#  General Information on Voluntary / Co-operative Housing:

* Voluntary and co-operative housing is an important element of the overall response to national housing need. It fills gaps in the housing system, increases the supply of good quality **rental** housing and contributes to social balance.
* Housing authorities play a key “enabling” and administrative role in the operation of capital funding schemes. Kildare County Council's role is to encourage an increased output by voluntary and co-operative housing associations to help meet overall housing need in County Kildare.
* The legal / statutory basis for housing authorities to assist approved housing bodies in the provision of housing is Section 6 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1992.
* There are over 50 approved housing bodies registered in County Kildare with 43 voluntary / co-operative units currently in progress, 375 units in planning and over 700 completed units in stock. These figures include sheltered housing for the elderly, special needs units, family housing and homeless facilities.

**Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS)**

* 75% of the dwellings units must be the main place of residence for persons included in Kildare County Council's most recent assessment of housing need, homeless persons, Local Authority tenants / tenant purchasers, returning emigrants. In practice, this scheme usually provides special needs housing such as accommodation for the elderly, disabled and/or homeless.
* Caretaker / welfare accommodation can be funded but this scheme is not intended to provide accommodation for persons requiring extensive medical or institutional type care.
* The funding available is €150,000 per unit for 1-2 person units and €170,000 for family houses and bays for Traveller Accommodation **or** 95% of the approved cost of the works (whichever is the lesser). Additional site costs may also be availed of.
* The funding provided is in the form of a “grant” which is not repayable provided that the approved housing body continues to comply with the terms of the scheme. The amount of the grant is registered as a charge against the property.
* An income-based system of rent calculation is in place. Rents collected are used to fund management and maintenance programmes.
* Examples of CAS projects in County Kildare include the Youth for Peace Ltd. Homeless Hostel in Athy and the sheltered housing for the elderly at Ryan’s Field, Newbridge by Newbridge Sheltered Housing Trust Ltd.

**Capital Loan and Subsidy Scheme (CLSS)**

* 75% of dwellings units must be the main place of residence for persons included in Kildare County Council's most recent assessment of housing need, homeless persons, Local Authority tenants / tenant purchasers, returning emigrants. In practice, this scheme usually provides family type housing for general needs.
* Communal facilities can be funded e.g. community centre, crèche.
* The funding available is €170,000 per unit **or** 100% of the approved cost of the works (whichever is lesser). Additional site costs may also be availed of.
* The funding provided is in the form of a “loan” which is not repayable provided that the approved housing body continues to comply with the terms of the scheme. The amount of the mortgage loan is registered as a charge on the property and loan repayments and interest charges are fully recoupable from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.
* An income-based system of rent calculation is in place. The rents collected are used to fund maintenance programmes. A Management & Maintenance Subsidy of €633 per annum per eligible unit applies.
* Examples of CLSS projects in County Kildare include three phases of houses by Cill Dara Housing Association Co. Ltd. at Bishopsland.

### To develop a Voluntary / Co-operative Housing Project

Group forms and acquires “approved housing body” status (application to the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government).

Approved housing body approaches Kildare County Council with proposal to build or purchase units (issues such as land availability, demand, funding, technical compliance etc. examined at this stage).

Kildare County Council examines proposal to establish viability and, if satisfied, applies to the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government for pre-tender funding approval for scheme.

Approved housing body seeks tenders or proceeds with purchase; Kildare County Council applies for post-tender approval for scheme and secures loan approval.

Approved housing body appoints contractor and co-ordinates construction or purchase, Kildare County Council processes payment claims and recoups same.

Allocations decided in accordance with terms of capital funding schemes and in consultation with Kildare County Council.

Units managed and maintained by approved housing body in consultation with Kildare County Council.

**To apply for voluntary / Co-operative Housing:**

* Complete Kildare County Council's standard application for housing accommodation and provide required support documentation.
* On page 12 of the standard application form, tick the 'yes' box at Question 4 i.e. Would you be willing to accept housing from a voluntary body / housing association?
* Once you are on Kildare County Council's Housing List you will be considered for all suitable voluntary / co-operative housing vacancies in your area(s) of preference.
* You may also approach approved housing bodies directly to confirm your interest in particular schemes and be registered on their waiting lists. Contact details are available from Kildare County Council.
* **There is no tenant purchase option for voluntary / co-operative units. Tenants of approved housing bodies must consider other options if they wish to become homeowners e.g. transfer to a social rented unit, affordable housing etc.**
* Contact details: Brendan Donohoe 045-980705 or bdonohoe@kildarecoco.ie