

Private landlords fleeing 'two-tier system' - Davitt

IRELAND'S rental sector has become a "two-tier market system", Pat Davitt the Mullingar man who is chief of IPAV, the Institute of Professional Auctioneers & Valuers, has said this week.

The "two tiers" are those who can apply market rents and those who, as a result of Rent Pressure Zone (RPZ) legislation, find their situation is non-viable financially, Mr Davitt stated. He was reacting to the publication of the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB) annual report for 2023 which showed a drop of 22,474 in the number of private registered tenancies year-on-year in December 2023. Mr Davitt said the figure



Pat Davitt.

confirmed what agents are continuing to see throughout the country, and pointed to likely increased pressure on rental levels, arising from a lack of supply of properties. He said the lack of supply of suitable properties is impacting house prices and rents with both continuing to rise.

"The policy focus for most of the last decade has been too heavily weighted in favour of trying to stem the secondary effects of a lack of supply, such as with the introduction of RPZ legislation, and we've been seeing for a number of years at this stage the unintended consequences, such as private landlords fleeing the market," Mr Davitt said.

He said RPZ legislation should have only ever been a short-term provision to give time for supply to catch up: "The longer the legislation is left in place the more serious the consequences, as much research points to," he said. "The International Monetary Fund report in November

recommended the removal of rent caps and more recently Ronan Lyons, Associate Professor of Economics at Trinity College cited very strong evidence that they lead to higher rents for those not protected and to lower supply and poorer housing quality."

Mr Davitt said RPZ legislation, introduced in 2016, has had the effect of increasing rents that would not have increased to the same level if the legislation had not been introduced. It also enabled large investors to set high rental levels, catering largely for the upper end of the market. He said there should be a whole-of-Government emphasis on increasing the supply of homes.

Local Authority Purchase and Renovation Loan goes live in Westmeath

THE Local Authority Purchase and Renovation Loan is now open for applications.

The Local Authority Purchase and Renovation Loan was approved by Government at the beginning of June. The loan, which is an expansion of the Local Authority Home Loan, will support both the purchase and renovation of homes which are eligible under the existing Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant.

The Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant has been popular to date in both Westmeath with 184 applications received in the county under the scheme and 122 approved. Now, with the Local Authority Purchase and Renovation Loan, a first time buyer who wishes to turn a vacant or derelict property into a new home can receive

a loan to fund both purchase and renovation works. This reinforces the Government's commitment to bring homes back into use, a key objective of Housing for All, while also providing another funding pathway for individuals. The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien, said, "Under Housing for All we have placed a special emphasis on tackling vacancy and dereliction all across our country. This new purchase and renovation loan is simply another tool in our armoury and offers another option for home buyers. We will continue doing everything we can to rejuvenate and regenerate our villages, towns and cities, making them even better places for people to call home," he concluded.

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PLANNING

APPLICATION TO AN BORD PLEANÁLA FOR SUBSTITUTE CONSENT

Bord na Móra Energy Limited, intend to apply for substitute consent for development at a site at Bailiow Bog, Carranstown Bog, Bracklin Bog, Lisclogher Bog and Lisclogher West Bog, located in the townlands of Clondalee More, Derrycoror, Clonycavan, Robinstown (Killaconnigan E.D.), Killaconnigan, Carranstown Little, Carranstown Great, and Coolironan, in County Meath and the townlands of Grange More, Riverdale, Craddanstown, Killagh, Bailynaskkeagh (Bailynaskkeagh E.D.), Mucklin, Lisclogher Great, Cocksstown, Clonleame, Clonmorill, Bracklin, Bailynhealy or Ballinure, Bolandstown, Martinstown (Bailynhealy E.D.) in County Westmeath.

This application is made pursuant to Section 177E of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

The development for which substitute consent is being sought consists of peat extraction activities and all ancillary works including the following:

- Installation of surface water drainage infrastructure at Bailiow Bog Group, specifically at Bailiow, Carranstown, Bracklin, Lisclogher, and Lisclogher West Bogs to facilitate peat extraction activity from 1988 to June 2020;
- Vegetation clearance to facilitate peat extraction activity from 1988 to June 2020;
- Industrial scale peat extraction (milled peat and sod peat/moss), specifically at Bailiow, Carranstown, Bracklin, and Lisclogher Bogs from 1988 to June 2020;
- Use and maintenance of pre-existing ancillary supporting infrastructure and services to facilitate peat extraction and associated activities (e.g., railway infrastructure, fixed fuel tanks, drainage (drains, silt ponds, pumps), machine passes etc.), from 1988 to present day;
- Control Measures associated with the above, inclusive of the IPC Licence measures (Ref. P0501-01) which commenced from April 2000 onwards to the present day.

(vi) All associated site development and ancillary works.

The application relates to development which is subject to an existing Integrated Pollution Control Licence (Ref. P0501-01) granted by the Environmental Protection Agency.

The application is accompanied by a remedial Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and a remedial Natura Impact Statement (NIS).

Submissions or observations may be made on the application (including EIAR and NIS), to An Bord Pleanála, 64 Marlborough Street, Dublin 1, www.pleanala.ie, without charge. Submissions or observations must be in writing and made within the period of 8 weeks beginning on the date of receipt of the application by An Bord Pleanála and such submissions and observations will be considered by An Bord Pleanála in making a decision on the application. An Bord Pleanála may grant the consent subject to or without conditions, or may refuse to grant it. The application for consent (including EIAR and NIS) may be inspected, or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy, at the offices of An Bord Pleanála, or the relevant planning authority during its public opening hours.

Any enquiries relating to the application process should be directed to An Bord Pleanála (Tel. 01-8588100).