the Maynooth Line) with commuter rail services. Also served by some high frequency bus services. <i>Planned:</i> BusConnects Core Bus Corridor - Blanchardstown to City Centre (by 2030) DART+ West programme on the Maynooth Line (2030). Luas extension to Finglas (2031- 2036) Water Uisce Éireann also indicate a need for minor works to water network service capacity and development phasing.
Proposed Update on Infrastructure funded under NDP Sectoral Plans (2026)		
Housing Infrastructure Investment Fund		
Project	Current Status	Delivery Timeline
Scribblestown and Dunsinea Lane	Accepted onto HAO/HIIF programme June 2026	AG2 Q1 2028AG3 Q3 2028Completed Q2 2030
Transport		
Project	Current Status	Delivery Timeline
DART+ West	AG1 approved 2021 Funded under NDP Transport Sectoral Plan	AG2 202XAG3 202XCompleted 203X
Luas Finglas	AG1 approved 2024 Funded under NDP Transport Sectoral Plan	AG2 202XAG3 202XCompleted 203X
Electricity		
Project	Current Status	Delivery Timeline
TBC	TBC	AGX 20XXAGX 20XXCompleted 20XX
Water		
Project	Current Status	Delivery Timeline
TBC	ABC	AGX 20XXAGX 20XXCompleted 20XX

Strategic Activation Example : Carrigtwohill Housing Activation

Directly unlocks lands for 2,747 new homes and indirectly unlocks lands for a further 1,646 new homes.

Integrated Investment

- **Uisce Éireann** –Recent investment in wastewater networks and pump stations at Waterrock and Millbrook Crescent will support local development on the lands.
- **ESBN**- Planned upgrades at Carrigtwohill and Midleton will increase capacity in the coming years.
- **TII**- The area benefits from the M8 Dunkettle Interchange upgrade completed in 2024 and proposed N25 Carrigtwohill to Midleton scheme.
- **NTA**- Planned investment in the Cork Area Commuter Rail Project including a new station at Carrigtwohill West and the Active Travel Carrigtwohill to Midleton Greenway.
- **URDF and LIHAF** funding has supported sustainable transport projects in the area.



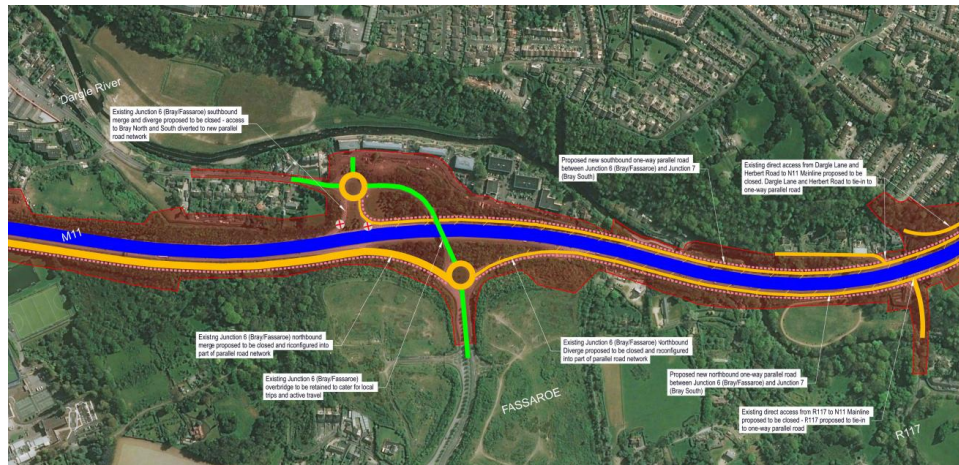
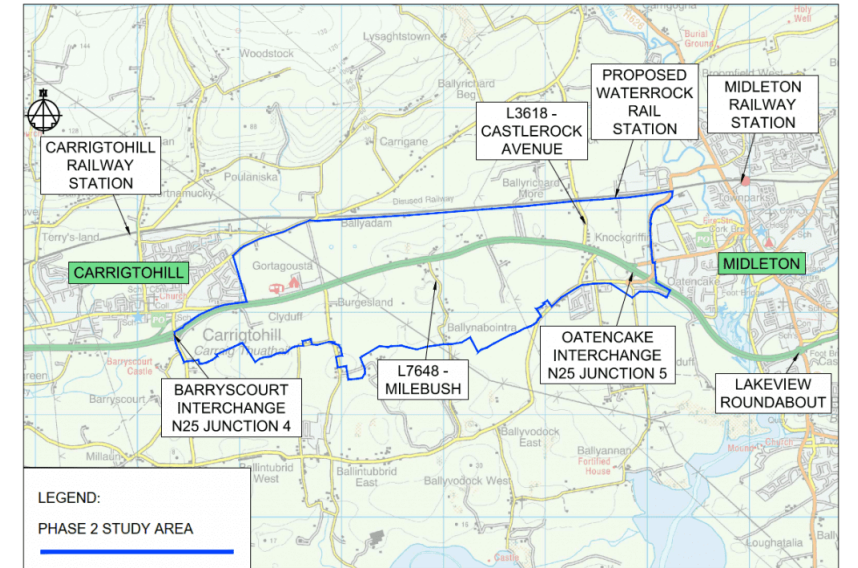
Carrigtwohill Urban Expansion Area (UEA)

Current Status: The HAO has had its kick-off meeting with Cork County Council and a HAO dedicated Programme Manager has been appointed.. The Carrigtwohill urban expansion area will require cross-state investment and the HAO will put in place measures to ensure that cross agency coordination happens on this strategic site.

Strategic Activation: Benefits of National Road Projects

N25 Corridor: Carrigtwohill to Midleton / Midleton to Youghal

Housing lands in Carrigtwohill & Waterrock, Midleton will benefit from national road upgrade. Up to 10,000 housing units combined.



N11 Corridor: Bus Priority Improvements / J4 to J14 Improvements

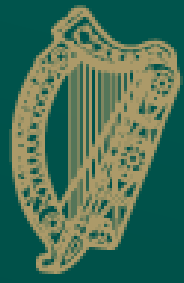
Housing lands in Old Conna & Fassaroe will benefit from strategic road upgrade. In excess of 17,000 housing units.

Strategic housing lands will benefit from coordinated investment by Housing Activation Office, TII, Department of Transport & National Transport Authority

Housing Activation Office – Next Steps

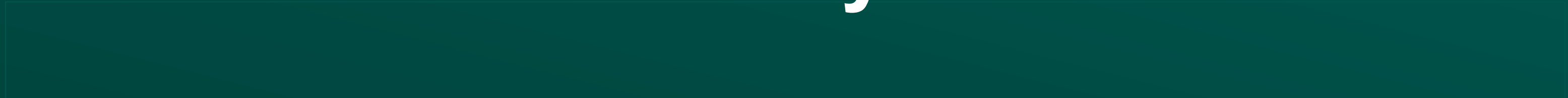
- Establish regional HAO-led Steering Groups based around the five metropolitan areas
- Develop future funding calls, including widening the range of delivery partners
- Coordinate the work of the New Urban Communities Taskforce and develop the coordinated programme of public infrastructure to support strategic activation
- Expediate delivery of the HILF programme, working with LAs, LDA, utilities and others



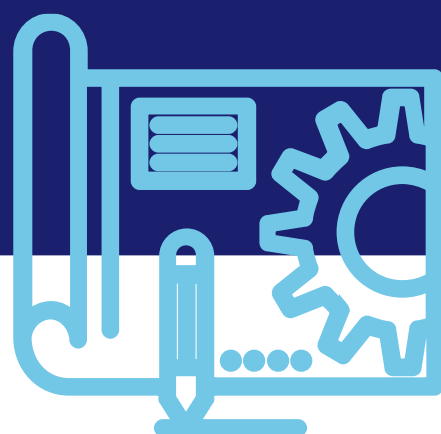


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Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage

Thank you



Panel Discussion



Session 3: Accelerating Infrastructure Delivery



Panel Discussion

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- **Damien Owens**, Director General of Engineers Ireland
- **Sean O'Driscoll**, ESRI Chair and Member of the Government's Accelerating Infrastructure Taskforce
- **Garrett Doocey**, Deputy Secretary General, DOH LG with responsibility for the Housing Activation Office

Comfort Break

Session 4 starting at 3:55pm

