

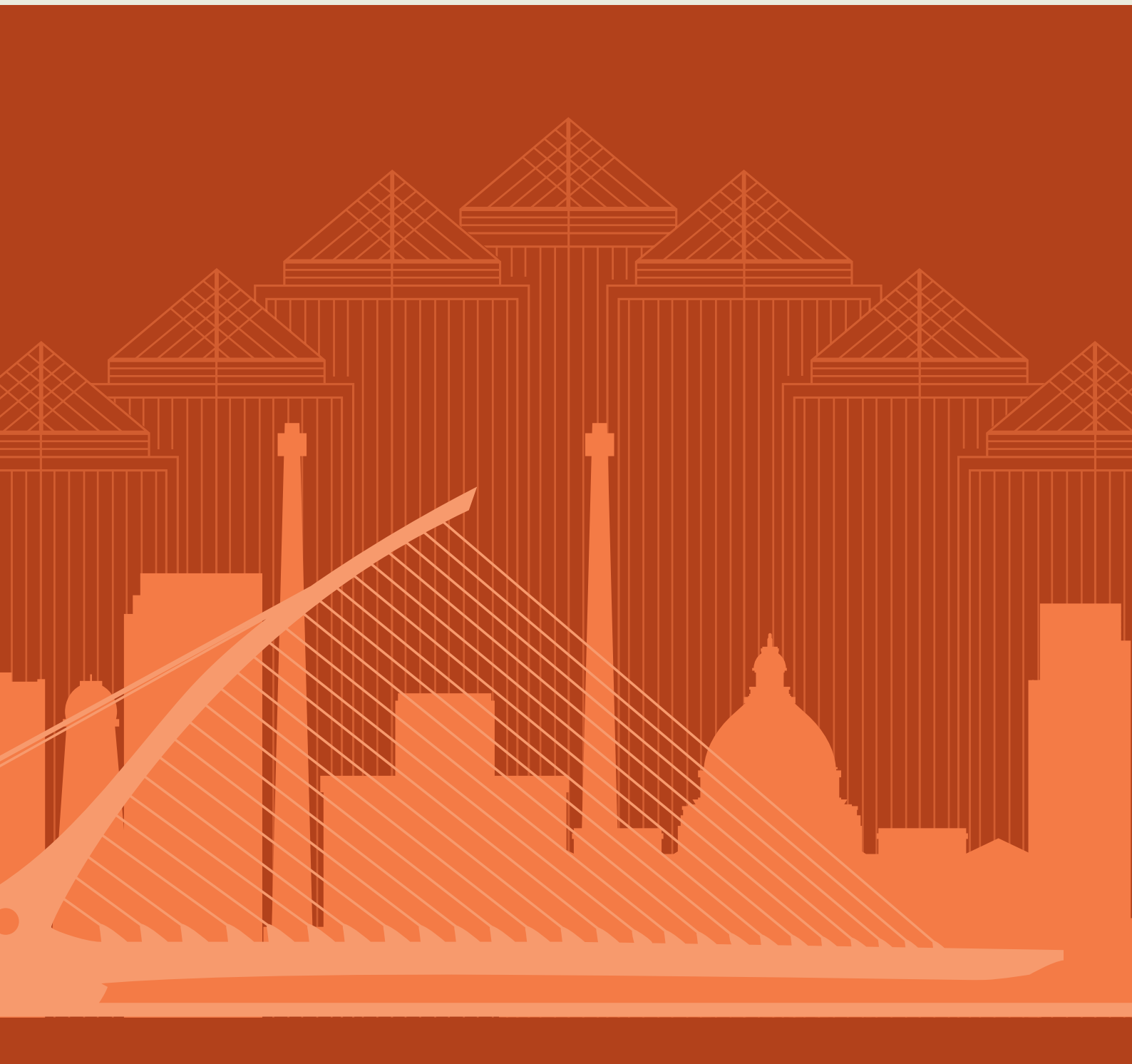
Ireland Development Land Report



March 2026

An overview of the latest activity in the Irish development land market

knightfrank.ie/research



Key Figures



€401m

Was spent on development land in H2 2025, down from €702m in H2 2024.



€685m

Was spent in 2025 in total. While this is down from €939m in 2024, it is still ahead of the 5-year average of €630m.



88%

Of spend in H2 2025 was comprised of residential development land sales with the major housebuilders, PLCs and state bodies, such as the LDA, remaining active.



46%

Of spend in H2 2025 was concentrated within the €20-€50m size bracket, up from 4% during the corresponding period in 2024.



€9.3m

Was the average deal size in H2 2025. While this was down from €14.6m during the same period last year, the latter was skewed by the sale of two significant portfolio transactions.

Market Trends

- Policies introduced in 2025 are now broadly supportive of a stronger outlook for activity in the development land market in 2026, however implementation will be key to realising the potential of these measures.

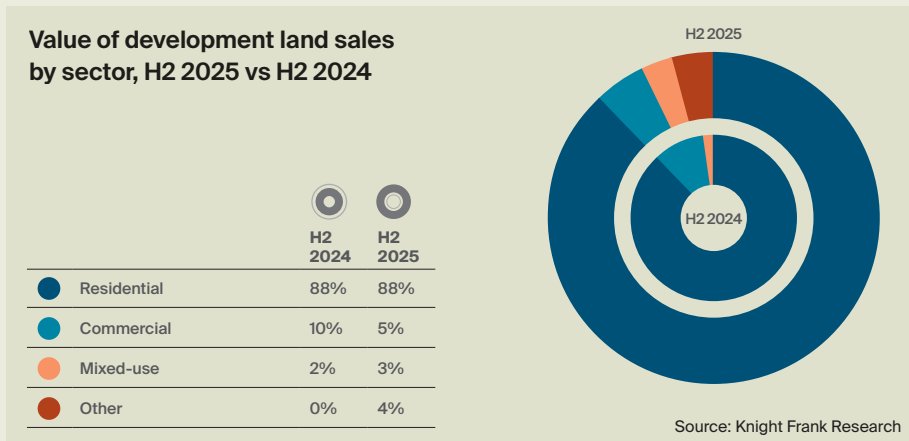
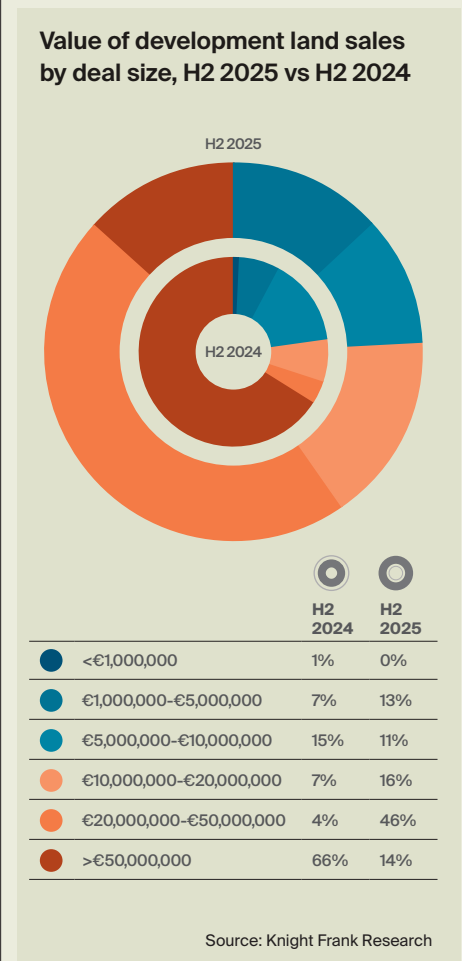
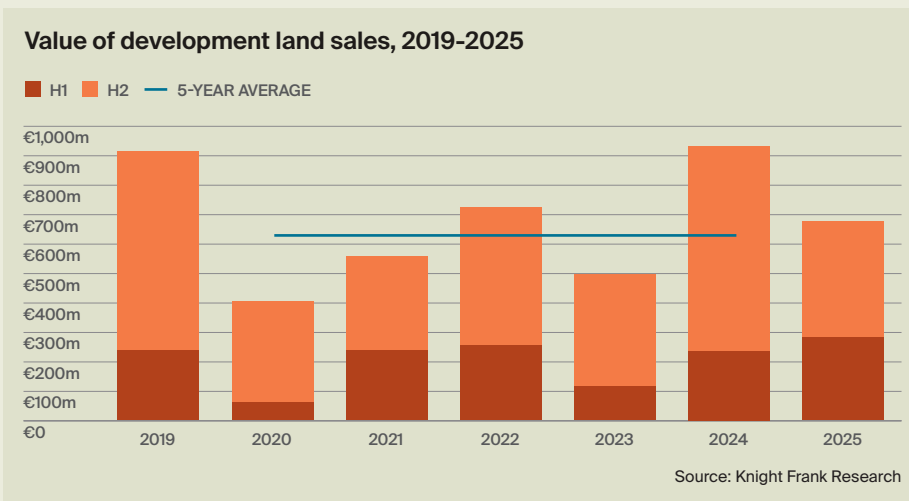
H2 2025 OVERVIEW

€401m worth of development land transacted in H2 2025, down from €702m in H2 2024. However, it is important to note that activity in H2 2024 was heavily influenced by the sale of two significant portfolios, notably Project Emerald which was acquired by TPG and the Gannon Homes Portfolio which was bought by Glenveagh. Excluding these exceptional transactions, underlying activity was higher in H2 2025 when compared to H2 2024.

On a sectoral basis, residential development land continued to dominate activity, accounting for 88% of spend in H2 2025 (unchanged in relation to H2 2024). Commercial development land comprised 5% (down from 10% in H2 2024) while mixed-use and other development land accounted for a combined 7% (up from 2% in H2 2024).

In terms of deal size, the largest increase in activity in H2 2025 was in the €20-€50m size bracket which accounted for 46% of spend (up from just 4% in H2 2024). Increases were also observed in the €10-€20m and €1-€5m brackets which comprised 16% and 13% of spend respectively (up from 7% each in H2 2024).

“Spend in 2025 totalled €685m, ahead of the 5-year average of €630m.”



H2 2025 TRANSACTIONAL ACTIVITY

€352m was spent on residential development land in H2 2025. Despite a materially shifting policy backdrop throughout much of this period, which included a new national housing strategy, budgetary measures, changes to apartment design standards (which were later subject to judicial review) and reforms to rent pressure zones, the major housebuilders remained active. This underlined the strategic imperative to secure sites for their development pipelines rather than delay investment in response to regulatory change.

“In practice, policy uncertainty proved secondary to the structural shortage of suitably zoned and serviced land, compelling housebuilders to act decisively when opportunities became available.”

One of the most notable acquisitions in H2 2025 was Cairn Homes’ purchase of the 8-acre, Former CMP site, on the

Kinsale Road in Cork, which has planning for 606 units, for €25.6m. Other prominent transactions included Ardstone’s acquisition of a 21-acre site on the Ninth Lock Road in Clondalkin in Dublin 22, which has the potential to deliver 1,000 units, for €24.0m. The Land Development Agency (LDA) was also very active, acquiring a 213-acre site at Lissenhall in Swords, Co. Dublin and an 84-acre site in Celbridge, Co. Kildare which are capable of delivering approximately 7,000 units. This follows on from four acquisitions in H1 2025 which have the capacity to deliver over 4,000 units.

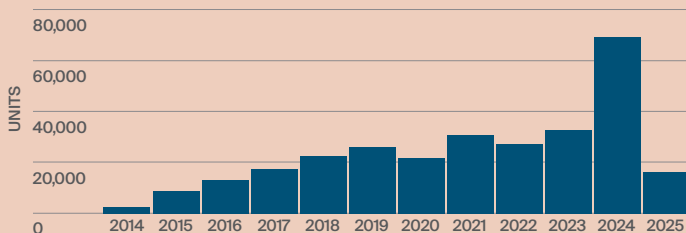
Interest in high-density apartment development sites strengthened during H2 2025, highlighted by the acquisition of the 5-acre, Hartfield Place site on the Swords Road in Dublin 9, a scheme with planning permission for 334 apartments. While demand continued to be strongest for consented, ready-to-go opportunities, activity also broadened to include larger sites without planning, including unzoned and strategic reserve land. Reflecting this trend, Knight Frank completed the sale of 97 acres of strategic reserve land in Maynooth, Co. Kildare for €16.0m. This is in addition to the sale of a 63-acre site at Skylark Hill in Newcastle Co. Dublin in H1 2025 which was sold for €5.6m.

Special Focus: New Homes Completions

New home completions exceeded expectations in 2025 with 36,284 units delivered – comfortably ahead of most commentators’ forecasts of between 33,000 and 34,000 units. Encouragingly, apartment completions rebounded strongly, with just over 12,000 units delivered, representing a 39% increase year-on-year. In addition, approximately 18,000 scheme units were completed, marking solid annual growth of 13%. While this renewed momentum in supply is welcome, it raises an important question: can this level of delivery be sustained as the Government seeks to meet annual requirements of 55,000 units p.a. to 2034 and 41,000 units p.a. between 2034-2040 as set out in the Revised National Planning Framework?

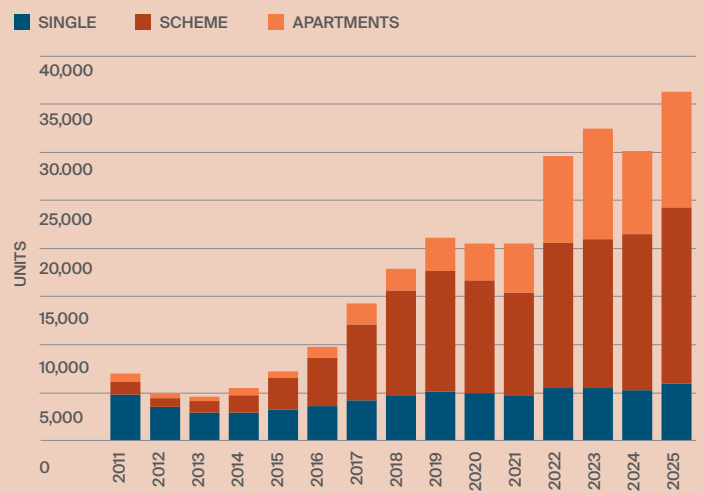
To assess the outlook, it is necessary to examine forward-looking indicators. On this front, the signals are less encouraging. Just 16,412 units commenced construction in 2025 – the lowest level recorded since 2016 (housing starts in 2024 were distorted as developers sought to avail of the temporary development levy waiver and water connection charge refund). Furthermore, although full-year data for 2025 is not yet available, rolling 12-month planning permissions are currently running at approximately 33,500 units. Taken together, these indicators suggest that housing supply is likely to continue to lag demand for some time, despite the stronger than expected completions recorded in 2025.

Commencements



Knight Frank Research/DHLGH

Completions



Source: Knight Frank Research/CSO

Planning permissions – rolling 12mths



Source: Knight Frank Research/CSO

The Outlook

Robert O'Connor, Divisional Director, Knight Frank Research

Given the scale of Ireland's housing shortage, we expect the major housebuilders, and the PLCs, to remain on the acquisition trail throughout 2026. The State is also likely to continue acquiring development land, supported by its target to deliver 90,000 affordable homes and 72,000 social housing units by 2030, as set out in the Delivering Homes, Building Communities strategy published last year. Against this backdrop, further acquisitions by the LDA are anticipated in 2026 as it continues to scale up its operations. Recent reports that the LDA intends to borrow up to €1.0bn from the European Investment Bank further reinforce this view.

“That said, activity levels in 2026 will continue to be shaped by the availability of suitably zoned and serviced land, the shortage of which was particularly acute last year.”

Encouragingly, a number of policy measures were introduced in H2 2025 to address this constraint, most notably the Section 28 Rezoning Directive. This requires local authorities to review and update their development plans to significantly increase zoned land capacity, aligned with the delivery of 55,000 units p.a. to 2034 and 41,000 units p.a. between 2034-2040 (as well as a requirement to include up to 50% headroom).

Alongside this, increased investment in enabling infrastructure represents another positive development. The new Housing Infrastructure Investment Fund will allocate €1.0bn over the next five years to deliver the infrastructure required to service and unlock housing sites across Ireland. This funding will complement investment by other agencies, including Uisce Éireann and ESB Networks, which have received additional capital under the updated National Development Plan as part of a more coordinated approach to housing delivery.

“Ultimately, the pace at which local authorities implement the Section 28 Rezoning Directive, together with the timely rollout of this new infrastructure investment, will determine how much additional land is brought to the market and the extent to which activity accelerates in 2026.”

It has been reported that just two local authorities have updated their development plans to date which is very concerning. It is imperative that all local authorities finalise this process as quickly as possible given the scale of the housing undersupply.

From a viability perspective, recent changes to rent pressure zone regulations and the reduction in VAT on new apartment construction are also welcome and should complement the Croí Cónaithe Scheme in supporting high-density apartment development. The Croí Cónaithe scheme has seen strong uptake with Cairn Homes, Glenveagh and Park Developments all progressing sites under the initiative. Proposed amendments to apartment design guidelines, which were published in July 2025 and which were later subject to judicial review, also have the potential to deliver meaningful cost efficiencies and further increase the attractiveness of these sites. As this process continues to evolve, clearer direction on timing and implementation will be important in underpinning confidence in this segment of the market.

Finally, continued progress in improving planning timelines will also be critical to supporting activity in 2026. The Large-Scale Residential Development (LRD) process is now widely regarded as operating effectively, with improved decision-making driven by increased resourcing at An Coimisiún Pleanála.

In 2024, 58 LRD appeals were formally decided. All of these were decided within the 16-week statutory period, reflecting a 43% increase in staffing resources compared to 2022.

While appeal-stage timelines have improved, ongoing uncertainty around the judicial review process remains a key constraint, underscoring the importance of implementing the reforms contained within the Planning and Development Act 2024 without delay. Greater planning certainty would materially strengthen demand for unzoned land and provide a further boost to transactional activity.

In terms of the commercial land market, Knight Frank expect to see continued demand for industrial, hospitality and healthcare-related sites throughout 2026.

“There may also be increased interest in office development sites in core locations in Dublin, particularly Dublin 2, given the constrained development pipeline and the prospect of strong prime rental growth which Knight Frank estimates will be in the order of 10% this year.”



Dublin Office Market
Q4 2025



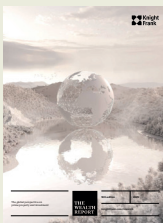
Ireland Living
Sectors 2025



Ireland Investment
Market 2026



(Y)our Space
Report 2025



The Wealth Report
2025



Ireland Student
Housing Market 2025

We like questions, if you've got one about our research,
or would like some property advice, we would love to hear from you.

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