



The €100,000 Design Challenge: creating Homes for Smart Ageing

SOME €100,000 in prize money to support a Smart Ageing design challenge to demonstrate innovation in the delivery of housing solutions for older people is announced.

A Steering Group will hold its first meeting early October to elaborate on the competition brief aimed to stimulate and support collaboration within the design, construction and technology sectors to be innovative in providing solutions for older people within the built environment.

Damien English, Minister of State for Housing and Urban Renewal, announced the new scheme at last week's Ploughing Championships.

The new policy statement 'Rebuilding Ireland: Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness' outlines the set of actions that aim to increase annual housing supply to 25,000 units per annum by 2020.

As number one priority for Government, the Action Plan is underpinned by some €5.35 billion in funding over its lifetime and will support the delivery of 47,000 units of social housing by the end of 2021.

In addition to the more high profile actions aimed at the accelerated delivery of quality housing and supporting a more responsive housing market, Pillar 2 of Rebuilding Ireland contains specific commitments to meet the housing needs of the vulnerable, which includes older people.

"Adaptable and smart homes will be the future in the developed world with advantages from

saving energy to creating homes suitable for a lifetime. An opportunity now exists to develop the know-how and commercialise the knowledge of smart ageing adaptation to support assisted living for older people in their homes," observed Minister English.

In this context, Action 2.19 of the Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness sets out a commitment to support a design challenge that focuses on three distinct areas: -

- smart technologies in housing for older people;
- adaptation of existing houses to meet the needs of older people;
- life-time communities.

To develop and oversee the roll out of the design challenge, a Steering Group is being established comprising representatives from the Department, the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland and the Construction Industry Federation.

"The Government and I have made it our number one priority to resolve the housing and homelessness crisis and under Rebuilding Ireland we have set out a broadly based and comprehensive set of actions to do just that," commented Minister English adding that the 'Homes for Smart Ageing: A Universal Design Challenge' is a small but key element of the Rebuilding Ireland solution."

