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**Government's "Housing for all" – a missed opportunity and just more of the same**

**PBP Cllr. Madeleine Johansson writes about the latest government housing proposals.**

On Thursday the government published their delayed Housing for All plan. The plan was supposed to be published in the summer but was delayed reportedly due to disagreements between Fine Gael and Fianna Fail on the level of funding committed.

Housing is the main issue for most people as we come out of the Covid 19 crisis. There are 8,000 people in emergency accommodation, rents are increasing at a staggering pace and those trying to buy a home are being outbid by vulture funds.

Fine Gael's Rebuilding Ireland plan had promised to fix the housing crisis but it didn't. This new Housing For All plan is essentially more of the same.

It promises over 300,000 new homes by 2030, half of which will be in the private market with 90,000 social and 54,000 affordable homes. This might seem like a lot but when you consider the need for housing it doesn't come near to being enough. The 90,000 social homes is actually a reduction of 10,000 compared to previous plans!

One of the affordable housing schemes, 'First Home', includes the state owning a share of your home and is highly likely to inflate property prices. Together with incentives to activate vacant sites this represents another handout to private developers.

In terms of affordable housing on public land there is no definition of affordable, with only the average of €250,000 being mentioned. But, a family with two earners on the median wage of €28,000pa can only get a mortgage of about €200,000. Prices are likely to be much higher in the Dublin area and other city regions.

The Land Development Agency will be given funding to develop public land, but in many areas this will be done by private developers. In Dublin the focus on delivery of social housing is going to be through Public Private Partnerships. This is yet again another handout to private developers by using public land for private housing.

For renters the plans include vague promises of more rights for tenants but very little concrete proposals.

There is no rent freeze proposed, only a linking of rents to inflation. The new cost rental scheme will create a third tier of housing provision for middle income earners.

Instead of this new scheme, social housing should be opened up to everyone regardless of income. This is the norm in other European countries.

Finally, if all these homes in the plan are going to be built we need workers to build them. There is a shortage of construction workers at the moment because of issues like bogus self-employment and poor pay and conditions.

The plan mentions more apprenticeship schemes and campaigns to attract workers. But to seriously address this we need a state-owned construction company that can offer decent wages, long term contracts and good conditions for workers.

The Housing for All plan is just more of the same hidden by progressive language and promises. In reality, the strategy of the government is to continue to rely on the private market to provide housing and to incentivise developers to build.

The limited measures in the plan will not help the vast majority of people who need housing, either to rent or to buy.

**The RED Network (incorporating Rebel Telly) are a network of radical socialists within the political party People Before Profit, a 32-county people power movement on the island of Ireland.**

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