



Comhshaol, Pobal agus Rialtas Áitiúil
Environment, Community and Local Government



Circular 15 /2016

22 April 2016

To: Each Director of Housing

Cc: Irish Council for Social Housing

Co-operative Housing Ireland

Governance and Regulation of the Approved Housing Body Sector:
Eligibility for Funding

In July, 2013 the Department published a voluntary regulation code for approved housing bodies in Ireland – Building for the Future, A Voluntary Regulation Code for Approved Housing Bodies in Ireland (the Code). The Regulation Office in the Housing Agency was established as the interim regulator for the Sector in 2014 and has been working to engage with the Sector and implement and develop the regulatory framework further. Currently there are 212 AHBs signed up to regulation, encompassing over 80% of the total stock.

The Code sets out key governance, financial and performance standards/principles that all AHBs signed up to the Code are expected to adhere to. The Code now also includes a specific financial standard and will continue to evolve and develop to allow for a smooth transition to a statutory based regulatory framework.

In view of the on-going development of the approved housing body sector and its greater role in social housing provision, the Department is continuing to prioritise the development of the legislation to support this. To this end, the General Scheme for a Housing (Regulation of Approved Housing Bodies) Bill was approved by Cabinet in September 2015 with a view to establishing an Approved Housing Bodies' Regulator on a statutory basis.

In order to continue to advance regulation of the sector, and as a step towards statutory regulation of the sector, only those AHBs who have signed up to the Code by **1 June 2016** will be eligible for funding from the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government under the following schemes this year:

- Capital Assistance Scheme
- Communal Facilities
- Capital Advance Leasing Facility
- New P&A Agreements with AHBs

As part of any application for funding, the AHB will be required to furnish the Local Authority, or, in the case of direct applications in respect of CALF funding, the Department, with proof of compliance with the Code.

2017 onwards

From **1 January 2017**, in addition to the requirement to have signed up to the Code, only those AHBs that are able to demonstrate commitment to and engagement with both the VRC and the Financial Standard and Assessment Framework, having undergone a satisfactory assessment as part of the annual assessment process by the Regulation Office will be considered eligible for funding under the above schemes.

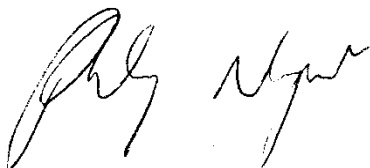
Local Authorities are advised to inform all applicant AHBs in writing that the Regulation Office may be asked to provide information of their assessment to the Department before projects will be deemed acceptable for funding.

The context for this is to ensure that State funding is prioritised to AHBs that have regulatory oversight and, therefore, can demonstrate that they well governed, well managed and are financially viable.

In order to sign up to the Code, each AHB is required to sign a Charter of Commitments and submit it to the interim Regulation Office in the Housing Agency. The Regulation Office provides support for AHBs that have queries about signing up, or that wish to discuss the regulatory framework/the Code in more detail. The Regulation Office can be contacted by email at regulation@housing.ie or by phone at 01 6564170. The list of Approved Housing Bodies signed up to the Voluntary Regulation Code is available on the Housing Agency's website at www.housing.ie/Regulation/AHBs-Signed-Up-to-Voluntary-Regulation/A-Z-Organisation-Listing

If you have any further queries in relation to this circular, please contact ahb@environ.ie

Yours sincerely,



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