

Tenant in Situ - Social Housing Acquisitions 2023

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage issued a circular dated 13th March 2023 in relation to arrangements for social housing acquisitions in 2023 which increased the number of social housing acquisitions under the Housing for All provisions from 200 per annum to 1,500 in 2023. The additional 1,300 acquisitions in 2023 are to be focused on the acquisition of homes where a HAP or RAS tenant is at risk of homelessness. The Council's target for 2023 is to acquire a minimum of 150 properties.

Amongst the measures being implemented by this Council to achieve a minimum of 150 acquisitions in 2023 are:

- Sufficient flexibility in relation to time on list, housing needs and other criteria for acquisitions to prevent homelessness wherever possible.
- Inter-authority cooperation with neighbouring and other local authorities as required in relation to potential acquisitions of other LA applicants currently in HAP supported tenancies within the South Dublin administrative area.
- Supplementing technical resources available to the Council for inspections and valuations by procuring additional external valuation and surveying services.
- The proposed recruitment of additional administrative staff to manage and progress acquisitions and the interim allocation of existing staff resources from other work areas to support dealing with the existing workload.
- Dedicated resources assigned within our Law Department to complete legal conveyancing processes.

We will continue to review the impact of our strategy to achieve the minimum acquisitions for the Council in 2023.

Where expressions of interest are received from property owners, various standard due diligence checks are undertaken in relation to property condition, valuation and conveyancing and the general steps in the process are as follows:

- Determine the housing need of the household and suitability of the property concerned to the household's needs with a flexible approach being taken to prevent homelessness where possible.
- Ascertain the validity and timelines of Notices of Termination.
- Explore options for suitable alternative accommodation where available.
- Undertake condition survey and valuation of the property.
- Commence negotiation on an acquisition price for the property.
- Where a sale price is agreed, the Council's Law Department are then instructed to complete the conveyancing process.

Individual property purchases can be delayed for various reasons such as the owner not having full legal title, various planning issues, outstanding property taxes, general contractual conditions of sale not in place etc. The process is also reliant on timely progress from the vendor's legal and sales agents, so timeframes vary from purchase to purchase.

The Council is taking appropriate steps to ensure that our first response will be to support households to try to prevent homelessness in cases where tenants are at risk of homelessness.

In respect of acquisitions currently being progressed, a PowerPoint slide is uploaded which provides an overview of expressions of interest received, and the stage of the process each application is currently at. Of the 255 expressions of interest received, 39 properties are not proceeding. This is due to either the property being vacant/tenant no longer in-situ, the tenant having been made a reasonable offer of alternative accommodation or where the property is not deemed suitable for acquisition.

B Pierce, May 2023