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EDITOR'S COMMENT

The new suite of community-based counselling rooms, recently opened by Dublin Simon Community as part of its 'Sure Steps Counselling' service for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, is to be lauded without question.

But it's just a small drop in the ocean and what is badly needed is a tidal wave of greater support to be put in place by the Government, in terms of proper and strategic funding and resources to address the ever-growing problem of homelessness in our society.

Who is going to look out for those who now find themselves homeless and on the streets – especially at this time of the year?

The provision of hotel accommodation for the growing numbers of homeless families in Dublin alone just doesn't stack up when you consider the financial implications of such a move.

Surely, the millions spent to house young families in hotel rooms would be better used in the construction of more self-contained units to give these people a place to call home.

And there appears to be a major lack of a co-ordinated long-term strategy between this Government (or even previous administrations) to work with the local authorities, housing agencies and charities to properly address the homelessness crisis, not just in Dublin but across the country. When one considers the vast amounts of money that went down the drain on the countless numbers of ghost housing estates in the country, there was certainly no forward planning at play here.

Despite widespread coverage in both print and broadcast media over time, these ghost estates continue to lie idle since the construction boom went bust, and little has been done by those in power to offer any realistic solutions.

Now with a recent resurgence in the construction industry and with the economy starting to get back on its feet somewhat, have any lessons been learned from past mistakes? Or will it be a case of wasting yet more time and resources on independent consultant reviews and analysis on what needs to be done?

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5 NEWS UPDATE

- LAMA Awards – 4 February 2017
- Cork Council Merger Report Reviewed
- Threshold calls for Tenancy Protection
- Promoting Arklow the Wicklow Way
- West Offaly's Local Community Fund
- Donegal rolls out Road Safety Plan
- Municipality award for Dún Laoghaire Rathdown
- Cork and Limerick share the spoils



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15 RURAL IRELAND

With its key strengths of people, energy and resources connected, rural Ireland could become a force to be reckoned with, according to David Minton, director of the Northern & Western Regional Assembly (NWRA), pointing to its potential to become an economically powerful region.



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19 WEEE IRELAND

Irish consumers are recycling 15% more than they did four years ago and are now top of the EU table when it comes to recycling. This significant increase has been outlined in the annual report of WEEE Ireland.



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20 PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

Local authorities, suppliers and all other public procurement stakeholders are set to benefit from the new EU Public Procurement Directives, writes Anthony Flynn, Lecturer in Purchasing and Supply Management at Cardiff University.



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23 DUBLIN SIMON COMMUNITY

A new suite of community-based counselling rooms, provided as part of the 'Sure Steps Counselling' service for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, has been opened by Dublin Simon Community.

25 HSE FLU VACCINATION

The HSE's winter flu vaccination campaign is targeting all frontline healthcare workers including carers, those aged over 65 years, and individuals with long-term medical conditions such as heart or lung disease.



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27 ARTHUR COX

A lot has happened over the last few months with regard to the Construction Contracts Act (CCA) 2012, writes Niav O'Higgins, Partner of the Infrastructure, Construction and Utilities Group at Arthur Cox. Here she outlines what this all means for those working in construction or procuring infrastructure and other projects.

28 DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

Letterkenny Institute of Technology and Donegal County Council have made history by becoming the first organisations of their kind in Ireland to formally sign a memorandum of understanding.

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33 LIMERICK INVESTMENT

Limerick recovery looks set to accelerate as a newly-launched company plans to deliver €500 million in inward investment assets and the capacity to create over 5,000 jobs over the next five years. Limerick Twenty Thirty will be the special purpose vehicle to accelerate transformation of the mid-western city and county into a top European investment location.

39 ENERGY PERFORMANCE

Dublin City Council has awarded Ireland's first local authority Energy Performance Contract project to Noel Lawler Green Energy Solutions, which will result in savings of up to €100,000 on the council's energy and maintenance costs per year. Work on this eight-year contract is expected to get underway later this year.

41 CORK POLICING PLAN

Cork City Council has joined forces with An Garda Síochána and the local communities under the first six-year strategy developed by the Cork City Joint Policing Committee in a bid to strengthen ties between the groups, by opening up clear lines of communication to address safety issues within the city.

43 ROAD SAFETY

As cases of dangerous and careless driving are now increasingly reported to councils across the country every year, road safety officers in Kildare and Mayo have rolled out a pilot scheme using cameras on STOP signs for school wardens in a bid to detect and expose such incidents outside the school walls in both counties.

45 WASTE MANAGEMENT

There has been a marked decline in waste-to-landfill with an improvement in both the recycling and recovery rates in the southern region, according to the findings of the 2016 Annual Report of Southern Region Waste Management Office.

47 MUSIC GENERATION

Research has revealed a pioneering model for music education that can achieve powerful and positive outcomes for children and young people in this country, according to the findings of a new report by Music Generation, in association with St Patrick's College at DCU.

48 SOCIAL HOUSING

Clúid, in partnership with NAMA and Galway City Council, has completed an unfinished apartment block by producing 15 brand new high quality and affordable rented apartments in the City of the Tribes. The housing association has so far delivered 250 units in 2016 and aims to deliver 500 by the end of the year.



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