

Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund

The Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund is among the suite of measures under the pathway to addressing vacancy and efficient use of existing stock in Housing for All. The Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund will provide new choices for people to live in cities, towns, villages and rural part of the country in Ireland, initially through the provision of a grant to support the refurbishment of vacant properties, with priority given to areas where the level of vacancy or dereliction is high.

A grant of up to a maximum of €30,000 will be available for the refurbishment of vacant properties for occupation as a principal private residence, including the conversion of a property which has not previously been used as residential. This will be subject to upper limits for the types of work required, having regard to a reasonable cost assessment by the local authority. The grant is inclusive of VAT cost of the works.

Where the refurbishment costs are expected to exceed the standard grant of up to €30,000, a maximum top-up grant amount of up to €20,000 will be available where the property is confirmed by the applicant to be derelict (i.e. structurally unsound and dangerous) bringing the total grant available for a derelict property up to a maximum of €50,000. In the case of a top up grant in respect of a derelict property, an independent report prepared by an appropriately qualified professional (e.g. quantity surveyor, structural engineer etc.) is required to be submitted along with the application confirming that the property is derelict (i.e. structurally unsound **and** dangerous) or if the property is registered on Carlow County Council's Derelict Sites Register.

Properties considered for inclusion must be vacant for two years or more and built before 1993. For the purposes of this scheme, a property is deemed to be vacant if it has been vacant and unoccupied for a period of two years or more.

Who is eligible for the Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund?

The Fund is focused on home ownership. A range of individuals or households will be eligible to avail of the scheme, with the prioritisation of applications for consideration using the framework below and in line with overall funding available. The priorities will be implemented on a sliding scale as follows:

1. Applicants who are first time buyers (i.e. not have purchased or built a home for themselves) or who qualify under the 'Fresh Start' principle. The Fresh Start principle includes previous homeowners who have experienced divorce or separation, or insolvency or bankruptcy, and who no longer have a legal interest in the previous home;
2. Applicants (other than 1 above) who have particular needs – specifically, disabled people or older people who are moving from their current home which they are selling or have sold;
3. Applicants (other than 1 and 2 above) who are moving from their current home which they are selling or have sold.

The property owner must intend in good faith to reside in the dwelling as his or her principal private residence on completion of the qualifying works to the dwelling. A declaration the individual intends to reside in the dwelling as his or her principal private residence on completion of the qualifying works to the dwelling must be provided to the Council and

clawback conditions (a charge on the property) will apply where the applicant ceases to reside in the dwelling as a principal private residence.

In order to qualify for the scheme, properties must be:

- Vacant for at least 2 years
- Built before 1993
- LPT (Local Property Tax) must be paid on the property

Types of work covered

The following categories of works will be eligible for grant assistance, subject to a reasonable cost assessment by the local authority and to any limits for specific works as may be set out in guidance from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage:

- Substructure works, including works to foundations, rising walls, floor slabs, damp-proofing and underpinning
- Structural works to superstructure, including walls, party walls, chimneys, suspended timber floors, structural timbers
- Works to internal walls, stairs, and landings, and internal wall completions including doors, windows, and applied finishes
- External walls completions including doors, windows, sills, and applied finishes
- Roof completions, including flashings, fascias, soffits, gutters, downpipes
- Building services including plumbing, heating, ventilation, electrical services, telecommunications,
- Painting and decoration required because of works carried out
- Extension within the ambit of exempt development under planning regulations, as part of a wider refurbishment
- Necessary external works and site development works carried out within the curtilage of the site
- Professional services associated with works

Proof of both vacancy and ownership will be required to support the grant payment. The Council may give approval in principle to a grant application where the applicant is able to provide evidence of active negotiations to purchase a property i.e. confirmation of engagement from the estate agency or owner of the property and where the owner provides such evidence as to vacancy as is required under the scheme on behalf of the applicant.

Please click on link below explanatory documents and application form. Any enquiries in relation to the Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund should be directed to the Council's Vacant Homes Officer at (059) 9163285 or via e-mail to vacanthomes@carlowcoco.ie.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/c2183-croi-conaithe-towns-fund/#documents>

Applications can be submitted to vacanthomes@carlowcoco.ie or by post to Vacant Homes Officer, Carlow County Council, County Buildings, Athy Road, Carlow, R93 E7R7