



**Focus Ireland • 12th Annual  
National Conference**

# Ending Homelessness: Overcoming the Barriers

**Millennium Hall, Cork City Hall  
Friday 14th September 2018**

**FOCUS**  
Ireland

**While many of the targets in Rebuilding Ireland are being met, the number of people who are homeless continues to rise to new record levels. While there are different judgements about what has been achieved so far, there is unanimous agreement that we need to do more. RBI's targets for new social housing delivery become increasingly challenging in the coming years and there are questions as to whether the targets were ever adequate given the scale of the challenge.**

**T**his National Conference will take this opportunity to identify the main barriers which are blocking or delaying progress, and to put forward ideas as to how they can be overcome.

The conference will kick off with a keynote address from broadcaster, journalist and economist, David McWilliams who will, in his challenging and engaging style, set out the overarching challenges which face us as a society and an economy.

The next session will address the complex question of how we plan and build sustainable and vibrant communities. RBI seeks to 'learn the lessons of the past' by avoiding building large-scale single tenure estates. But relying on small scale developments creates significant burdens of financing, planning, cost and delivery. What are the real lessons from the past? Can we build homes on the necessary scale while building communities too? **Professor Michelle Norris** of UCD will draw on years of experience and

research on what makes communities viable, and the debate will be deepened by **John Boughton**, author of recently published 'Municipal Dreams', which the Guardian described as 'arguing passionately for safe and secure public housing for all who need it'.

The second session will explore the way in which our land management and planning processes may be slowing down the delivery of new houses and making homes unaffordable. **Prof Rory O'Donnell** will build on the challenging and radical analysis of recent NESC reports on the issue, while **AnnMarie Farrelly** will bring her practical experience as Director of Planning in the fastest growing council in Ireland, Fingal County Council. **Dr Brendan O'Sullivan** of UCC will draw on his professional experience and research to critically address our planning processes and whether they support or hinder the task of solving the housing and homelessness crisis.

*continued overleaf*

# Ending Homelessness: Overcoming the Barriers

For the last few years we have been tackling the housing crisis in a world with low interest rates, low labour costs but a shortage of capital. Over the next period there will be very different challenges – rising interest rates, shortage of skilled building labour and anxiety that building 30,000 houses a year will over-heat the economy. Dr Seamus Coffey, Chair of the Government's Fiscal Advisory

Council will outline the challenges and choices that will confront us as we face into this even more difficult world.

The conference will close with a round table discussion in which all these issues can be explored, along with other challenges such as the importance of 'political will', what we mean by it and how it can be harnessed.

**10.00am Arrival, registration and coffee**

**10.30am Opening address:** Michael Finn, Lord Mayor of Cork

**10.40am Opening comments:** Pat Dennigan, CEO, Focus Ireland

**10.50am Keynote address:** David McWilliams, economist, broadcaster and journalist

**11.20am Social mix and the fear of new ghettos**

**Chair:** Ger Spillane, Regional Manager, South and South West, Focus Ireland

- › Prof Michelle Norris, UCD:  
Is the obsession with mixed tenure and building small social housing developments a serious impediment to solving the housing crisis?
- › John Boughton, author of *Municipal Dreams: The Rise and Fall of Council Housing* (Verso 2018)

**12.10pm Land and the means to build on it**

**Chair:** Kerry Brennan, Head of Housing and Support Services, Cork Simon

- › Prof Rory O'Donnell, Director NESC
- › AnnMarie Farrelly, Director of Planning and Strategic Infrastructure, Fingal County Council
- › Brendan O'Sullivan, Director of UCC Centre for Planning Education and Research

**1.10pm Lunch**

**2.00pm Fiscal space and the fear of overheating the economy**

**Chair:** Brian Geaney, Director of Services, Cork City Council

- › Dr Seamus Coffey, Department of Economics in University College Cork, and Chair of the Irish Fiscal Advisory Council

**3.00pm Round table discussion**

**Chair:** Mike Allen, Focus Ireland

- › AnnMarie Farrelly, John Boughton, Seamus Coffey, Rory O'Donnell, Michelle Norris

**4.00pm Final remarks and thanks**

**4.15pm Close of conference**