# CORK AND WICKLOW SCOOP TOP COMMUNITY HOUSING AWARDS

*Cork City Council's Competitive Dialogue Procurement & Planning initiative was the national winner at the Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH) Community Housing Awards 2021 in September, while Wicklow County Council's transitional-supported accommodation project in collaboration with approved housing body Tiglin scooped the inaugural Public Choice Award.*

Cork City Council's Competitive Dialogue Procurement Process was used very successfully to deliver 650 social and affordable homes to date across Cork City, according to Donal McManus, Chief Executive of the Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH).

Speaking at the ICSH Community Housing Awards for 2021 in September, he said that through dialogue with private developers, the approach has encouraged innovative and competitive proposals to develop residential sites in collaboration with Cork City Council and approved housing bodies.

"What stood out for judges was the positive and proactive approach by the council in reducing administrative barriers that led to successful delivery," noted McManus.

He added that such an approach can be replicated, in particular, to regenerate challenging brownfield sites, and to deliver more affordable housing, and in greater numbers during this crisis period for housing.

Brian Geaney, Cork City Council's Assistant Chief Executive, said that the Competitive Dialogue system enabled the council to find sustainable solutions in terms of accommodation across the city. "It provides flexibility for changing requirements as they evolve in this dynamic space," he added.

INAUGURAL PUBLIC CHOICE AWARD

For the first time ever, members of the public also had an opportunity to vote for the project they felt the most deserving of recognition. The inaugural Public Choice Award went to Carraig Eden – a transitional-supported accommodation residence in Greystones, Co. Wicklow.

"Members of the public voted wisely when they chose Carraig Eden for our first ever Public Choice Award. Receiving the highest number of votes from the more than 5,000 voters, the entry is a collaborative project between Wicklow County Council and approved housing body Tiglin," added Donal McManus.

"The landmark building faced demolition and has been beautifully restored to provide 35 en-suite transitional supported accommodation units, operated by Tiglin. Judges applauded Wicklow County Council, who championed this project, demonstrating what can be done when the will is there," he noted.

Aubrey McCarthy, Chairperson of Tiglin, said: "Carraig Eden



**This procurement route for the delivery of social housing resulted in the regeneration of Cork's urban neighbourhoods. The Rutland Square project is a strong example of this initiative.**

bridges the gap that many fall into after rehabilitation. It's a buffer against people entering homelessness and Wicklow County Council said yes, let's fight for this. I salute the staff at Tiglin and residents at Carraig Eden who were willing to stand up and fight to save this vital service. We look forward to working with Wicklow County Council in the future."

Gillian Power, Senior Executive Engineer at Wicklow County Council, said: "This award is all about collaboration and Wicklow County Council couldn't have asked for a better partner in Tiglin. It is an amazing organisation that brings hope and support to people who have temporarily lost their way in life."

In his summary address, the ICSH Chief Executive commented: "The 2021 award entries demonstrated the dedication of the sector by both approved housing bodies and local authorities – and the scale of the ongoing work throughout the country, despite the many obstacles presented by the COVID-19 pandemic to both new development and housing management.

"The ICSH applauds all of our approved housing body members and local authority partners who submitted entries during these

**The interagency work by Wicklow County Council, Tiglin and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage enabled Carraig Eden in Greystones to be upgraded to provide transitional-supported accommodation.**

challenging times and recognises the support of the Department of Housing, local Government and Heritage in the delivery of these projects."

COMPETITIVE DIALOGUE MODEL
Cork City Council's Housing Directorate designed and implemented an integrated Competitive Dialogue Procurement & Planning procedure to deliver and construct hundreds of social housing units in the city in response to the homelessness and housing crisis.

The project provided a streamlined solution to the housing delivery requirements in its central urban area, currently hampered by various constraints, ranging from scarcity and complexity of available sites to stakeholder and other concerns.

The resulting procurement process produced a creative and innovative solution to the housing delivery puzzle. The Competitive Dialogue Procurement & Planning model – developed and adapted by Cork City Council – is based on the adoption of an EU procurement procedure.

The model has been integrated with local authority Part 8 planning procedures, all within a Competitive Dialogue wherein the Procurement Authority engages transparently, proportionally and equally. Stakeholders range from landowners, developers, designers, host communities, and elected members to the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.

Over the past four years, close to 650 homes have been delivered (or are under construction) across the city via this route in addition to its traditional construction methods.

The initiative is in full swing this year, with a new round of schemes for both social and affordable homes around the city, involving hundreds of apartments and houses. Some of these schemes will contain right-sized homes and specialised solutions as required by the council.

WICKLOW'S HOUSING FOR THE HOMELESS
Built in the 1800s and modified in the 1960s, Carraig Eden in Wicklow had been leased by the Approved Housing Body, Tiglin, since 2009, to support homeless individuals who have taken steps to rehabilitate and become addiction free.

Accommodation was provided by Tiglin for 30 individuals in transitional-supported accommodation with progression to either private rented accommodation or social housing. In 2016, Wicklow County Council became aware that the property was being sold, and that residents were in immediate danger of becoming homeless and, engaged with all necessary stakeholders to prevent this.

The interagency work is a key focus of the homeless policy in Wicklow. Wicklow County Council, Tiglin and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage collaborated to ensure funding was made available to enable the building to be purchased and upgraded within a tight timeframe.

Accommodation changed from shared bedrooms and bathrooms to 35 en-suite single bedrooms, while the kitchen and common rooms were transformed to very liveable shared spaces.

The high-quality and energy-efficient refurbishment work to the building, as well as its surroundings, sent a clear message to the residents that they are valued.

**ICSH COMMUNITY HOUSING CATEGORY AWARD WINNERS FOR 2021**
Alongside the overall winner and the Public Choice award winner, 11 additional projects received awards for their excellence in homeless projects, most creative supply, housing for people with disabilities, housing for families, collaboration initiatives, housing for older people, community integration, regeneration, housing management and the contribution to Housing 'Margaret O Leary' award.

- Homelessness: Cope Galway
- Most Creative Supply: Cork City Council – Competitive Dialogue
- Housing for People with Disabilities: Peter Triest
- Housing For Families (Large): Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council
- Housing for Families (Small): Roscommon County Council
- Collaboration: Wicklow Councty Council and Tiglin
- Housing for Older People: Fold Housing
- Community Integration: HAIL Housing
- Regeneration: Clúid Housing
- Housing Management: Clúid Housing
- Contribution to Housing 'Margaret O Leary': Pauline McNamara (Cuan an Chláir)