

SURVEYORS JOURNAL

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CLIMATE
TARGET
2050



ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

WHAT WE MEAN BY HOME

BUILDING MENTAL HEALTH

STRATEGIC PLANNING





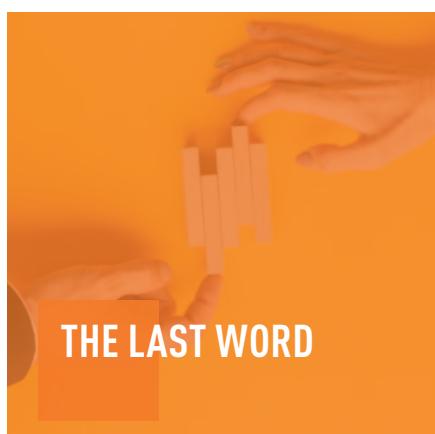
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THE IMPORTANCE OF ENGAGEMENT

THE SCSI CONTINUES TO MEET WITH ALL STAKEHOLDERS TO ADVANCE ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE TO THE PROFESSION.

W

hen we issued our last *Journal*, we had hoped we would not be in the position we currently find ourselves. The latest extension of lockdown for the majority of the industry to at least April will have come as a blow to a huge number of our members.

As you will know from our CEO's regular updates, we have been engaging strongly with the Government, both as a Society and in our participation in the Construction Industry Council (CIC). At a recent meeting with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, attended by the Taoiseach's office, I noted that while a lot of media focus is on re-opening the construction sector, it must be accompanied by re-opening of the property sector.

Away from Covid-19, our interaction with important stakeholders in our industries continues apace. In recent weeks we have met with the Department of Housing, Irish Water and the Land Development Agency with agreement on all fronts to continue this meaningful contact on a regular basis to progress many important issues.

As you read this *Journal*, I will have less than three months of my term of office remaining. The two issues I will be concentrating on with our great team of volunteers and executive staff are membership engagement and professional indemnity insurance (PII).

For the former, the focus will be mainly in the regions and most particularly in residential agency. We have already commenced significant work at Council level and you will see tangible progress over the coming months.

For the latter, as a practitioner and business owner, I am only too aware of the issue, and cost, of achieving adequate PII. We have engaged with the insurance industry extensively and it would appear that the issue is not likely to go away. They advise us that the issue primarily relates to supply and demand, as a number of underwriters have exited the market. In addition to our contact with the insurance industry, we have also raised these issues with the Government, in particular the Office of Government Procurement (OGP). The OGP has also been in contact with our industry, the insurance industry and the State Claims Agency, and we expect to meet with them again soon with a view to possible solutions/alternatives on State projects.

However, while the public sector is looking at potential solutions, it now behoves us to outline to the private sector the issues that are being encountered, in particular client bodies, funders and indeed the legal profession, and that will form part of our engagement in future.

As always, your input and sharing of issues is always welcome. Please feel free to reach out to me or the executive team.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Micheál Mahon
President

PREPARING TO RE-OPEN

Any re-opening strategy must include both the construction sector and the property sector.

TIPPING POINTS

WE MAY BE CLOSE TO CONTROLLING COVID-19,
BUT OTHER ENORMOUS CHALLENGES
REMAIN, SUCH AS CLIMATE CHANGE
AND, IN IRELAND, HOUSING.

In the midst of a pandemic it may seem strange to be reminded that the greatest challenge facing us all is the climate crisis. With the arrival of vaccines must come a confidence that the combination of brilliant science and appropriate behavioural changes will overcome the challenge posed by Covid-19. We will recover from the pandemic and must move on urgently to deal with the climate crisis. As such, we should all welcome the Surveyors Declare initiative Eloise Heron writes about in her feature in this edition (page 28), and be delighted to see that 300 members have signed up. Of particular use will be the practical guide she refers to, which is aimed at showing members how to implement sustainable practices as part of a journey to sustainable surveying. Also of interest in this context is Barra McCabe's piece where he writes informatively about the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Bill 2020. These are important developments to be informed about.

It seems that another crisis, housing, remains with us, exacerbated by the decline in supply resulting from the closures of sites as part of the measures to contain Covid-19. I am sure surveyors will read the report of the Eoin Ó Broin interview with great interest. Eoin is the prominent and very well informed Sinn Féin Spokesperson on Housing, and he talks here about the need for a paradigm shift in housing policy and how to bring it about. Housing is likely to be a significant if not a defining issue during the next general election and the proposals outlined by Eoin would break new ground and will inform what is without doubt a critical debate leading up to that election. He feels that the public are at a tipping point on this issue. He is not wrong about that.

EDITORIAL

Tom Dunne
Editor



WHAT A WASTE!

The average amount of waste recycled each year.*



GERMANY
67.1%



FRANCE
45.1%



UNITED KINGDOM
44.1%



Norway
40.7%



IRELAND
37.6%

*Source: Eurostat SDG 11 'Sustainable cities and communities' 2018.

NEW CO-WORKING SPACE



The Building Consultancy has been appointed to design and project manage a new co-working space for a private client in Blackrock, Dublin 4. The project is currently out for tender with a project completion date scheduled for summer 2021. Comprising of a variety of open-plan spaces, private office options, bookable meeting rooms and refreshment facilities, The Building Consultancy states that the facility will substantially enhance the co-working options for the locality.

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NEW APPOINTMENT AT DUKE McCAFFREY



David Madden has joined Duke McCaffrey as a project manager to work across diverse industry sectors including housing, nursing care, schools, data centres, and hotels. David is a Chartered Engineer with seven years' experience in construction and is a Certified Associate in Project Management (CAPM).

David's experience includes project managing the Cherrywood Strategic

Development Zone (SDZ) and Grace Park Educate Together National School (ETNS) in Dublin, and acting as design engineer on the WESSEX Capacity Programme for Waterloo Station, London. Back in 2015, David was shortlisted for the New Civil Engineer (NCE) Graduate of the Year award in London and was presented with a European Renewable Energy Research Centres (EUREC) Award for the Best Undergraduate Renewable Energy Project in 2013.



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EARN AS YOU LEARN AT TU DUBLIN

In direct response to the demand for surveying graduates, TU Dublin has announced its commitment to launch new part-time Earn-As-You-Learn Property Economics and Geographic Science level 8 degrees, in partnership with industry.

TU Dublin states that it has been successfully running its Earn-As-You-Learn BSc (Hons) in Quantity Surveying and Construction Economics for the past five years. This course recently won the Irish Construction Excellence 2020 Award for third-level programmes. Dr Alan Hore, Head of Quantity Surveying in TU Dublin, said: "We are delighted to have received this award. We have a long and established reputation in respect to our part-time provision on our Bolton Street campus. This programme has proved to be very popular among Leaving Certificate students and also more mature candidates. The course is a five-year programme with students attending one day per week during normal term time".

Ruairí Hayden, Head of the Geomatics Department in TU Dublin, noted: "The launch of the Earn-As-You-Learn model is closely aligned with the TU Dublin strategic plan (People, Planet and Partnerships) focusing on opening third-level education to a diverse student cohort and fostering sustainable industry partnerships. The Earn-As-You-Learn BSc in Geographic Science is a five-year part-time programme, with each year split into two semesters. A particular feature of the programme is the work-based learning module, which provides students with the opportunity to formally record and reflect

on their experience in the workplace, and undertake a work-related project". A part-time Property Economics Earn-As-You-Learn programme is also being launched in September 2021. This is also a five-year programme, which will initially commence with a third-year intake and is open to applicants who hold a level 6 or 7 real estate qualification and are interested in completing a level 8 SCSI-accredited honours degree part time.

Frank Harrington, Head of Real Estate at TU Dublin, noted: "We are committed to providing pathways for all students to complete their academic journey and this new part-time property economics programme provides a pathway to become a Chartered Surveyor for many who work in practice, perhaps with a PSRA licence, who would like to become chartered. It is also a great environment to learn. Applying what you learn in theory to your work in practice is an excellent way to develop skills and I am confident that the Earn-As-You-Learn model will prove as successful with our new students as it has with our quantity surveying colleagues".

Mark Mulville, Head of the School of Surveying and Construction Management, welcomed these new programmes: "While TU Dublin is the first university of its kind in Ireland, technological universities are more common across Europe. A dominant theme is their close links with industry, and these Earn-As-You-Learn programmes provide another example of our School's commitment to work with industry and bring greater choice and flexibility into surveying education".



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300 SIGN UP TO SURVEYORS DECLARE

In January, the SCSI followed up its declaration of a climate and biodiversity emergency with the launch of a member-centred initiative in support of it called 'Surveyors Declare'.

Climate change is one of the greatest threats of our time and has far-reaching implications for the real estate industry, and all our futures. With the built environment contributing approximately 40% of the energy-related carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions in the world, the thought of tackling this challenge can seem daunting. Surveyors Declare provides members with an initial framework for tackling this challenge within their own practices and homes. Members who sign up are aware of how our business activities impact upon the environment and are committed to ensuring that these activities have the least possible detrimental effect. They commit to following sustainable business practices in their day-to-day operations, and encouraging and supporting clients and colleagues to do the same.

Following close engagement with the Sustainability Group, the Society

launched an extensive cross-channel media programme in support of Surveyors Declare, which included the placement of an article in the *Business Post* by John Shannon as well as email marketing, video and content creation, social media posts, two new website pages, ezine stories, shareable content for members, and new document design. There was great engagement with the campaign, with dozens of companies supporting the declaration and 300 members signing up to it. The Sustainability Group has now produced 'Surveyors Declare, A Practical Guide', which is aimed at showing members how to implement sustainable practices in five key areas – energy, waste, surveying activities, water, and biodiversity – as they continue on their journey to sustainable surveying. Momentum is also building nicely for a Sustainability Conference, which the SCSI is hosting with other industry partners and which is scheduled for mid April.

For more information on Surveyors Declare, see page 28 of this edition of the *Surveyors Journal*.

RESIDENTIAL PRICES TO RISE BY 4%

While the property market was dominated by Covid-19 in 2020, residential property prices proved surprisingly resilient throughout the year and are set to increase by an average of 4% in 2021. That was the key takeaway from the SCSI's 'Annual Residential Review and Outlook Report 2021', which was published in mid January. The report, which has been running since 1983, was based on four surveys of almost 800 members conducted during the four quarters of 2020. Chartered Estate Agents believe that property prices in Dublin – which has the highest prices – are set to rise by 3%, while Connacht Ulster, which has some of the lowest prices, will see an increase of 6%. An increase of 4% is predicted for Leinster, while prices are forecast to increase by 5% in Munster. According to the findings, over two-thirds of Chartered Estate Agents (68%) expect to see an increase in property values over the coming 12 months, 24% expect values to remain the same, while just 8% expect them to fall. The Vice President of the SCSI, TJ Cronin, said that while the lack of supply would continue to underpin these price expectations in the short term, Chartered Estate Agents are struggling to meet the demand for property, especially from first-time buyers. "2020 was dominated by Covid-19 and this led to a 'stop, start, surge' property market, which only began to taper towards the end of the year. Agents believe that Covid-19 will once again

d dictate activity levels in 2021, and given the recent introduction of new restrictions it's very possible we could see a repeat of that pattern in 2021. "Some 62% of the Chartered Agents and Auctioneers who are predicting prices will rise, say it is because of the lack of supply of new and second-hand homes, while 33% say economic performance and the impact of Covid-19 on output will be the key drivers. We can see that the transition to working from home has led to a reordering of priorities and is driving interest in larger properties in regional locations with good broadband and lots of amenities, as well as holiday homes in secondary locations. The trend away from urban areas is also reflected in the survey's price projections, with agents in Dublin forecasting the lowest growth and agents in Connacht/Ulster the highest. While Covid-19 has badly affected certain sectors, it has enabled prospective buyers who work in areas that haven't been hugely impacted, such as pharma, tech, financial and the public sector, to increase their savings. We've also seen a big inflow of Irish people returning from abroad, to Dublin in particular, and this has underpinned prices at the upper end of the market. In a situation where you have very limited supply – 83% of agents report having low levels of stock available in Q4 – the fear of missing out on a property will very often trump the fear of paying over the odds," TJ said.

REPRESENTATION ON NDP

The Government has sought the views of stakeholders and the public in relation to a mid-term review of the National Development Plan (NDP).

Covid-19 has had a significant negative impact on our society and economy in 2020 and into 2021. The impact of restrictions has forced some businesses into a higher reliance on Government supports and this will push up our overall national debt to levels well beyond €200bn.

The 'Review to Renew' consultation and SCSI submission sets out our organisation's response to policymakers to address key priorities within our

sector, to support businesses and stimulate economic activity. Sustainability, rural revival, and housing are the three key components that informed our submission, which is aimed at ensuring that as the economic recovery kicks in, the various elements of the NDP will be implemented in a measured, deliverable, and sustainable way for future generations.

View the submission at <https://scsi.ie/scsi-national-development-plan-submission/>.

CHARTERED SURVEYORS MARK INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY WITH LAUNCH OF NEW MENTORING PROGRAMME

On Monday, March 8, over 300 female Chartered Surveyors celebrated International Women's Day with a virtual lunchtime event featuring Chartered Quantity Surveyor Patricia Power. Patricia became one of the best-known quantity surveyors in the country thanks to her involvement in the much-loved RTÉ TV programme *Room to Improve*. Patricia discussed her career to date and was joined by SCSI President Micheál Mahon and a guest panel from within the industry. The panel members talked about their careers and about the people who mentored and inspired them along the way.

SCSI Chief Executive Shirley Coulter said the Society is committed to increasing diversity in the surveying profession and was launching its 'Women in Surveying Mentoring and Leadership Development Pilot Programme' as part of its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy.

"The response to the programme, which offers a unique opportunity to connect women with mentors working across construction, land and property, has been hugely positive.

"We are delighted that so many members have come forward to support female surveyors in their career progression by taking on mentoring roles," she said.

"The number of women entering careers in property, construction and land is rising all the time but we still have a long way to go to get to gender parity. The idea of this programme is to provide women who are starting out in the profession, who are looking to take the next step in their careers, or who are looking at re-entering the workforce, with the practical advice and tools they need to achieve their career ambitions.

"Having a trusted person to bounce ideas off or someone with professional expertise and industry experience to offer advice or counsel on the challenges and opportunities they may face will, we believe, make a huge difference. While gender diversity has improved in recent years, we can see challenges for women at particular career stages and we aim to start an open conversation within the industry as to how we can work together to overcome barriers to career progression for female surveyors."

For more information about the mentoring programme, go to <https://scsi.ie/members-area/my-professional-journey/mentorship/>.

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New Earn as You Learn undergraduate programmes in Real Estate, Geospatial Surveying and Construction Management coming on stream in September 2021



WHAT WE MEAN BY HOME

SINN FÉIN HOUSING SPOKESPERSON EOIN Ó BROIN TALKS ABOUT THE NEED FOR A PARADIGM SHIFT IN HOUSING POLICY IN IRELAND, AND HOW TO BRING IT ABOUT.

H

ousing has long been a major, and often controversial, political issue in Ireland, and few politicians are regarded as having immersed themselves as deeply in the issues as Sinn Féin's housing spokesperson Eoin Ó Broin. His 2019 book, *Home: Why public housing is the answer*, makes

the case for a radical shift in thinking about how we provide housing, and this is reflected in Sinn Féin's housing policy, which calls for a massive local authority building programme, which it says will provide affordable, mixed-income developments where tenure and housing types are tailored to the long-term needs of communities, backed up by

appropriate infrastructure and services. He points out that this is not a new idea; it's something the Irish State has done in the past in areas like Marino in Dublin. However, he says changes in financial, and ideological, models since the 1980s have meant that development is "driven by the diktats of finance rather than housing need". The result is the current

INTERVIEW

Ann-Marie Hardiman
Managing Editor,
Think Media





ULTIMATELY IT COMES DOWN TO POLITICAL WILL. EOIN COMPARES IT TO THE KIND OF BRAVERY AND DETERMINATION THAT LED DONAGH O'MALLEY TO INTRODUCE FREE SECONDARY EDUCATION IN IRELAND, OR ANEURIN BEVAN TO CREATE THE NHS IN BRITAIN.

situation, where large numbers of people on modest incomes cannot afford to rent or buy a home.

The answer, Eoin says, is to dramatically break with the current model, to break the link between land values and house prices, and the key to this is public development of housing on public land in urban centres: "The State has lots of land in those areas and that land has lower existing use values. The State doesn't have to charge a 10-15% margin and profit, doesn't have high financing costs, and the build costs should always be roughly equivalent in two comparable developments, whether public or private. If the State doesn't have the same soft costs as the private sector, then the public sector as a developer, or its agents as developers, can deliver much greater affordability".

The plan

As he says, these aren't new ideas, but how are they to be brought to fruition? There are a number of elements, the first of which is an unprecedented level of State investment: "This can't be about tinkering around the edges. We have to introduce a new development model, backed up by a level of capital investment by the State not seen in the entire history of the island. That's the kind of circuit breaker that allows you to make those bigger interventions".

WALKING THE WALK

We may not know when the next general election will take place, but like any politician Eoin is hoping that his party will be in Government, and that he will have the opportunity to put these plans into action as Minister for Housing. So what are the first three things he would do as Minister?

"First thing is we announce that we've kept our promise, that the capital budget for public housing will double. The second is to introduce legislation to ban rent increases for three years, and provide a refundable tax credit for renters to bring their rents down. One in four households in Dublin rent, and they are some of the most precarious in our housing system. We have to give them help now.

"The third is to set a date for legislation on a referendum on enshrining the right to housing in the Constitution. While doing this won't build a single house, it will allow us to have a national conversation about what we mean by home".

The second factor is that idea of public housing on public land enabling true affordability. But Sinn Féin's proposals go further: "There will be a percentage of people who will buy their homes. The big difference between our proposal and everybody else's is they would own that house outright, but they would not buy the land. What we would be saying to the purchaser is: this is your home. You control it in exactly the way any other private homeowner does. But there are two conditions to the leasehold on the land that we are giving you at no cost in perpetuity. You can never rent it in the private rental sector, and you can never sell it into the private market. You can sell it to another affordable purchaser, index-linked, for example, to inflation and home improvements. What that would mean is, over a decade or two, we would build a stock of permanently affordable and tradeable homes".

Where there's a will

He also makes the case that there's never been a better time to make these radical changes: "We're at that moment now: negative or near to negative interest rates, flexibility in the EU's fiscal rules, huge demands from industry, from the chambers of commerce and from Ibex, not only to invest in infrastructure, but to mitigate against rising wage claims because of rising housing costs".

He feels that public opinion is at a tipping point too, as so many people are directly affected by the housing crisis and need solutions. Covid-19 also presents opportunities, both in terms of availability of skilled labour, which can be diverted from delayed or abandoned projects, and in terms of land that may be available to purchase from developers: "I'm a developer. I have five sites. I have two too many, given the changing conditions of Covid. The State will come in and buy them off me at cost. I can push ahead with my other three and the State can transform those into public developments in the way that I have outlined. There's all sorts of things that are available right now, but that window of opportunity doesn't last forever".

Ultimately it comes down to political will. Eoin compares it to the kind of bravery and determination that led Donagh O'Malley to introduce free secondary education in Ireland, or Aneurin Bevan to create the NHS in Britain.

He also argues that this model will benefit the private sector as well, for example in much-needed reform of tendering and procurement: "At Dublin City Council when they're going out to tender for larger apartment-based residential development, a tiny number of companies are able to tender, maybe two or three. We would completely shake up the tender and

THE MORE INFORMATION WE CAN PUT IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN TO HAVE AN EVIDENCE-BASED CONVERSATION ABOUT THIS, THE BETTER.

procurement system, create far greater access for medium-sized contractors, for regional contractors. We would create far greater access for young architects through architectural competitions. What we're looking to do is have more public sector-led development in parallel to the private sector-led development, but also to reform the overall system so that everybody gets a fair share of the work that's there".

Role of the SCSI

Eoin welcomes the SCSI's reports, in particular its recent report on the cost of apartment delivery in Dublin: "What's really helpful about the reports is they give us a view over a number of years about what's happening. We've now thankfully got more data from the public sector side as well. We're finally getting a level of transparency that we didn't have before. Could it be better? Absolutely. And one of the SCSI's recommendations around a kind of a standardised reporting formula for construction in the public and private sector is absolutely crucial".

He sees the report's findings around the cost of construction as vital: "What the SCSI report shows us very clearly, as did all of the reports, is that the cost of construction is the cost of construction. It hasn't moved dramatically since 2016/2017. While comparing two sites is always difficult because you have different abnormalities, when you cut out the abnormalities, the cost per square metre is the cost per square metre. The conclusion to draw from that is that construction is not our problem. Our problem is the all-in cost of development".

He feels the SCSI's role is important at all levels: "The great value of an organisation like the SCSI is they straddle the public and private sectors, not just because they have people who work in both, but also their sons and daughters

are living the housing crisis. The more information we can put in the public domain to have an evidence-based conversation about this, the better".

He would like to see more voices join the call for a paradigm shift in housing policy: "I don't believe anybody out there believes our current system is working. I think in some senses, the reason why the SCSI releases those reports is, they might not shout from the rooftops we need the paradigm shift, but nobody reading that report can honestly say that that doesn't provide us with evidence that something is broken and needs to change".

Creating the 15-minute city

Ireland's strong cultural pull towards home ownership, and indeed towards the three-bedroom semi in the suburbs, coupled with the perceived lack of long-term security in the rental sector, might make these proposals a hard sell. Eoin disagrees: "No society is genetically predisposed to any form of tenure or any typology of housing. Our problem is that over a century of Government housing policy, the only secure tenure was home ownership. If we want people to live in different types of tenure, then we have to make it secure for the full work cycle. That means, for example, our cost rental models also have to work out what happens when I reach pension age and my income drops dramatically".

He wants to see reform of the rental sector too: "Our current system is bad for landlords and tenants. If we had tenancies of indefinite duration, if we had rents linked to an index such as the consumer price or some other, if we had a proper way of enforcing RTB determinations in the interests of landlord and tenant, and if we taxed all landlords fairly, then private rental would be more secure, both for the landlord and tenant".

When we talk about housing, the 15-minute city is a concept that is much discussed. For Eoin, this is something we had in our urban centres, and have lost: "People talk about the 15-minute city as if it's some new radical idea. That's what the Liberties was. And we moved those people to the suburbs.

"What is it people look for in where they choose to live? They want affordability, they want comfort, they want access to services and they want to be part of a community. The difficulty is, those things aren't available in our city centres. If we provide, not just apartments, but integrated, mixed-use developments that have schools and parks, that are on high-frequency public transport links and that have really good walking and cycling permeability as a matter of course, what sensible person wouldn't choose that if the price is right?"



HOME

Eoin Ó Broin is from Cabinteely in Co. Dublin. He holds a degree in Cultural Studies from the University of East London and an MA in Irish Politics from Queen's University Belfast. His interest in housing began during his time serving on Belfast City Council, representing a constituency in north Belfast where housing was a major political issue. On his return to Dublin, he spent three years as a policy officer and legislative advocate for Focus Ireland. His interest continued when he was elected to South Dublin County Council, and he was appointed Sinn Féin Spokesperson on Housing on his election to Dáil Éireann in 2016. He is currently undertaking a master's in urban regeneration and planning at Technological University Dublin.

Putting Town Centres First Podcast Series



An Chomhairle Oidhreachtach
The Heritage Council



Podcast No.5 Sarah Sherlock

Sarah Sherlock is the current Chair of the SCSI's Geomatics Professional Group & the Irish Representative to CLGE. She has several years' experience spanning many sectors, involving many notable and high-value real estate transactions both in Ireland and the UK. Standards are a matter that Sarah considers very important. She currently sits on a number of standard-setting committees – making sure measurement is carefully considered – in Ireland, the UK, and Internationally. Sarah served as a member of the Irish Defence Forces for c. 17 years.

She has post-graduate qualifications in Urban & Building Conservation & in Planning and Environmental Law.



She is Geospatial Consultant with Murphy Geospatial. A family-run business that was established in 1983 by Peter Murphy. With over 200 staff, they have offices throughout Ireland & Europe. Murphy Geospatial offer world-class solutions globally to public and private sector clients, including government bodies and blue-chip companies. The company prides itself on its innovation and core understanding of our clients' needs. There she leads the property technical due diligence research team, in areas such as area measurement, its reporting, and boundary surveys. She is passionate about our towns and our villages constantly highlighting their importance for many years now and the invaluable contributions they make to our nation and its citizens.

According to Sarah, to make any meaningful appraisal and or verification, of any property, one of the foremost important grounding aspects you need is the identification, measurement, and recording, whether it is land, buildings, or utilities. No job is too complex - maps, mapping, and measurement are where it all starts and ends because everything is somewhere after-all so she reckons it is best to note where and exactly ...

STRATEGIC PLANNING

THE STRATEGIC HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PROCESS AIMS TO ACCELERATE HOUSING DELIVERY, BUT CHALLENGES REMAIN, PARTICULARLY AROUND THE NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS ENDING UP IN JUDICIAL REVIEW PROCEEDINGS

S

trategic Housing Development (SHD) legislation was introduced in July 2017 under the Planning and Development (Housing) and Residential Tenancies Act 2016 as a means to secure permission for residential schemes of 100+ units. The primary aim of the process was to accelerate housing delivery by reducing processing time. This was to be achieved primarily by requiring applicants to provide comprehensive planning applications following active liaison with relevant planning authorities (PAs).

A pre-application gateway (Section 247) process, which takes approximately four weeks, is designed to speed up full engagement with all divisions within the PA to progress applications more efficiently. The objective of this engagement is to give clarity to developers bringing forward projects under SHD where items can be resolved in a semi-formal forum at local authority level.

This is followed then by a tripartite consultation (applicant, PA and An Bord Pleanála (ABP)), which is a useful forum for teasing out points of disagreement between departments of the local authority and prospective applicants. Without SHD, the only route for resolving such issues would be following a lengthy planning process and more often an appeal to ABP.

Positives

The meeting of deadlines and the timeline certainty following submission at each stage are certainly positives of this process. The SHD system provides consistency in approach, with definite and improved timelines for decisions, allowing more certainty and multidisciplinary engagement in structured ways. The 16-week timeframe whereby ABP is required to issue a decision or else have a financial penalty imposed has focused decision making.

The Section 247 pre-application meetings with the local authority benefit from multidisciplinary interaction from the various departments such as roads, drainage and parks; however, there is often a difference of policy between the PA and ABP, which can be challenging. For example, height and density standards and objectives can often differ in Local Area Plans (LAPs) versus Development Plans (DPs). Standards on unit size, storage,

FEATURE

Lisa Rocca

Director of Planning & Development,
Oakmount, and SCSI P&D Committee

and private open space can often vary between DPs and Design Standards for New Apartments (DSFNA) (2018).

Under the SHD process, there is no provision for requests for additional information or any other correspondence between ABP, the applicant or any third party during the application stage. This is designed to ensure that all substantive issues are resolved prior to lodgement of an application under SHD. In some instances, where an issue arises during the 16-week period, ABP has held single issue oral hearings to resolve these. This is a positive step and allows a decision to be made rather than issuing a refusal and a prospective applicant having to start the entire process again.

The use of 'technical clarifications' would also allow ABP to seek additional information, strictly where technical uncertainties could be clarified. While the SHD process gives much greater certainty around timelines, there is a substantial amount of work involved during and between each stage.

Challenges

This process can be more costly, as there are often design changes required at each stage, where feedback and requirements between the PA and ABP may not always be consistent and the level of information required is very comprehensive. There is a lengthy time schedule to prepare submissions at each stage of the application process. The degree of required supporting documentation has grown. This is in part due to the forensic thoroughness required to mitigate against possible judicial review (JR) on points of detail. If the application is for 500 units or more, an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) is required, which adds to the cost.

Impact of judicial review

The perceived lack of public participation, together with an under-resourced ABP and a very limited mechanism for clarification of technical points, have resulted in a landscape of excessive JRs. Approximately 10% of SHD decisions have faced JR proceedings. Over the past 18 months the number of challenges has increased, which, if successful, will have a significant impact on providing the required

number of residential units annually.

JR is a significant risk factor facilitating access to courts on administrative issues rather than on the merits of individual schemes. The process in place is already lengthy, and third-party observations form part of the final application stage.

If a legal versus planning critique prevails, this will do damage to the SHD process and the benefits it has brought to date. Scope for increased legislative review will also threaten the pace of delivery of public sector schemes that are open to the same process.

This matter was not helped by the JR where Dublin City Council challenged ABP in court in the interpretation of SHD legislation in the case of an SHD application.

There has been a commitment by Government to complete a review of JR since December 2019. Urgent action is now required.

Positive and working

The main principle and objectives of the process are positive and working. The overall mechanism has led to many improvements in applicant/local authority/ABP inspector interaction. The requirement to launch a bespoke project-specific website is informative and offers third parties the opportunity to review the planning application online without having to search local authority online planning portals.

ABP's treatment of SHD applications has had the effect of increasing densities in line with national policy.

Improvements needed

There are a number of areas where changes could improve the overall planning and specifically the SHD process:

- There is an urgent need for a holistic review of standards. On a macro level, the introduction of viability and consistency testing of plans specifically for issues of height and densification at all levels, from LAPs to county/city development plans (currently under review in 2021) and strategic development zones (SDZs), to ensure an equitable weighting to market requirements, would greatly assist.
- Consider using the oral hearing request for

additional information (RFI) route more frequently to deal with technical clarification.

■ Implementation of a lesson learned approach to SHD tripartite consultations would assist in understanding and learning from best practice, which could be used in any replacement of the SHD process post December 2021.

■ Consider the omission of the pre-planning 247 meeting stage and reduce the requirements for tripartite submission and meeting only, where developers can submit their proposal to both the local authority and ABP simultaneously for initial comments, followed by a tripartite meeting.

■ The process for amending SHD applications (Section 146B) is not fit for purpose. It is unwieldy and has no statutory time frames. It was taken from Strategic Infrastructure Developments (SIDs) and is unsuited to residential developments. Such amendment applications should be dealt with directly by ABP.

■ In urban areas, the threshold for commercial development should be increased, e.g., schemes of 300+ units should allow for a 50/50 split of residential/commercial, or consider removing the cap on 'other uses' limits.

■ The requirement in build-to-rent schemes where the developer must enter into a covenant with the local authority that the development is held in single ownership for a minimum period (15 years+) post completion should be reviewed, and an opportunity created to split by block/phase as opposed to the blanket covenant.



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Is Ireland in need of a retirement home re-think?

In a culture with family firmly set as its cornerstone, the concept of care homes has long been in need of a major charm offensive in Ireland.

Perceived as institutional settings and a proverbial last – functional rather than comfortable – stop before the grave, committing loved ones to or volunteering for residency remains the exception rather than the rule.

The coronavirus pandemic has certainly not helped the sector's cause, casting question marks over the quality of the "care" component as a consequence of it contributing to more than half of the Republic's recorded Covid-19 deaths.

Reform looks to be something of an inevitability in respect of State-provided homes after they were labelled as "outdated" in a recent Health Information and Quality Authority report, and despite their unpopularity there is a very real need for care facilities to become increasingly prominent features of our towns and cities.

Why? Because Ireland's current scarcity of provision for retirement living means it is set on a road to a massive supply and demand imbalance. The country's ageing population is going to leave thousands requiring a place to call home.

It is a reality for which the national pension system and funding for public care homes are woefully unprepared, so it is inevitable that private schemes must come to the fore.

Such circumstances will certainly pique the interest of those seeking investment prospects in real estate. An undersupplied market suggests stable cash flows and a chance to diversify and balance risk across portfolios.

Indeed, retirement living appears a sure-fire bet when viewed against the challenges of other sectors, where Covid's legacy is one of volatility.

Having the money to finance builds is all well and good but it means nothing if the product does not appeal to its target customers.

Perceptions have to be challenged to make occupancy desirable and not a decision of last resort. So is it now time for the Republic to embrace the creation of US-style retirement villages? To make that move from the family home an aspirational one rather than just something done in the autumn years of life.



Shifting the focus from stairlifts to hospitality would certainly help.

Mixed developments of "close care" and assisted-living flats complemented by spas, coffee shops and restaurants will be immediately more appealing to forthcoming generations who prize independence, security and being part of a vibrant community.

Presenting retirement villages as a positive life choice will require more than just the promise of private parking and parkland though.

A change in the Government's approach to zoning is also required. There is political pressure to prioritise residential developments but additional thought needs to be given to the mid- and long-term as well as the short-term.

At Duke McCaffrey our appetite to help Ireland build a better future for its population has been whetted by working on a number of new developments which will deliver significant residential care settings.

As construction consultants, innovation has always been part and parcel of the services we provide and such imaginative thinking – grounded in the expertise of the art-of-the-possible – needs to be applied to bring Florida-style retirement villages to the likes of Falcarragh.

Modern methods of construction, design and build solutions and an appreciation of preserving investors' profit margins can help to transform the options open to those on the precipice of downsizing.

Challenging convention – be it by bringing residential villages to high streets or exploring alternative footprints and modular designs – can exceed the expectations of both potential developers and their tenants of tomorrow.

CLIMATE TARGET 2050

THE CLIMATE ACTION AND LOW CARBON DEVELOPMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL 2020 HAS SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS FOR SURVEYORS.

The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Bill 2020 was published on October 7, 2020, and is described by the Government as an ambitious piece of legislation. It commits us, in law, to move to a climate-resilient and climate-neutral economy by 2050, and amends the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 to address a previous criticism of that Act, which was its failure to identify specific targets. The Bill will also provide a mechanism to agree, review and enforce Ireland's climate plans, and sets out a framework by which every industry will be called upon to help the country to reduce emissions and protect the environment.

The Bill is part of the wider EU movement towards a greener economy with the aim of assisting Ireland in meeting its EU 2030 emissions targets. Those targets are based on the recently published European Green Deal to cut greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030 across Europe, with the overarching objective of putting Europe on a responsible path to becoming climate neutral by 2050.

The Programme for Government, agreed in June 2020, commits to a 7% average yearly reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions over the next decade and to achieving net zero emissions by 2050. The key features of the new Bill are:

- putting Ireland's 2050 climate target into law;
- carbon budgets, including a provision for setting sectoral targets;
- an annually revised Climate Action Plan and a 10-year National Long-Term Climate Action Strategy;
- a strengthened role for the Climate Change Advisory Council;
- a requirement for all local authorities to prepare individual climate action plans, which will include both mitigation and adaptation measures; and,
- new oversight and accountability by the Oireachtas.

FEATURE

Barra McCabe BL
Barrister-at-law and
former surveyor





A CLIMATE-NEUTRAL ECONOMY MEANS A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY WHERE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS ARE BALANCED OR EXCEEDED BY THEIR REMOVAL.

New National 2050 Climate Objective

The Bill legislates for net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, through a National 2050 Climate Objective. A climate-neutral economy means a sustainable economy where greenhouse gas emissions are balanced or exceeded by their removal. The Bill mandates that the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications must submit a number of documents to Government for approval, which include:

- a series of national long-term climate strategies (once every 10 years);
- a Climate Action Plan (annually);
- a national adaptation framework;
- sectoral adaptation plans; and,
- a series of carbon budgets.

Carbon budgets

The Bill introduces a system of successive five-year, economy-wide carbon budgets starting in 2021, which are to be set on a 15-year cycle. Carbon budgets will include all greenhouse gases, and each five-year carbon budget will allocate emissions ceilings to all relevant sectors, known as decarbonisation target ranges. The first budgets will span 2021-2035. These budgets will be in the form of ceilings on how much CO₂ may be emitted by certain sectors of the economy.

Where a sector comes within its allocated emissions budget, the surplus emissions can be carried forward for use in successive budgets. In circumstances where a sector exceeds its allocated emissions budget, then there will be provision to "borrow" from subsequent budgets up to a maximum of 1% of the total carbon budget.

These graduating carbon budgetary processes and sectoral decarbonisation target ranges will provide a clear signal and pathways to drive future investment, allowing the country to reach our climate targets and stimulate job creation in new sectors such as retrofitting and renewable energy, the circular economy, clean mobility, green and blue infrastructure, sustainable agriculture and the bio-economy.

New plans/strategies

Starting in 2021, annual updates will be made to the Climate Action Plan. Annual revisions to the Plan will focus on the near and medium-term perspectives, and will provide a road map of actions, including sectoral actions to achieve the carbon budget and sectoral decarbonisation target ranges. A National Long-Term Climate Action Strategy will be prepared once every ten years and may be updated every five years if necessary. It will specify the manner in which it is proposed to achieve the national 2050 climate objective. The National Mitigation Plan will be replaced by the preparation of the Climate Action Plan and National Long-Term Climate Action Strategy.

Climate Change Advisory Council

The role of the Climate Change Advisory Council is significantly strengthened by being given a central role in setting carbon budgets. The Council will propose national and sectoral limits to be adopted by Government while the all-party Committee on Climate Action will provide key oversight. Each successive carbon budget will be proposed by the Climate Change Advisory Council after considering relevant scientific advice and international best practice on the reporting of greenhouse gas emissions and their removal.

Local government role

All local authorities will develop Local Authority Climate Action Plans for their areas covering both mitigation and adaptation actions. This will provide more visible local action to tackle climate change.

Stronger Dáil and Seanad oversight of climate policy

Both Houses have a role in the development and approval of carbon budgets with an opportunity for an Oireachtas committee to consider the Government's recommended carbon budgets as part of the

approval process for carbon budgets. In addition, Ministers will be accountable to an Oireachtas Committee on Climate Action on an annual basis to give an account of performance against the targets. Ministers will also have to attend the Committee and respond to any recommendations within three months.

Impact on businesses

The impact of this Bill will particularly affect businesses in the built environment, along with the energy, transport and agri-food sectors, given Ireland's emissions profile. Businesses in these sectors will need to pay particular attention to the applicable sectoral targets to be set within the Climate Action Plans, as these plans may change on an annual basis and will determine the particular policy measures that will be applied. The first carbon budgets are due to be set from 2021.

BUILDING MENTAL HEALTH

THE YSCSI'S MEMBER SURVEY ON MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING SHOWS THE IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC AND OTHER MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES IN THE PROFESSION.

Mental health and well-being are watchwords for professionals as the shadow of Covid-19 still looms large. The SCSI's Young Members' Committee (YSCSI) is leading the way in supporting members, and recently circulated a survey that garnered over 500 responses.

How many is too many?

Since the onset of the global pandemic, 38% of respondents reported a decline in mental health and well-being, with 32% feeling they have developed some form of mental ill health. These results align with similar studies carried out by Trinity College Dublin and St James's Hospital, and point to a need for tools to assist individuals and employers alike.

The impact of the pandemic is well reported. However, underlying issues such as bullying, sexual harassment and discrimination should not be ignored.

A staggering 75% of respondents have experienced bullying at some point in their career, 43% have experienced discrimination, and 11% sexual harassment.

Some 84% have never reported these incidents.

On a positive note, the majority feel supported by their current employer (65%) and feel comfortable asking for help and advice (63%). The data is further supported by 51% reporting that their companies provide supports around mental health awareness.

Covid-19 has been a catalyst for change, and while 48% noted that Covid-19 has had a negative influence on work-life balance, 32% reported a positive impact on work-life balance, despite a majority of 68% feeling that working from home has resulted in longer working hours overall.

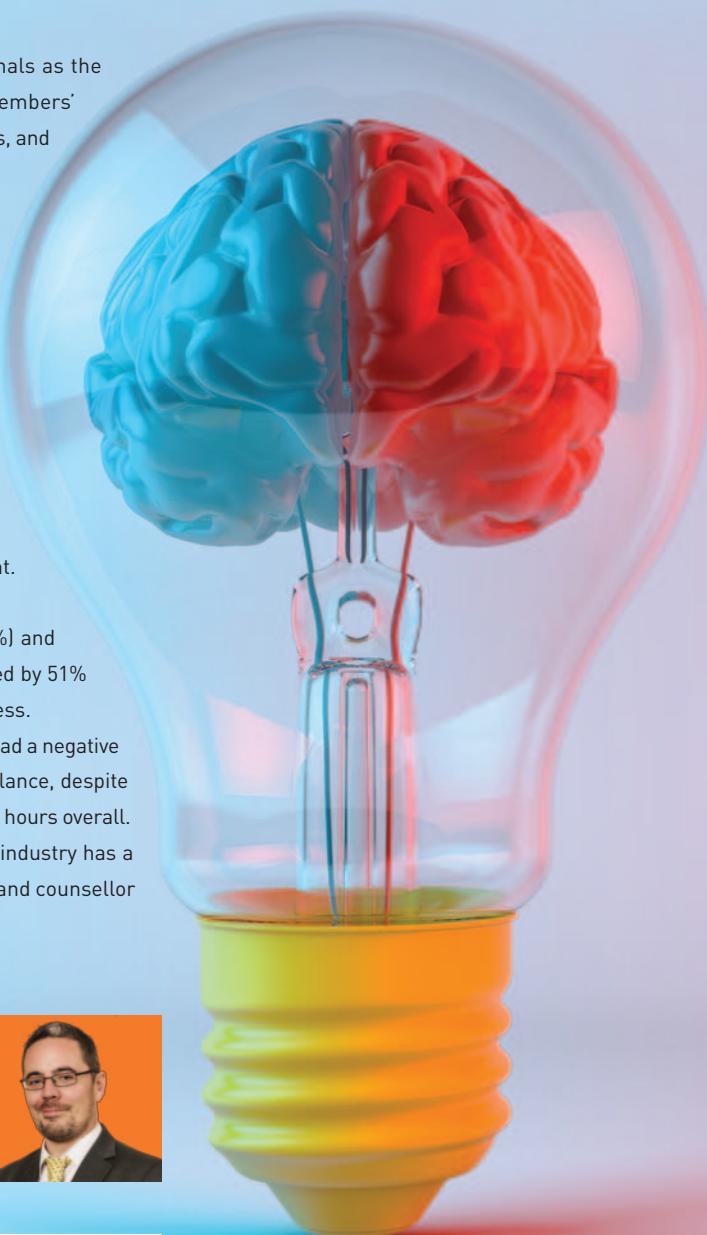
A total of 78% reported that genuine mistakes are a learning experience. The industry has a strong learning culture, as prospective SCSI members work with a supervisor and counsellor to aid their professional development towards Charter.

FEATURE

Dr Mary Collins
Chartered Coaching Psychologist



James Lonergan
Director of Education and Membership, SCSI



AT A TIME WHEN WE MUST BE PHYSICALLY APART, IT IS IMPORTANT TO STAY SOCIALLY AND EMOTIONALLY CONNECTED TO OTHERS.

Some 82% agreed or strongly agreed that they find themselves worrying about work in their free time. Addressing this and stress (58% agreed they often feel excessive stress) may help with sleep (51% find it difficult to sleep due to work issues). We also need to change the narrative around stress, as 43% think showing stress is a sign of weakness.

Role of employers – breaking the stigma

It is crucial that staff feel supported and reassured that life can and does go on. Here are some practical steps employers can take:

- offer resources to help staff become more literate in mental health issues and encourage them to seek support;
- make sure HR staff have training to understand mental health issues;
- monitor the potential for exclusion to happen digitally rather than in the physical workplace – overt bullying may now be covert;
- address work-life balance issues, e.g., some firms operate a no email policy between 8.00pm and 8.00am;
- survey staff or informally ask how people are doing to help identify triggers;
- use different communication channels so staff feel connected (emails, meetings, forums); and,
- use support that is already available, e.g., SCSI CPD and supports, and LionHeart.

Personal responsibility – developing resilience

The American Psychological Association defines resilience as the ability to bounce back from the stresses of life. Dr Mary Collins, a Chartered Coaching Psychologist with over 15 years' experience in leadership development and talent management, describes resilience as a muscle that we should work on developing on a daily basis. Just as we have routines and practices to stay physically fit and strong, we should also have practices and rituals to maintain our emotional and psychological well-being. The scientific study of positive psychology is showing increasing evidence on the impact of various activities to help increase our resilience:

Sleep, eat, move

Sleep is an overlooked factor in our well-being. Aim for at least 7.5 hours per night. Simple tips can make a difference, e.g., have a cooler temperature in the bedroom, go to sleep and wake up at a similar time each day, and do not leave your mobile phone in your bedroom! Ensure that your diet is balanced and rich in nutrients to energise you and support your immune system. Exercise is a powerful weapon in the fight against stress and poor mental health. As well as keeping us physically strong, exercise is an excellent way to release tension and increase endorphins, our 'happy hormones'. Neuroscience research also tells us of the importance of movement when we have difficult problems to solve.

Control the controllables

With so much uncertainty in our lives, it is important to focus on what we can control. Our brains like routine, certainty and structure. Can you get up earlier each morning to fit in some meditation or exercise? Can you take regular screen breaks if you are working from home? Can you put practices in place to mark the end of the working day if you are at home, for example, changing your clothes and putting your laptop and work items out of sight for the evening?

Develop optimism

Optimism comes from the Latin word *optimus* meaning "best" – an optimistic person is always looking for the best in any situation and senses opportunities even in the face of adversity. The good news is that optimism can be developed. One of the simplest ways to do this is to focus on gratitude and what you appreciate in life, even in challenging times. Prof. Brian Sexton from Duke University in the US is doing exciting research in this area. In his 'Three Good Things' study, before going to sleep at night, if you focus on three positive things that happened that day and do this consecutively for at least two weeks, it can have the same impact as taking anti-depressants for mild depression!

Nurture positive relationships

At a time when we must be physically apart, it is important to stay socially and emotionally connected to others. Social science research points to the quality of the relationships in our life as the defining fact in our well-being. With many of us reaching peak 'Zoom exhaustion', consider creative ways to stay in touch: write a letter, make a good old-fashioned phone call or a take a socially distanced walk if restrictions allow. Try to stay in touch with people who have a positive impact on your motivation, mood and energy.

Resources for SCSI members

The LionHeart Charity for RICS professionals provides a range of services, support and advice – Tel: 01-223 9446, or go to www.lionheart.org.uk/support-in-ireland.

SCSI members have access to live and recorded CPD relating to mental health and wellness – www.scsci.ie.

Dr Mary Collins is one of the lead facilitators on the 'Leading Remote Teams Programme' with McNulty Performance – www.mcnultyperformance.com.

A VIEW FROM ABOVE



IS IT DULL? IS IT DIRTY? IS IT DANGEROUS?
GET A DRONE TO DO IT!

Need a bird's eye view of the surrounding area? Need to put up scaffolding to inspect a building and roof? Is the area to be surveyed accessible? Are there harmful materials or chemicals present? Surveyors are constantly challenged with gathering accurate, timely data for analysis in real time with actionable insights and not always in ideal conditions. They may not be aware of the benefits and capabilities of using drone technology. Drone operations may not currently be part of in-house expertise, or companies may use outdated, costly solutions. In some cases, companies outsource at great expense, or use expensive alternative platforms such as scaffolding, cranes or helicopters. Real-time information is a key challenge for engineering and construction companies. Drones are a means to an end and the value is in the data and in taking full advantage of integrating it. Enhanced processes and digital tools cannot replace people but they are essential to increase quality, reduce costs, mitigate safety risks and improve decision-making, bringing a competitive advantage to early adopters.

Types of drones and use cases

The most common type of drone is a simple quadcopter and the advantage of these drones is that they are generally light, with simple technology, easy to operate and reliable. The disadvantage is there is no redundancy – if a motor fails, the drone will crash. The payloads are generally not interchangeable on smaller drones and they will not be as stable as larger drones in windy conditions. Hexcopters and octocopters provide more stable platforms, with interchangeable or multiple payloads. Fixed-wing drones tend to be used where larger areas are being surveyed or mapped.

Drones can be flown manually through a remote control, with pre-programmed flightpaths and actions set at waypoints, or may be fully autonomous, where the operator has no ability to make an input once the operation has commenced.

Drones are most commonly used to obtain high-resolution photographs and videos, and there are constant new entrants to the market competing with the well-established brands. Whether thermal or multispectral sensors, or sensors for detecting light intensity, sound, frequency or gas vapour, the applications and available sensors are endless, as are the combinations of sensors on the same platform. The uses are only limited by our imaginations.

FEATURE

Julie Garland
CEO, Avtrain





European regulations

The new EU regulations, which came into effect on January 1, 2021, adopt a risk-based approach and do not distinguish between leisure and commercial activities. They take into account the weight and specifications of the drone, and the operation it is intended to undertake. The operational categories are based on increasing levels of risk, and are: Open; Specific; or, Certified. In the Open category, once you have carried out very basic training and are registered, you can operate the drone with no further reference to or permission from the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA). The Specific category is the next level where you have to perform a risk assessment and make a declaration, or apply for an authorisation based on the risk your operation poses to uninvolving persons and to manned aircraft. If the drone is flown over a controlled ground area this is a significant advantage during the risk assessments.

Getting airborne

The first step is to register on <https://iaa.mysrs.ie/auth/sign-in> and complete the Open A1/A3 exam. This will allow you to operate very small drones close to people and drones up to 25kg far away from people and property. The next level is for drones up to 4kg, where you need to complete further training and certification for the Open A2 Category, which



allows for operations up to 30m from uninvolving people and to 5m with a low speed mode selected. If the operation is of sufficient risk to require a risk assessment to be completed and/or if you are operating anywhere in Dublin, Cork or Shannon within 15nm of the airport, you will most likely be in controlled airspace and to get permission to fly in these areas you need to be certified in the Specific Category. This certification is a two-day theoretical knowledge course focused on risk management followed by the development of an operations manual and a flight test. There is also the option of practical flight training with software and systems instruction.

The advantages of having in-house drone operators is that they know exactly what they are looking for and can immediately carry out in-depth analysis if an area causes concern. They will be on location anyway so time and weather won't cause the same kind of limitations, and will be familiar with the health and safety considerations of a live site environment. Site insurance can be extended to cover drone operations.

Subcontracting questions

If you are planning on using a subcontractor, there are a number of questions you can ask to see if they're the right fit for you.

What level of certification do they hold?

I would suggest a minimum of a Specific Category Operational Authorisation. This means the operator can identify and mitigate risks to an acceptable level applicable in diverse operations.

Other questions to consider

- What experience/flying hours do the pilots have?
- Have they been on sites or do they have expertise in construction?
- What variety of equipment do they have?
- Do they have sensors for the data you need to collect?
- What insurance do they hold?
- Can they indemnify your organisation against all risks?
- Can they provide survey grade data, has it been quality assured, and what is the level of accuracy and verification?
- What is the cost?
- What is the availability?
- Will they be reliable and have continuous regular availability during a large-scale project?
- Finally, ask for references.

A NEW VISION FOR HOUSING

THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSED COMMISSION ON HOUSING PRESENTS AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEAVE BEHIND THE BOOM AND BUST CYCLES OF THE PAST AND DEVISE A SETTLED AND EFFECTIVE HOUSING POLICY.



In the Programme for Government, there is a proposal for a commission on housing and the Government is currently working on the terms of reference. The Government may opt for a narrow brief focusing on a specified set of problems to be solved within the framework of current housing policies. This would be a lost opportunity.

A commission could provide a timely and much-needed opportunity to look rigorously at our housing system and seek an explanation for the perennial cycles of shortages and high prices. A wider scope would also allow an exploration of how other aspects of public policy either accentuate housing problems, or are themselves tainted by policies designed to incentivise housing supply.



FEATURE

Tom Dunne
Chair, Residential Tenancies Board,
and Editor, *Surveyors Journal*



Lack of clarity

The logic for this wider vision is that a lack of clarity now exists about the direction of housing policy. This is inhibiting the supply of appropriate housing and, more particularly, the role and purpose of social housing. A lack of housing is a significant inhibitor of economic growth. Lack of supply, together with high rents and prices, make Ireland, and particularly its main urban areas, unattractive to a mobile workforce seeking employment in future-oriented industries and a good accessible home in which to enjoy life.

Moreover, this lack of clarity is likely to result in housing becoming an area for even more intense political debate and this could lead to more volatile and damaging policy implementation. Many of the more profound housing problems are long term and solutions must transcend the electoral cycle. Well-meant policies aimed at dealing with acute market failures can accentuate other weaknesses or have unintended consequences.

Breaking the cycle

Many countries, and particularly cities, experience difficulties with housing. Housing issues are inherently political and many politicians, particularly those active at local government level, demand responses when prices and rents increase sharply. Mostly, these call for direct provision of housing or suggest economic, financial or legal measures. In this, Ireland is no different.

Where Ireland is different is that such problems are perennial and persistent, and housing is at the forefront of electoral politics at a national level. In recent years, we have not been able to develop sustainable housing policies that endure through time and, importantly, through economic and electoral cycles. The constant tweaking of planning policy in recent years is evidence of this. A commission with a wide remit could facilitate the development of a settled, widely accepted and sustainable planning policy for housing.

Ireland was an early provider of what would

now be called social housing, as there were policies to provide housing for landless labourers in rural Ireland even before the foundation of the State. It is well known that once Fianna Fáil was founded, housing was a core political cause and this saw the provision of what came to be known as council housing, resulting in the creation of large areas of good housing throughout the State. It is not so well known that the first Cumman na nGaedheal governments in the 1920s also commenced large housing schemes. Today, housing remains a core concern of the electorate and Sinn Féin majored in this area of public policy in the last election.

To inform political debate there is a strong argument for this commission to have wide terms of reference, sufficient to consider housing in the context of other important areas of public policy that impact on housing. The process adopted by a commission, and its findings, should inform policy formation, provide a framework of understanding, and facilitate informed and constructive political debate.

Planning system

An obvious aspect to be examined, which is always politically contentious, is the planning system. Booms and busts have been a significant characteristic of housing since the introduction of the Planning Acts in the early 1960s. Arguably, the operation of our planning system, how it interacts with the property development industry and how Government responds to acute market failures, have the effect of accentuating market cycles. Such Government interventions, often procyclical and frequently intended to induce increased house production, mostly rely on demand-side incentives. They have, however, the unintended effect of accelerating property prices, which in turn increase land and site values. Indeed, under the present system, incentivising home ownership through grants and tax reliefs simply increases land and site values, and encourages speculation more than it increases supply. Effectively, this removes an option of incentivising

home ownership using the tax system. The commission should examine the causal links in all of this, which are not well understood.

A good example of the interaction between housing and other areas of public policy that is complicated and obscure is provided by considering pensions. Does it make sense that the Government incentivises saving for a pension through the tax system rather than saving and paying for a house? Would it not make more sense to buy a house and own it outright by retirement rather than saving for a pension large enough to pay rent?

It should make sense to provide tax incentives for home ownership, thus reducing the need for larger pensions. However, as we have seen above, this option has consequences for land speculation. Indeed, given the uplift in land and site values as a consequence of planning decisions, planning has been a political cauldron since the introduction of the Planning Acts. Today issues such as density, height, and building for rent or for sale are contentious. Understanding the economics of property development and the complex interactions between planning, incentives for homeowners, tax policies and housing supply is crucial to understanding housing.

All-encompassing view

All this points to the need for a commission to look at housing holistically and include taxation, the social welfare system, and other areas of public policy that have housing impacts. It offers an opportunity to devise a settled and effective housing policy for a generation. A narrowly focused commission limited to looking at particular aspects of housing would be an opportunity lost.

The prize is to create a long-term vision for housing with wide political and public acceptance, integrating housing with other areas of public policy. This would allow the country to move beyond the cycle of housing shortages followed by repeated ineffectual responses. The commission offers a chance to find a way out.

BUILDING GREEN

THE IRISH GREEN BUILDING COUNCIL IS WORKING TO TRANSFORM THE IRISH BUILT ENVIRONMENT THROUGH LEADERSHIP, RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND POLICY INPUT, AND IS LOOKING FOR SURVEYORS TO GET INVOLVED.

Green building councils are independent, non-profit organisations made up of businesses and organisations working in property and construction. The Irish Green Building Council (IGBC) was launched in 2011 to accelerate the transformation of the built environment, related industry and supply chains to ones that are sustainable, through leadership, research, education, and policy input to national and local Government. The IGBC is Ireland's leading authority on green building best practices, with a network of over 180 green building organisations spanning the entire built environment industry. The World Green Building Council (of which the IGBC is a member) has a mission to transform the building and construction sector across three strategic areas – climate action, health and well-being, and resources and circularity. The IGBC supports these by:



- providing leadership for sustainability and quality in the built environment;
- developing credible metrics for measuring progress towards the end goal of sustainability;
- providing resources to companies transitioning their activities towards more sustainable practices; and,
- being central to the alignment of the policies of organisations seeking to achieve sustainability in the built environment.

Over ten years, the IGBC has made enormous contributions to the transformation to a sustainable built environment by inputting into national policy, promoting greener homes through smarter finance and home performance certification, developing guidance and tools for green procurement, and bringing buildings and

construction into the circular economy. The IGBC has rolled out extensive training and upskilling in sustainability, provided networking opportunities, and implemented and encouraged the use of a range of tools, including the Environmental Products Declarations (EPD) platform, Home Performance Index (HPI), and various accreditation programmes such as LEED, BREEAM and WELL. Current programmes include:

- upskilling for energy efficiency;
- one-stop shop renovation;
- green finance green homes;
- green public procurement;
- supporting local authorities' renovations;
- building renovation passport;
- embodied carbon and life cycle assessments (LCAs);
- learning hub; and,
- net zero commitment.

The SCSI is collaborating with the IGBC on some of these initiatives.

FEATURE

Krystyna Rawicz
Managing Director, KRA



Home Performance Index

The IGBC developed the HPI to ensure that broader sustainability issues are measured and taken into account when building new residential developments. The certification gives a third party-verified seal for financial institutions, procurers, buyers and developers.

Last November, Pat Barry, CEO of the IGBC, said: "New homes built to the current building regulations are highly energy efficient. But with half a million homes to be built by 2040, we cannot afford to focus exclusively on this. The conversation needs to move on to the total environmental impacts of the built environment across its entire life cycle. It's encouraging that international investors already set broader environmental requirements for the assets they purchase and operate in Ireland".

The HPI was designed to be easy to apply and fully integrate with Irish building regulations. It is divided into five categories: environment; health and well-being; economic; quality assurance; and, sustainable location. It provides people with the assurance that their homes have been designed and constructed with care to ensure low running costs, enhance occupant well-being, and minimise environmental impact. For further information, see: <http://homeperformanceindex.ie>.

Bringing embodied carbon upfront

Most industry and policy focus to date has been on tackling operational carbon – 29% of global emissions. But the construction of new buildings and infrastructure accounts for 11% of global carbon emissions, before they are even used or operated. These embodied carbon emissions result from use of carbon-intensive construction products and wasteful practices in the design and construction process. To meet the imperative goal of keeping the global temperature rise below 1.5°C, upfront embodied carbon must be addressed in addition to operational carbon. LCAs take into consideration all the steps that lead from raw material to manufactured product, including extraction of materials, energy consumption, manufacture, transportation, use, recycling and final disposal or end of life. This holistic methodology quantifies how a product or process affects climate change, non-renewable resources, and the environment.

EPDs are a standardised way for manufacturers to display information on the environmental impact of building products, including global warming potential. EPDs allow specifiers to make more informed choices about the materials they use.

Many organisations, including surveying companies, have already signed the IGBC's EPD commitment. They have committed to ask for EPDs and to prefer products with EPDs where possible (within procurement rules).

Green mortgages

The IGBC has been working with the World Green Building Council and the European Mortgage Federation on the development of energy-efficient mortgages, which are being piloted by 40 banks across Europe. The SMARTER Finance for Families programme aims to further develop green mortgage programmes and expand them beyond simplistic energy-efficiency goals.

**SURVEYORS HAVE NOW
RECOGNISED THE CLIMATE
AND BIODIVERSITY CRISES
AS AN EXISTENTIAL THREAT
TO HUMANITY. WE HAVE
DECLARED A CLIMATE AND
BIODIVERSITY EMERGENCY.**

Retrofitting our existing building stock

Ireland cannot achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 without decarbonising its existing building stock. Many homeowners cannot afford to do everything at once or are limited by the need to continue to live in the house while work is being done. To address this issue, the IGBC, with support from the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI), is exploring the opportunity of introducing a building renovation passport in Ireland. Building renovation passports are masterplans for retrofit and include a record of works. By providing a set of actions, sequence and estimated costs to inform improvements towards more energy-efficient homes, they address the barriers to consumer decision making.

Why should surveyors join the IGBC?

Surveyors have now recognised the climate and biodiversity crises as existential threats to humanity. We have declared a climate and biodiversity emergency. Many of you have signed up to the 'Surveyors Declare' document.

Joining the IGBC will allow you to build sustainability skills and knowledge, participate in the push to decarbonise the built environment across the whole life cycle, become part of a movement to transition Ireland's building industry to carbon neutrality, and get up to speed with the latest tools and initiatives for a more circular building industry. You can join as an individual or as a company at www.igbc.ie/membership/.

There are great savings for members on LEED, BREEAM and other IGBC training, which offset the cost of membership. Members receive sustainability news and research. You become part of a global movement working to bring about global and local change, and to accelerate Ireland's transformation to a sustainable built environment.

SURVEYORS DECLARE

THE SURVEYORS DECLARE INITIATIVE AIMS TO GET ALL SECTORS OF THE INDUSTRY ON THE PATH TO A TRANSFORMED INDUSTRY THAT IS MORE IN HARMONY WITH THE NATURAL WORLD AND A DECARBONISED BUILT ENVIRONMENT.

"WE ARE THE FIRST GENERATION TO FEEL THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE, AND THE LAST GENERATION TO BE ABLE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT."
– BARACK OBAMA

Ireland already had a binding 20% target for greenhouse gas emissions reduction by 2020, but performed very poorly in attempting to achieve it. In 2018, then Taoiseach Leo Varadkar said we were "climate laggards", and we haven't exactly outshone ourselves in doing better since. The World Economic Forum lists climate action failure as the current number one global risk in terms of impact, and number two global risk in terms of likelihood in the next 10 years (extreme weather being number one). Climate action failure trumps everything else, including

infectious diseases. We need to halve our carbon emissions by 2030 if we are to have any chance of averting dangerous climate change, an absolutely huge challenge.

Decade of change

This has to be the decade of change. We literally have no choice! We have just under a decade to address this global climate change emergency, or we risk catastrophic irreversible damage to the natural world. Without nature, we cannot live.

Yet as the Earth's life support systems come under increasing threat, the scale and intensity of urban development, infrastructure and construction globally continue to expand, resulting in greater greenhouse gas generation and loss of habitat each year.

For everyone working in construction and the built environment, meeting the needs of our societies without breaching the Earth's ecological boundaries will demand a paradigm shift in our behaviour, at work, at home, everywhere we go and with everything we do. If we are to reduce, and eventually reverse, the environmental damage we are causing, we will need to reimagine our buildings, cities and infrastructure as indivisible components of a larger, constantly regenerating and self-sustaining system. Respecting Mother Nature must be at the centre of this. Biodiversity underpins our economy, health and well-being, and plays a key role in the functioning of ecosystems, their resilience and their continuing ability to provide ecosystem services.

FEATURE

Eloise Heron
Chair,
SCSI Sustainability Group



Since the emergency was declared in early February, the number of members and companies joining up has been huge, with heartening messages of support from members, including:

Surveyors declare

The SCSI's Sustainability Group, comprised of approximately 20 surveyors from different backgrounds in property and construction, has been working on promoting and integrating sustainability into our business as surveyors for the past few years. One member, Krystyna Rawicz, came up with the idea of the SCSI declaring a climate and biodiversity emergency last year, and this was wholeheartedly supported by the SCSI governing groups, the Board and Council.

Decarbonising our built environment cannot happen without a wide-ranging declaration of intent, followed by committed action, co-operation and open-source knowledge sharing. Our hope is that this declaration by the SCSI [and other related stakeholders] will support more effective lobbying of policy makers and governments to show leadership and commit resources. The next few years will shape our collective future – now is the moment to act.

We have to act

The basis of us declaring an emergency is simple: we have to act; we aren't doing enough in our profession; and, we want to do more, quickly. Joining the movement couldn't be simpler. Members (and supporting firms) can sign up on the SCSI website, and new member details are put on our website every Friday. As an official supporter, you are asked to commit to a simple pledge, which is to act on the following principles:

- to strive to limit the use of fossil fuels in my practice;
- to act in accordance with the best principles for the mitigation of environmental harm, and the enhancement of environmental quality for all;
- to strive to ensure that the uses of natural resources are fair and sustainable, taking account of the needs of a diverse society;
- to use my skills and experience to serve the needs of the environment and society;
- to serve as an example to others for responsible environmental behaviour; and,
- to be aware of and aim to observe and support the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

We also ask members to take specific action around the wise use of energy, waste and water, to take steps to promote biodiversity, and to encourage suppliers, contractors and everyone in our circle to do the same. In order to help members with this, we have also prepared a supplementary document, which details practical ideas to make your pledge a reality.

"This is an excellent initiative, which I wholeheartedly endorse."

"Particularly delighted to see this and particularly delighted and proud to be a member of the SCSI at this moment."

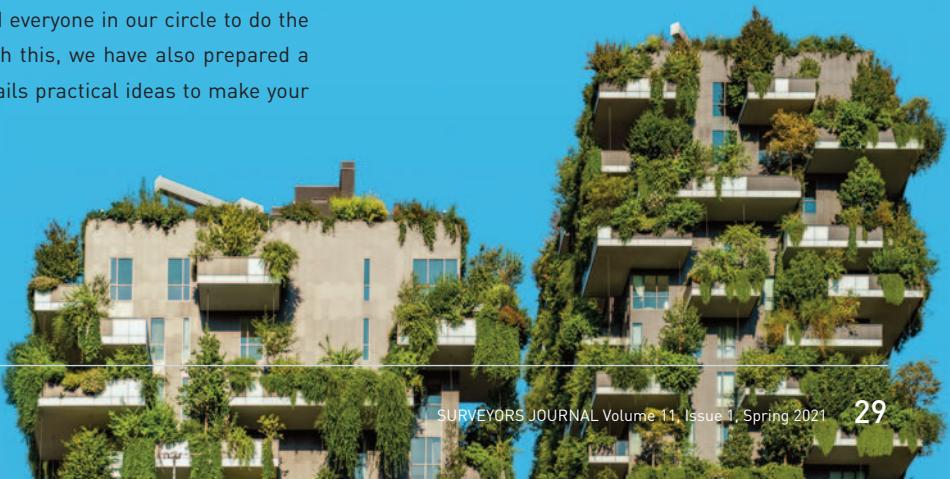
"I was delighted to see the SCSI take this progressive step to declaring a climate and biodiversity emergency."

The next step

Our next step is to invite all stakeholders to an online meeting, where we can come together in one space, regardless of who we work for, and start the journey together, helping each other on this long road ahead towards decarbonising our entire built environment. At this meeting, we can address practical issues facing all of us, including barriers to sustainability, where to go for advice, how to upskill ourselves and our supply chain, and how to develop and protect our businesses as we move into this unknown future area.

Collaboration is essential to dramatically reduce emissions and spur transformative change, and with this in mind, our inaugural sustainability conference in April will be shared with the Association of Consulting Engineers in Ireland, Engineers Ireland, and The Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland, as the problems and opportunities face us all. As we seek to overcome the Covid-19 crisis, building retrofitting and other sustainability measures offer a unique opportunity to rethink, redesign and modernise our buildings to make them fit for a greener, digital society, and sustain economic recovery. Let's move towards a better future for all.

Sign up to back the climate and biodiversity emergency at <https://scsi.ie/members-area/my-professional-journey/surveyors-declare/>



COUNTING THE COST

DESPISE POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS, THE LATEST SCSI REPORT SHOWS THAT APARTMENT CONSTRUCTION VIABILITY AND AFFORDABILITY CHALLENGES REMAIN.

The Society's Real Cost of New Apartment Delivery Report is informed by approximately 10,000 apartment units and is the output of many member volunteer hours compiling and analysing the data. The objective of our report is to examine the average delivery costs of new two-bedroom apartments to the market, whether the development is built to sell or to rent. Our comprehensive, evidenced-based report not only publishes average costs, but examines viability, affordability for the average income earner, and also includes a series of recommendations to help improve the outlook for the apartment development market.

The importance of data

Real-time, reliable construction data is now more important than ever. The housing challenge remains a key concern, despite Covid-19-related impacts over the past 12 months. The stop-start nature of the construction sector because of Covid-19 restrictions is impacting on new housing completions. Annual new completions are running at 19,000, well below the Central Bank's estimate of 35,000 units needed to cater for housing demand. Given this seismic challenge, the Government must continue to develop and shape policy to improve the delivery of new units to meet projected demand. This is why the Society's report is so important, as it provides real-time data to assist policymakers in introducing positive

change to the market and the supply of much-needed housing units.

There is much discussion currently regarding which is the better and most cost-efficient method of delivering new units to the market – public versus private. This can be a divisive and unhealthy debate because it can act as a distraction to progressing important new development. Public and private should work together to improve delivery and this collaboration is already a regular feature with positive outcomes. It is important that costs are reported accurately and consistently. Whether it is the public sector delivering housing on public land or private development on private sites, the same cost headings should be used to clearly differentiate costs. Consistent reporting of 'all-in' cost data for public and private housing delivery is key to driving correct policy decisions so that housing is

delivered for all tenure types, in correct proportions to accommodate future needs. The Society, and its involvement with the International Construction Reporting Standards, will hopefully provide this solution to Government departments.

Main findings

Our report covers the construction, viability and affordability of four categories of build-to-sell and build-to-rent apartments in Dublin. The report found that the all-in cost of delivering medium-rise (five to eight storey) two-bedroom apartments ranged from €411K for a low-specification unit in the suburbs to €619K for a high-specification medium-rise (nine to 15 storeys) unit in the city.

The costs of delivering a low-rise suburban apartment range from €359K for a low-specification unit – an increase of 8% since

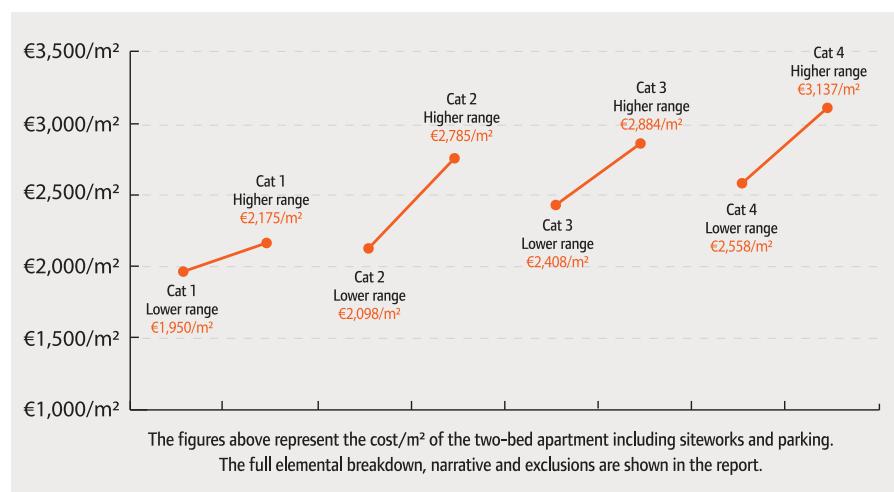


CHART 1: Construction costs (€/sq.m) of a two-bedroom apartment (ex. VAT), including siteworks and parking.

SCSI REPORT

Katie Dempsey
Research and Policy Executive, SCSI



SCSI REPORT

Paul Mitchell
Chair, SCSI Real Cost of Apartment Delivery Working Group



the SCSI's last apartment report in 2017 – to €413K for a high-specification one, up 7%. These figures outline the cost to deliver these units; sales prices would need to exceed these figures for developments to be viable.

Construction costs have generally increased since our 2017 report and now represent 47% of overall development costs of a two-bedroom suburban medium-rise apartment (43% in 2017). However, the increases have been below the general rate of inflation, which means that the actual cost of delivery for some categories has reduced overall due to recent regulatory changes regarding apartment building (Chart 1).

Scheme viability/non-viability

Based on an analysis of current sales price (excl. VAT) compared with total delivery costs, it was identified that only lower-specification build-to-sell apartment schemes in categories 1 and 2 are considered commercially viable. This is an improvement from our 2017 report where Category 1 (lower range) was the only viable category. For apartments to become viable, overall costs will need to reduce or sales prices increase, which has implications for affordability (Chart 2).

Affordability

Affordability for purchasers remains a key area of concern across all apartment categories and ranges. Taking the example of a first-time buyer couple earning an average combined income of €88,000, the report found that the couple would not meet the financial threshold required to purchase an apartment across any of the four categories. The couple would require a deposit of €38K and a joint income of €98K to purchase the lowest price apartment type. Only with the Help to Buy scheme does the Category 1 apartment become affordable (Chart 3).

Stakeholder engagement

The launch of this report has led to significant engagement with key stakeholders, including continued engagement with the Department of Housing around a number of key policy areas.

In advance of the report, a team from the SCSI comprising President Micheál Mahon, Paul Mitchell, Claire Solon and CEO Shirley Coulter held a series of briefings with the Department of An Taoiseach, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, and the Land Development Agency, as well as with a number of TDs, councillors and industry officials.



Category 1: Suburban (Low Rise)

Sales price (excl. VAT)
Total cost (excl. VAT)
Development margin/risk

	RANGE	
Lower	-	Higher
€30k	-	€361k
€273k	-	€317k
€57k	-	€44k
21%	-	14%



Category 2: Suburban (Medium Rise)

Sales price (excl. VAT)
Total cost (excl. VAT)
Development margin/risk

	RANGE	
Lower	-	Higher
€364k	-	€399k
€314k	-	€407k
€49k	-	-€7k
16%	-	-2%



Category 3: Urban (Medium Rise; 5-8 St.)

Sales price (excl. VAT)
Total cost (excl. VAT)
Development margin/risk

	RANGE	
Lower	-	Higher
€427k	-	€463k
€379k	-	€451k
€49k	-	€12k
13%	-	3%



Category 4: Urban (Medium Rise; 9-15 St.)

Sales price (excl. VAT)
Total cost (excl. VAT)
Development margin/risk

	RANGE	
Lower	-	Higher
€438k	-	€501k
€396k	-	€479k
€42k	-	€22k
11%	-	5%

Figures rounded to nearest €1,000.

CHART 2: Viability/nonviability of a two-bedroom apartment scheme across four apartment categories.

The publication of the report also resulted in a one-on-one meeting between the SCSI team and the Minister for Housing on the day of the report launch. The Society will continue to engage with the Minister's office over the coming months and assist in discussions through sharing of factual data and members' expertise across a range of pertinent policy issues.

The report also received extensive media coverage and was included on the front page of both *The Irish Times* and *Irish Independent*. It was

further covered across broadcast, online and social media. The Society would like to acknowledge the commitment and efforts of all members who contributed time, data and expertise to inform this report, and ensure a successful launch.

Read the full report here: https://mk0societyofchag3d3v.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/SCSI_RealCostofNewApartmentDelivery_final.pdf.

	Cat. 1	Cat. 2	Cat. 3	Cat. 4
Sales price of two-bedroom apartment (lower range)	€375,000	€413,000	€485,000	€497,000
Deposit required (10%) (First-time buyer)	€37,500 —	€41,300 —	€48,500 —	€49,700 —
Mortgage required	€337,500	€371,700	€436,500	€447,300
Mortgage available (based on LTI of 3.5)	€308,000 —	€308,000 —	€308,000 —	€308,000 —
	-€29,500	-€63,700	-€128,500	-€139,300
	X	X	X	X

CHART 3: Affordability/unaffordability scenarios for an average income earning couple looking to purchase a two-bedroom apartment in Dublin.

MODULE GROUP

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Building Surveyors **Designers** **Project Managers**

KEEPING THINGS MOVING

CORMAC KENNEDY IS HEAD OF PROPERTY AT DUBLIN PORT, A JOB WHICH ENCOMPASSES MANY ASPECTS OF MANAGING THE PORT'S PROPERTIES AND ITS MASSIVE FOOTPRINT.

Cormac has been Head of Property at Dublin Port for three years and says the Port is a unique property ecosystem: "Because from a general practice point of view, we have all sorts of lease structures in the Port. We've standard occupational leases, we've licences, we've building leases, we've all sorts of legal relationships. Because of the work we're doing in the Port in terms of the development pipeline, we've plenty of engagement with our quantity surveyors, our architects, our heritage architects and land surveyors. We use LIDAR to take surveys of all our walls. From a surveying point of view, we cross over into all the other surveying disciplines on a regular basis". Cormac says that his week is broadly split into thirds covering different aspects of his job. One-third is spent on development projects, primarily about developing freight capacity. Dublin Port accounts for most of the 'ro-ro' and 'lo-lo' freight coming into Ireland. Ro-ro is roll on, roll off, meaning the freight on lorries that drives off the ships. Lo-lo is load on, load off, which is freight coming in on container ships, which must be loaded off with cranes. Dublin Port accounts for almost 90% of ro-ro freight coming into Ireland and around 70% of lo-lo freight: "It's very

important in that sense and our job is to create the environment for that traffic to transit through the port as efficiently as it can. We're guided in all that work (in building capacity) through our masterplan and our franchise strategy, which is essentially our land use strategy". Ground was broken last year on the Dublin Inland Port, which is located near Dublin Airport: "We're building a remote location where we can move what we call non-core port users from the Port". Traditional landlord/tenant issues take up about another third of Cormac's time, and the remaining third is spent on legal and insurance issues.

Port development

Cormac explains that the Port will have reached maximum capacity by 2040 and its masterplan will be developed through three strategic infrastructure development (SID) applications: "As part of our work in planning for 2040 we've issued seven post-2040 dialogue papers. I think this is important from a surveyor's point of view because it talks about where we see capacity in Dublin Port and the Irish port system post 2040".

Brexit

Cormac says the Port took the view that Brexit meant Brexit from the start: "We started planning for Brexit straight after the vote because there's a long lead-in for providing the infrastructure needed to accommodate Brexit. We've given up about 14.6ha of lands to meet the various State agencies' needs".



Cormac has a busy household with four kids, and he is involved in his local GAA club in Kill, Co. Kildare. He likes to keep fit through cycling and running.

Within that land were two large warehouses that the Port secured vacant possession of, which were converted for inspections. Dublin Port spent €30m preparing for Brexit, on such things as acquiring buildings and providing infrastructure. Cormac says that at the start of the year the Port was quieter than normal, as many firms stockpiled goods before Brexit. However, volumes from the UK will increase: "All of our trade isn't done with Europe. A lot of the talk had been about those direct European routes [from Dublin and other ports], but we still do a lot of trade with the UK. That land-bridge route [across Britain] is still very important for hauliers. The current model is built on picking up a load in Ireland, bringing it through the land-bridge and dropping it in Europe, but on the way back through the UK, they'd pick up loads as well, so you can see why that route is important for the whole logistical supply chain".

SURVEYOR PROFILE

Colm Quinn
Journalist and Sub-Editor,
Think Media



GETTING THE BALANCE RIGHT

GENDER BALANCE AT ALL LEVELS OF THE SURVEYING PROFESSION IS ONE OF THE KEYS TO RUNNING A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS.

When I was in Bolton Street, many years ago, the surveying profession was very much a male-dominated one. In my class when I started out there were five female students in a class of 25. By the time we graduated, there were only two. Fortunately, things have changed dramatically and female representation in the profession is high; however, unfortunately representation at management level is not as high.

The value of diversity

On a personal note, having been surrounded by strong, intelligent and hard-working women all my life, it has never really struck me that there should be any difference in the ability of either sex to achieve high performance and success in business. In TWM, the stats show that we are very diversified at all levels: shareholders 50:50 male:female; directors 50:50 male:female; and, total employees 55% male, 45% female. These statistics were not premeditated or planned. Our recruitment policy has always been to employ the best candidate. Even though not by design, we have found that having a diversity of

employees is of tremendous benefit to our company. The differing personalities, ways of looking at things and dealing with issues that arise are a fantastic resource in any organisation. This is the same at graduate and senior management level.

Another aspect to this is that we find that our clients run diversified businesses and therefore it is important for the business that our surveying team can respond to this.

The importance of mentoring

In TWM we place a high priority on employee training and mentoring. It is extremely important to give every employee the same chance to excel and to assist them to be the best they can be.

Not every company provides this assistance, and this is why the mentoring programme being launched by the SCSI is so important. Everyone will go through ups and downs in their career and will hit obstacles along the way. This can be more challenging for women in business. Having someone that you can turn to, who knows the issues you face, will help you to steer a course around these obstacles and can be critical at various stages of a person's career to give a leg up when needed. Whether male or female, we all need that from time to time!

THE LAST WORD

Sean O'Neill
Director, TWM



PROPERTY IN THE IRISH TIMES

The image shows four distinct magazine covers from The Irish Times, each with its own title and a small photo of a person or scene related to the topic. The 'Residential Property' cover features a smiling man and a large house. The 'Commercial Property' cover shows a modern building complex. The 'Art, Antiques & Collecting' cover features a painting by Paul Henry. The 'Home & Design' cover shows a woman in a room. Each cover includes a brief description of the content and some contact information.



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