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# **Consultation on the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage's Statement of Strategy 2025-2027**

**Response from the American Chamber of Commerce Ireland  
(AmCham) to the Department of Housing, Local Government and  
Heritage Consultation on the Statement of Strategy 2025 – 2027.**

**March 2025**

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# **The American Chamber of Commerce Ireland**

## **The Voice of US-Ireland Business**

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The American Chamber of Commerce Ireland (AmCham) is the collective voice of US companies in Ireland and the leading international business organisation supporting the Transatlantic business relationship. Our members are the Irish operations of all the major US companies in every sector present here, Irish companies with operations in the United States and organisations with close linkages to US-Ireland trade and investment.

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The American Chamber of Commerce Ireland (AmCham) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the consultation on the review of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage's Statement of Strategy for the period 2025 – 2027.

Housing and planning represent key areas in the effort to support Ireland's continued development of critical infrastructure that will aid Ireland's competitiveness for talent and business attractiveness and retention. While overcoming these challenges is of significant importance, 9 out of 10 respondents to a recent AmCham survey reported that their corporate headquarters have a positive view of Ireland as an investment and growth location. Furthermore, 51% of respondents said that they expect the number of employees within their Irish organisation to grow over the next 12 months, with a further 36% reporting that they will maintain the current level of employees in the same period. Through the implementation of effective policies, Ireland can maintain its position as a leading destination for talent and business in the years to come. Core to this goal will be the timely delivery of critical infrastructure and housing supply, both to address the current needs of the country, and to incorporate future demand.

### **Strategic Goal A**

AmCham members have consistently identified housing as the leading issue Ireland needs to resolve in order to facilitate future growth and investment. In the most recent survey of members carried out by AmCham, 34% of respondents identified housing supply as the biggest challenge to their ability to expand their Irish operations.

Further, AmCham surveys have highlighted that 98% of members state that the availability of residential accommodation is challenging for staff in their business operations in Ireland. Attracting and retaining talent in Ireland is a key driver of business expansion and investment, with 63% of AmCham members stating that Ireland's highly educated and skilled talent pool is Ireland's leading competitive advantage that resulted in their organisation investing and expanding. Access to housing has a direct impact of Ireland's attractiveness for talent and underscores the importance of enabling economic growth through housing delivery.

In accordance with the stated mission of Strategic Goal A, *"to provide a framework that ensures a sustainable housing system in Ireland with a supply of good quality housing to match the needs of all our people"*, AmCham is of the position that the continued focus on, and delivery of, housing, under the 'Housing for All' plan is of critical importance. Moreover, in support of the Department's Strategy, in-built annual updates and reviews of housing targets would prove valuable in informing the necessary actions to deliver

housing supply, both in the private purchase and rental markets, and in turn ensuring adequate accommodation levels are reached for both current and future demand, in line with the CSO's projected population growth of 5.6-5.8 million people by 2030. As such, housing targets must be regarded as a floor for delivery rather than a ceiling.

### **Strategic Goal B:**

With regard to the aim of Strategic Goal B, *"To provide a framework for the sustainable management of water resources from source to sea and for the provision of effective and efficient water services"*, it is vital that necessary provisions of water and wastewater facilities are met, in order to facilitate the future delivery of housing and enhance Ireland's attractiveness for FDI.

Central to the advancement of water and wastewater services will be through providing for the necessary resourcing and capital investments are made in the context of the relevant infrastructural projects. AmCham is encouraged by commitments made in the Programme for Government including commitments to *"invest additional capital in Uisce Éireann to support reaching our new housing targets. We will prioritise water and waste water infrastructure to deliver the capacity to facilitate housing development in our towns and villages."*

Furthermore, as detailed in AmCham publications, the delivery of the 'Water Supply Project Eastern and Midlands Region' and the 'Greater Dublin Drainage Project' are important steps to see completed. It is projected that by 2044, the Eastern and Midlands Region will require an increase of 34% in the water supply as it relates to current levels. These projects will ensure that growth within these regions can be achieved in a sustainable manner and will support future inward investment, business development, and population growth.

### **Strategic Goal D:**

Strategic Goal D which outlines the Department's aims *"to ensure that planning and building in our regions, communities and maritime area contributes to the delivery of sustainable and balanced development"* is of utmost importance in the context of future Statements of Strategy.

Reform of the planning system in Ireland is a significant component to addressing issues that have had a depressing effect on the delivery of housing and infrastructure projects. It is vital that future Statements of Strategy produced by the Department continue to build

on the progress and momentum achieved through legislation such as the Planning and Development Act 2024, and implement the necessary reforms to the planning system in order to ensure efficient and effective in the context of housing delivery.

Innovation within the planning application process, such as the Programme for Government commitment to, “*establish a new procedure for large developments above 100 units where a developer can meet local authority planners and Uisce Éireann on site to iron out issues at pre-planning stage*”, and measures to allow for the prioritisation of critical infrastructure and investments would assist in the goal of maintaining Ireland’s position as an attractive location for growth, FDI and for talent and ensuring the capacity to meet future demand is met. Infrastructural challenges in Ireland have been underpinned by obstacles in the planning system. Given that businesses look for certainty of process and timeframe, not certainty of outcome, in terms of the planning process, measures to introduce triaging of critical infrastructure applications will be important in supporting future growth in Ireland.

Furthermore, adequate resourcing of the Land Development Agency (LDA), as well as overall resourcing of planning bodies, will prove beneficial to unlocking the LDA’s capacity to drive housing delivery into the future. Ensuring the necessary levels of resourcing are in place within the planning system will be essential in supporting certainty of timeframe and process with regard to planning applications.

### **Strategic Goal G:**

With regard to the stated aims of Strategic Goal G, “*to provide a framework that assists the department, local authorities and agencies to enhance digital services and accelerate, alongside our partners, the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through the use of data and digital technologies*”, increased digitalisation of Department processes can assist the ease in which industry engages with the Department, resulting in the potential for greater future investment.

Engagement with industry and representative bodies in the development of a Digital Strategy for 2030, can provide enhanced opportunities to increase the modernisation and digitalisation of Department services, reducing the administrative burden on the business community and provide for increased investment and project delivery.

Advancements towards the Department’s goals of implementing key measures contained within the Connecting Government 2030 Strategy in order to enable 90% of

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applicable services provided by the Department to be online by 2030, would further assist in creating an ecosystem in which industry can engage with the Department and support future engagement with services. In achieving this, AmCham is of the view the implementation of a cloud-first policy is essential whereby consideration is given to public cloud solutions first, before exploring any other options, when upgrading or introducing new services. Further, in terms of digitalisation of services, clear KPIs must be in place against which to measure progress.