

SURVEYORS JOURNAL

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2022

LOVE LETTERS IN REAL ESTATE



SCSI

Chartered property,
land and construction
surveyors

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

COUNTDOWN TO BUDGET 2023

CONSTRUCTION COST INFLATION

PROTECTING OUR LANDSCAPES



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



NEWS



FEATURE



EDITORIAL



INTERVIEW



THE LAST WORD



NEWS FEATURE



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LETTERS, COMMENTS AND ARTICLES WELCOME

All submissions will be considered by the Editorial Board: editor@scsi.ie

SHARING OUR EXPERTISE

THE SCSI'S PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION HIGHLIGHTS OUR KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE TO ASSIST GOVERNMENT IN ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES IN THE SECTOR.

As this edition of the *Surveyors Journal* goes to print, the discussion of Budget 2023 in the news and in Leinster House is intense. During the summer the SCSI issued its pre-Budget submission. This highlighted the knowledge and expertise of the profession in helping to deliver the necessary housing supply increase of nearly 8% needed each year until 2030 if 'Housing for All' targets are to be met. Our submission included a series of recommendations that were made at our presentation to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Housing on policy actions to alleviate the impact of rising costs on the construction sector and assist project viability.

Residential accommodation

For the residential sector, our recommendations focused on closing the affordability gap, addressing delays, and decreasing construction costs. Opportunities for the Government to address material price inflation are limited; however, the establishment of a proper planning process and earlier engagement by utility companies with the development sector can help to reduce the delays and development risk associated with inconsistent application of policies. A further extension of the Help to Buy scheme should be catered for in the Budget and grant funding should be included for vacant and derelict homes. Adequate funding should also be set aside to develop a land price register to help increase transparency in the land market.

Commercial sector

The current rate of Capital Gains Tax is 33%. The SCSI is recommending that a rebate is introduced to reduce this to 8% for development land used for the delivery of new housing. An important element will be to make the rebate time bound to encourage a rapid flow of development land to the market. The reduced rate will incentivise those with development land to bring it to market during a small window of opportunity. Also, in any additional proposed taxation measures on development land, the viability of the development must be considered first and foremost. The SCSI believes that this incentive will have greater impact than taxation levy proposals, which are expected to hit zoned and serviced land where no progress is made to develop, and is due to be introduced from 2024.

Climate change and the built environment

Currently, building renovations account for only 0.5-1% of the building stock annually, which is particularly concerning. Preliminary Census data recorded 166,752 vacant homes in 2022. The SCSI is working on our new Real Costs of Renovation report to illustrate the main costs and barriers to renovating vacant property. As we await the findings of our report, the Government should consider setting aside additional grant funding for the renovation of vacant and derelict buildings.

I will update you in the coming weeks as we progress this work.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Kevin James
SCSI President



FACING THE CHALLENGES

AMID SERIOUS CONCERNS ABOUT INFLATION, THE SCSI CONTINUES TO OFFER VALUABLE SERVICES TO THE PUBLIC.

After many years, inflation and stark increases in the cost of living have come back to haunt our personal and working lives with serious consequences for us all. The latest SCSI Tender Price Index, published in July, shows that prices have grown by 7.5% since the first half of 2022, with the annual increase since the first half of 2021 being 14%. The overall effect has seen tender price inflation rising by 22% over the past 18 months.

It appears that over the past 12 months, the largest contributor to inflation has been material prices; worryingly, SCSI members have indicated that they expect to see further price increases in the second half of 2022. To add to that, it is thought that the construction industry is near peak capacity, even though there is much work for the industry, particularly in the housing sector. It is good to note, however, that in his piece (p.24) SCSI President Kevin James points out that there is a broad consensus that construction inflation may have peaked, or is very close to doing so, and supply issues will gradually ease. Hopefully, this will prove to be the case. As Kevin says, our industry faces significant challenges over the next few years.

Construction inflation impacts on home insurance, and there is the danger that property owners could renew their insurance without recalculating rebuilding costs. One of the real contributions the SCSI makes to society is providing the Guide to Rebuilding Costs for Insurance Purposes, first published in 1989. The guide and the calculator are among the highest drivers of web traffic to the SCSI website, attracting over 250k visits each year. In the last word (p.34), Kevin Brady, the Chair of the working group that oversees the updating of the guide, notes that the creation of the guide is not a simple or short exercise. It involves many quantity surveyors committing to providing up-to-date cost information on a *pro bono* basis. We all owe the members who participate in this a lot of thanks. Kevin says that from 2023 the guide will be expanded to incorporate additional house types.

EDITORIAL

Tom Dunne
Editor



CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL PRICE INFLATION

The price of materials has risen significantly over the past 12 months.



↑
19%

Steel reinforcing bar – €858/tonne

↑
16%

Timber – €104/tonne



↑
7.7%

Cement – €237/tonne

↑
9.2%

Concrete – €76/tonne



Source: Linesight and <https://www.irishtimes.com/business/2022/08/04/building-materials-prices-continue-to-soar/>.

ATU AND SCSi EXPAND OFFERING

Atlantic Technological University (ATU) has announced an expanded range of property services and facilities management (FM) programmes, which are accredited by the SCSi.

ATU states that the programmes have been developed in close collaboration with industry partners in response to a growing market demand.

Delivered online through ATU's Sligo campus, the new part-time online programmes include: Level 7 BSc in Property Services and Facilities Management; Level 7 Certificate in Auctioneering and Estate Agency Practice; Level 8 BSc (Hons) in Facilities and Building Services Management (launching 2023); and, Level 8 BSc (Hons) in Real Estate Development and Valuation (launching 2023).

James Lonergan, Director of Education at the SCSi, commented: "The SCSi is delighted to see the launch of these courses through our partnership with Atlantic Technological University. The availability of these online courses in real estate development and valuation, and in

FM, provides a unique, flexible, accessible opportunity for students who wish to upskill on a part-time basis". James went on to say that these online courses will help to address a significant skills gap in the industry by providing access to education to prospective students nationwide. Those who complete the Level 8 degree courses will be eligible to apply for chartered membership of the SCSi.

ATU states that there is a unique mix of construction and business within the courses, from managing contracts, budgets, valuations, communications, and negotiations, to surveying, measuring, planning, and reporting.

Trevor McSharry, Head of the Department of Civil Engineering and Construction at ATU, said: "This new suite of SCSi-accredited programmes further strengthens ATU's position in addressing unmet industry skills requirements through online and flexible part-time programme provision, particularly in the property and facilities management areas".

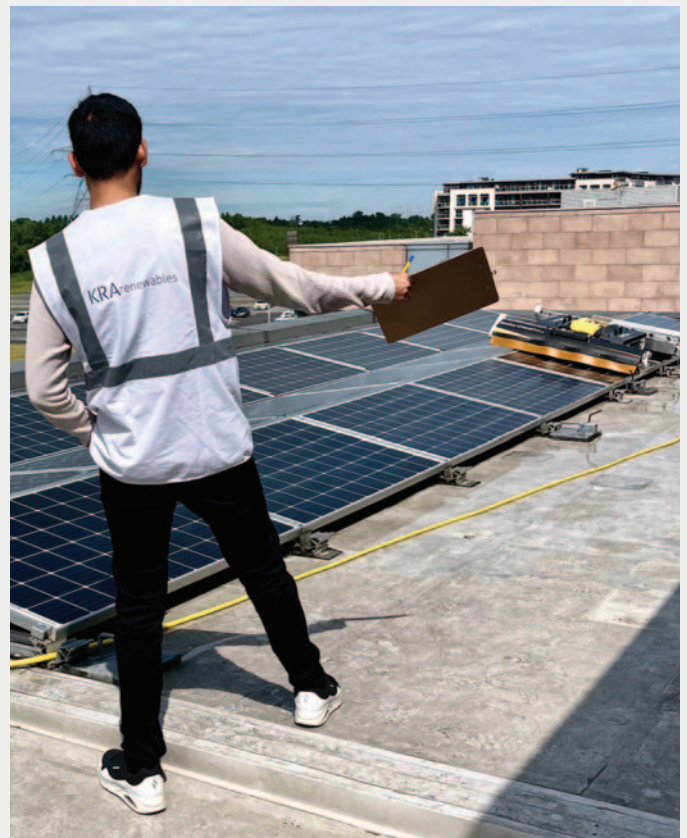
KRA AND NISSAN DRIVING RENEWABLES

In 2019, Nissan Ireland commissioned KRA Renewables to undertake a large-scale energy efficiency upgrade across many of its nationwide locations, including the company's Irish headquarters, as part of its quest for carbon neutrality. The company states that Nissan's principal motivation was to reduce primary energy demand, and associated carbon emissions and operating costs.

The sustainable upgrades made at Nissan Ireland's headquarters included the installation of solar film to the east- and south-facing elevations, upgrading to LED lighting throughout the building, and managing a 107 kilowatts peak (kWp) rooftop photovoltaic (PV) installation integrated with the Nissan X-Storage system. Electric vehicle chargers were specified to increase the self-consumption of the rooftop PV system, and maintained and monitored as part of Nissan's long-term asset management services.

This year, the project progressed into its asset management phase. KRA states that its solar engineers monitored the PV array every day to ensure that no downtime occurred and high performance was maintained.

According to KRA, in July 2022 Nissan Ireland's solar PV system saved the company €4,155 in total energy costs. For July alone, KRA states that the building was 37% self-sufficient, and following KRA's solar PV robot cleaning in June, Nissan saw an increase of approximately 6% in energy production.



Robot cleaning of the solar PV system at Nissan Ireland's headquarters.

DESIGNING POINTSBET'S EUROPEAN HQ



The Building Consultancy has completed the design and project management of PointsBet's new European headquarters (pictured above). The company states that it was delighted to have the opportunity to deliver PointsBet's new office, located within The Eight Building in the heart of the Liberties.

According to the Building Consultancy, the fit-out was designed to create a world-class hybrid and collaborative working environment, with state-of-the-art interior and technology installations. PointsBet's global headquarters is located in Denver, with operations across the US, Canada and Australia.



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SUPPORTING MEMBERS TO ADVANCE THEIR CAREERS

This autumn, the SCSi has a new workshop series and APC assessor opportunities available to members. Whether you are getting started in your career or a seasoned professional, take advantage of great upskilling opportunities with the SCSi.

Soft skills workshop series: grow your business skillset

Our soft skills workshop series provides members with opportunities to improve their presentation, technical report writing and negotiating skills. These online workshops will help members to gain essential business skills needed to advance in their careers.

APC workshops: support and advice to succeed

The SCSi's upcoming APC events offer support and guidance for APC trainees. If you are working towards your final assessment, register



to attend our upcoming workshops and forum event. These events will provide you with advice on writing your critical analysis, preparing for final assessment, and top tips from former APC candidates.

APC assessor training: help support the next generation of surveyors

For chartered members with three years' post-charter professional experience, we are hosting a new APC assessor training workshop. Take the next step in your career and support the next generation of Chartered

Surveyors by becoming an APC assessor. Members will receive four CPD hours for taking part in this training.

To register for these events, please go to www.scsi.ie/calendar. If you have any queries, please contact our education team at education@scsi.ie.



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BACK ON THE COURTS

It was fantastic to see the return of our annual SCSi/*The Irish Times* tennis tournament, with 12 teams from eight member firms competing in the 31st tournament. Our congratulations to the winning team from Hooke & MacDonald, who defeated *The Irish Times* team to maintain their winning streak! Well done to all the teams that came out and competed, including teams from P.J. Hegarty & Sons, Sherry FitzGerald, Savills Ireland, CBRE Ireland, Knight Frank Ireland, Hunters Estate Agents, *The Irish Times*, BNP Paribas Real Estate, and Lisney Sotheby's International Realty. Our thanks also to *The Irish Times* for their continued support of this annual tournament.



From left: Peter Dargan, *The Irish Times*; Maeve Cantwell, David Cantwell and Christina Kelly, Hooke & MacDonald; SCSi CEO Shirley Coulter; Hooke & MacDonald MD Ken MacDonald; and, Conor Steen, Hooke and McDonald.



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- BSc (Hons) in Facilities and Building Services Management (Level 8) – 2023 Intake

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- BSc (Hons) in Construction Project Management (Level 8)
- Certificate in Mechanical and Electrical Quantity Surveying (Level 9)

For more information, visit www.scsi.ie or www.atu.ie



INTERNATIONAL PROPERTY NETWORK



Pictured at the SIOR conference in Dublin were (from left): Patrick King, Director of Membership and Public Affairs, SCSi; Paul Danks, President, SIOR Europe; Renata Osiecka, Past President, SIOR European Chapter; Shirley Coulter, SCSi CEO; Iain Finnegan; and, David Lockwood III, SIOR Vice President.



Pictured at the CEPI General Assembly in Bulgaria were (from left): SCSi delegate Edward Carey; CEPI Policy Manager Vittoria Marchegiani; CEPI Director General Guy Valkenborg; and, SCSi Director of Practice and Policy Edward McAuley.

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 All together different

The SCSi continues to focus on creating connections for members and expanding our presence within the global property industry. By expanding our network, members benefit from market insights, thought leadership and business relationships.

Over the summer, the SCSi was delighted to support the international Society of Industrial and Office Realtors (SIOR) Conference in Dublin and connect with over 360 property professionals. Congratulations to Paul McDowell on organising a fantastic event showcasing Ireland for our international colleagues.

In July, SCSi delegates Edward Carey and Edward McAuley attended the European Association of Real Estate Professions (CEPI) General Assembly in Bulgaria, the organisation's first face-to-face meeting in two years.

Established in 1990, the CEPI is a non-profit organisation made up of national associations based in Europe that represent estate agents and property managers.

At the conference, the SCSi participated in international discussion panels on the topic of regulation of agents and anti-money laundering. Discussion around European housing supply and viability issues featured prominently, and is anticipated to continue in the CEPI meetings in September and November.

The SCSi would also like to remind members of our partnership with Bisnow, which provides members with exclusive discounts to their upcoming property events.

Members are invited to use the discount code SCSi20 for 20% off of Bisnow events, including the upcoming property event, 'Ireland's Industrial and High-Tech Deep Dive'.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR APC GRADUATES

Congratulations to the 93 APC graduates who were awarded APC Diplomas at the SCSi graduation ceremony in June. We congratulate you on reaching this professional milestone and wish you the very best in your careers!

Whether you are part of a large firm or a small business, the SCSi staff are here to support you and your staff in becoming chartered and growing in your professional skillset. The SCSi has partnered with

companies to provide informative workshops designed to educate and inform staff about becoming chartered and the benefits of becoming active members of the SCSi. These workshops cater to a range of staff, from new graduates to experienced professionals.

Members are invited to find out more about partnering with the SCSi for workshops, APC support, and more. Contact Ruth Comerford-Morris at ruth@scsi.ie for more information.

APC GRADUATE LIST AUGUST 2022

Patricia Barrett, Project Management

Fergal Beacon, Quantity Surveying

Anita Behan, Project Management

David Buckley, Quantity Surveying

Declan Burke, Quantity Surveying

Eugene Burns, Commercial Property Practice

Jean Butler, Quantity Surveying

Adrian Byrne, Property Finance and Investment

Michael Byrne, Quantity Surveying

Saoirse Byrne, Valuation Surveying

Brenden Carstens, Quantity Surveying

Lisa Cassidy, Commercial Property Practice

Mark Cassidy, Commercial Property Practice

Fergal Cleary, Commercial Property Practice

Russell Cleere, Commercial Property Practice

Riona Coleman, Residential Surveying

Andrew Colfer, Valuation Surveying

Tommy Comerford, Quantity Surveying

Odhran Thomas Coughlan, Quantity Surveying

Ryan Cox, Quantity Surveying

Sarah Critchley, Valuation Surveying

Darragh Deasy, Commercial Property Practice

John Devery, Quantity Surveying

Jane Donnelly, Valuation Surveying

Conor Doyle, Commercial Property Practice

Brendan Duffy, Property Management

Philip Duggan, Quantity Surveying

Cian Dunne, Commercial Property Practice

John D. Elliott, Commercial Property Practice

Michelle Farrell, Commercial Property Practice

Paddy Farrelly, Commercial Property Practice

Ben Fitzgerald, Valuation Surveying

Philip Fitzpatrick, Quantity Surveying

Adrian Gallagher, Quantity Surveying

Michael Gallagher, Project Management

Majella Galvin, Residential Surveying

Nigel Grace, Quantity Surveying

John Greene, Quantity Surveying

Eoin Griffin, Quantity Surveying

Daniel Gunning, Building Surveying

Ryan Higgins, Quantity Surveying

Des Hocht, Building Control

Claire Irwin, Quantity Surveying

Slaney Joyce, Property Finance and Investment

Enda Kearns, Commercial Property Practice

Brian Kelly, Commercial Property Practice

John Kelly, Commercial Property Practice

Trevor Kelly, Building Surveying

Ronan Keogh, Property Management

Nadine Kinsella, Quantity Surveying

Mark Kirwan, Quantity Surveying

Linda Korne-Ivanova, Valuation Surveying

Joseph Lavan, Quantity Surveying

Tim Lawrence, Quantity Surveying

Roisin Lenehan, Commercial Property Practice

Colm Lennon, Building Surveying

Donal Leydon, Quantity Surveying

Patrick Lucey, Quantity Surveying

Etain Markey, Commercial Property Practice

Stephen McDonogh, Commercial Property Practice

Stephen McGoldrick, Quantity Surveying

Stephen McHugh, Property Finance and Investment

Martin McLoughlin, Quantity Surveying

James McParland, Building Surveying

Jeff Molloy, Quantity Surveying

Carmel Mooney, Valuation Surveying

Robert Mulcair, Commercial Property Practice

Asma Nassir, Quantity Surveying

Thomas O'Dowd, Commercial Property Practice

Conor O'Dwyer, Valuation Surveying

Donnchadh O'Halloran, Quantity Surveying

Aidan O'Hare, Building Surveying

Darren O'Keeffe, Quantity Surveying

Gary O'Keeffe, Quantity Surveying

Kevin O'Keeffe, Quantity Surveying

Jack O'Neill, Commercial Property Practice

Colman O'Shea, Quantity Surveying

Darragh O'Shea, Quantity Surveying

Lisa O'Shea, Quantity Surveying

Ronan O'Sullivan, Quantity Surveying

John Philips, Quantity Surveying

Laura Prendergast, Commercial Property Practice

Shane Regan, Quantity Surveying

Padraig Reidy, Property Finance and Investment

Jordan Ring, Commercial Property Practice

Darren Rudkins, Quantity Surveying

Brigid Ryan, Planning and Development

Ellen Ryan, Valuation Surveying

Elliott Smith, Project Management

John Patrick Sweeney, Quantity Surveying

Mark Walsh, Valuation Surveying

Daniel Walshe, Valuation Surveying

Jack White, Quantity Surveying

RETURN OF SPORTING EVENTS WITH NEXUS



The winning team from Cushman Wakefield. Back row (from left): Dave McCarthy; Marc Kelly; Conor Pender; Paul Nalty; and, Volkan Koc. Front row (from left): Jane Donnelly; Eleanor Wood; Joanna Berry; and, Harry Opperman.

The SCSi welcomed the return to in-person sporting events with two Nexus summer tournaments. It was fantastic to once again enjoy friendly competition followed by delicious BBQ dinners.

Congratulations to the team from Cushman Wakefield Ireland on taking first place in the tag rugby tournament. We would also like to congratulate the soccer tournament winning team composed of players from two member companies, Logical and Xestra.



A great day was had by all at this year's Nexus Tag Rugby Tournament.

Special thanks to Ardmac and P.J. Hegarty & Sons for supporting this year's tournaments, which were attended by over 270 members.

Nexus is the SCSi's network of young professionals. If you would like to build your network, give back, and make a difference, please get in touch to find out how you can get involved in the Nexus Committee. Please contact Ruth Comerford-Morris at ruth@scsi.ie for more information.

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Application process opens November 2022 for September 2023 applications

Construction Management

- ~ **TU083 Higher Cert in Construction Technology**
- ~ **TU086 BTech (Ordinary) in Construction Technology**

Geospatial Surveying and Digital Construction

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- ~ TU415/2 Pg Dip in Collaborative BIM
- ~ TU415/3 MSc in applied BIM and Management
- ~ TU174 BSc (Honours) in BIM (Digital Construction).
- ~ TU214/1 Pg Cert in Digital Construction Analytics / Engineering Analytics
- ~ TU214/2 Pg Dip in Digital Construction Analytics / Engineering Analytics
- ~ TU214/3 MSc in Digital Construction Analytics / Engineering Analytics
- ~ TU214 MSc in Applied Digital Construction Analytics / Engineering Analytics
- ~ TU5405 CPD Cert in Geographical Information Systems
- ~ **TU089 BSc (Honours) in Geospatial Surveying**
- ~ TU220 MSc Geographic Information Science

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CLEAN-UP ON BURROW BEACH

In August, SCSi staff and members cleaned Burrow Beach in Sutton as part of the SCSi's commitment to corporate social responsibility (CSR). Staff, members and their families collected 94kg of rubbish from the beach area. By taking part in beach clean-ups, we not only assist in cleaning our public spaces, but also acknowledge the significance of the plastic issue we currently face and the need to recognise how our regular habits impact on the environment.

Our thanks to Flossie and the Beach Cleaners for partnering with us and providing us with support and guidance.

If you would like to get involved in SCSi CSR activities, or would like to make a suggestion, please contact Aravindh, SCSi Sustainability and CSR Officer, at aravindh@scsi.ie.



SCSi members, staff and their families took part in a clean-up of Burrow Beach in Sutton.



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Shane Hynes: 086 012 6820 / shane@modulegroup.ie



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PROPERTY MARKET MONITOR SHOWS AFFORDABILITY GAPS

The SCSi's most recent Residential Property Market Monitor shows that agents anticipate increases in national property prices over the next 12 months, with an annual increase of 4%. The SCSi report included three scenarios involving couples earning average salaries of €89,000, and seeking to buy in Kildare, Cork and Meath. According to these scenarios, a couple who want to buy a new home and who have the 10% deposit, having availed of Help to Buy relief, will face a shortfall of €64,000 in Kildare and €30,000 in Cork. The couple will only afford to buy in one of the locations – Meath – and then by a modest margin of just over €6,000.

John O'Sullivan, Chair of the SCSi Practice & Policy Committee, said the figures showed that affordability and viability remain the critical issues for the Irish property market: "These figures show that buying an affordable property remains out of reach for thousands of Irish



people on average salaries. Of course, you are also going to have thousands of people on salaries below this level. Unfortunately, with construction costs continuing to spiral and interest rate increases on the way, it looks as if the situation facing first-time buyers is set to become even more challenging. From a homebuilder's perspective, if people can't afford new homes, that raises questions over viability and overall housing supply.

"While we have limited control over global supply chain issues and the cost of imported materials, we do have control over issues such as planning,

procurement, utility connection charges, VAT, and development contributions. We know from previous SCSi reports that these soft costs make up around half the cost of delivering a new home, and these are the areas the Government and local authorities need to focus on if we want to reduce the costs of delivering new homes".

GOLF TOURNAMENT RAISES OVER €3.5K

Thank you to all the members who took part in the annual LionHeart Golf Day and helped to raise vital funds for LionHeart. After a fantastic day of golfing at the Woodbrook Golf Club, members were joined by Bernadette Antoniou, a LionHeart counsellor and cognitive behavioural therapist, who spoke on the work of LionHeart and the services available to our members.

We would like to remind members about the many supports and services available to you and your family members through LionHeart. LionHeart offers counselling, back to work support, legal advice, financial grants, and more. The full list of services is available on our website at www.scsi.ie/lionheart. If you are in need of support, please contact us at lionheart@scsi.ie or 01-223 9446.

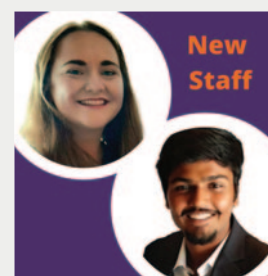


From left: SCSi President Kevin James; Bernadette Antoniou, counsellor and cognitive behavioural therapist at LionHeart; and, Paddy O'Donoghue, at the LionHeart Golf Day.

WELCOME TO NEW STAFF MEMBERS

We're delighted to introduce two new staff members who have recently joined our SCSi team. Hannah Coombs is our new Education and Membership Engagement Officer working with our education team. Aravindh Krishnan Ramesh will be working with

membership and public affairs staff as our new Sustainability and CSR Officer. We hope you'll join us in welcoming these new staff members and encourage you to reach out to both Hannah and Aravindh with queries, ideas and suggestions.



REPORT SHOWS RISING COSTS



THE SCSi'S LATEST TENDER PRICE INDEX SHOWS SIGNIFICANT CONSTRUCTION PRICE INFLATION, SAYS KEVIN BRADY, CHAIR OF THE SCSi'S QUANTITY SURVEYING PROFESSIONAL GROUP.

Construction price inflation has become a hot topic for many working in the sector, and those in media and political circles, of late.

The SCSi has been publishing its Tender Price Index since 1998, and it is the only independent, sentiment-based assessment of construction tender prices in Ireland. The Index is informed by Chartered Quantity Surveyors who provide cost/inflation data for non-residential projects. It is based on predominately new build projects with values in excess of €0.5m, and covers all regions of Ireland. The Index is therefore a measure of median price movements across differing project types and locations, and is an authoritative source of information used by Government and non-Government organisations to gauge market trends.

Significant price growth

The latest Tender Price Index, published in July, shows that prices have grown by 7.5% since the first half of 2022. The annual increase since the first half of 2021 is 14%. Tender price inflation increased noticeably following the easing of Covid-19 restrictions in 2021, resulting from pent-up demand for construction services combined with supply chain issues following the lockdowns in the previous year. The overall effect has seen tender price inflation rising by 22% over the past 18 months.

Continuing pressure

The SCSi's report highlights continued inflationary pressures in the sector. The main reason for further tender price inflation witnessed in 2022 is the invasion of Ukraine, which has led to high energy prices that have

exacerbated the inflation pressures on construction materials. High demand for construction services following the easing of Covid-19 restrictions also resulted in increasing tender rates within the commercial construction sector. Prior to the invasion of Ukraine, it was anticipated by many in the sector that construction inflation rates would stabilise as supply chains and demand adjusted to a post-Covid environment.

While activity within the construction sector remains extremely high across all regions, SCSi members have indicated growing concerns regarding affordability and viability in relation to projects on the back of significant price increases since 2021. The SCSi welcomes commitments by Government to reform planning procedures, as we believe that the Government should reduce overall levels of risk and costs of delivery where it can, such as reducing planning delays and timelines.

Outlook

SCSi members have indicated that they expect to see further price increases in the second half of 2022, but at a lesser rate than was experienced in the past 18 months. It is anticipated that the median rate of tender price inflation into the second half of 2022 will likely be at lower levels compared with the first half of 2022, if there are no additional unexpected events. At current levels, it is thought that the industry is near peak capacity; however, the threat of a downturn in economic activity may give rise to current industry inputs being able to continue at this level, with the potential for added competitiveness within the market.

For further information, visit www.scsi.ie.

FACING UP TO DEFECTIVE HOUSING

CHARTERED BUILDING SURVEYOR KEVIN HOLLINGSWORTH EXPLAINS THE FINDINGS OF THE RECENTLY PUBLISHED REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP TO EXAMINE DEFECTS IN HOUSING.



The publication in July of 'Defects in Apartments', the report of the Working Group to Examine Defects in Housing, has re-awakened public interest in the issue of defective apartment blocks.

Over an 18-month period, the Working Group consulted with a wide range of stakeholders, including apartment owners, property managers, construction professionals, the insurance industry, local authorities and banks, using online meetings and surveys to collect a huge amount of data on the extent of defects already found, and the remediation needed. The findings are stark, indicating that between 50 and 80% of apartments built between 1991 and 2013 (62,500-100,000 apartments) may be affected by fire safety, structural, or water ingress defects, with some

needing significant remediation at an estimated cost of €1.56-2.5bn.

Chartered Surveyor Kevin Hollingsworth, who was a member of the Working Group, says that the extent of the consultation has created a robust dataset, enabling the Working Group to stand over its findings, and make a series of recommendations. He praises all those involved, in particular the staff at the Department of Housing: "I was thoroughly impressed by the Department staff and how they left no stone unturned, went down every avenue that the members of the Working Group wanted to, and did it with gusto. They were dynamic, enthusiastic and wanted to assist us to get to the nub of the problem".

How did we get here?

The findings may have come as a shock to politicians and the media, but for Kevin they confirm what he and colleagues have suspected for some time: "I've been seeing these issues since about 2010. Through the NAMA years, when a lot of these developments were going into receivership, we were going in to try and fix them, to make them conveyable, and we found massive amounts of issues. Then Priory Hall came out [the Priory Hall

INTERVIEW

Ann-Marie Hardiman
Managing Editor, Think Media Ltd





WHEN A LOT OF THESE DEVELOPMENTS WERE GOING INTO RECEIVERSHIP, WE WERE GOING IN TO TRY AND FIX THEM, TO MAKE THEM CONVEYABLE, AND WE FOUND MASSIVE AMOUNTS OF ISSUES.

apartments in Dublin were evacuated in October 2011 due to fire safety concerns], but I'd seen loads of equivalents of Priory Hall before that. I went to fellow members through the SCSi Building Surveying Committee asking 'Is anyone else doing what I'm doing?' and the answer was yes".

The Committee produced the 'Defects in our Built Environment' report in early 2017 in the hopes of raising the issues with Government, but it wasn't until the Grenfell Tower tragedy in London later that year that the landscape changed. The Government commissioned the Fire Safety Taskforce in 2018, which looked at safety issues in high-rise buildings. This was followed by the Joint Committee on Housing, Planning and Government's report: 'Safe as Houses? Report on Building Standards, Building Controls & Consumer Protection'. One of this report's recommendations was a redress scheme for home owners affected by latent defects, and the Working Group was set up in March 2021.

Having co-authored the SCSi report, and given evidence to the Oireachtas Committee, Kevin was invited to be a member of the Working Group: "In an ideal world, we would have preferred a building surveyor and a property manager to be part of the Group because property managers are at the coalface of this issue. That request was denied by the Department, so I had close contact with my property management colleagues throughout, who were a great support".

But how did this happen in the first place? Kevin says a perfect storm of inexperience, a building boom, lack of resourcing of local authorities, and the effective deregulation of the industry, is to blame: "The industry was deregulated in 1992 by the Building Control Act 1990. Prior to that, in the metropolitan centres – Galway, Cork, Dublin – they had quite robust building bylaws departments, where they had surveyors and engineers who would go out and check compliance. The Act put in place a regime of self-certification. Opinions of compliance based on a visual inspection were sufficient to allow properties to convey. Many people gamed that system. They could hire an architect, engineer, or surveyor to design and submit the relevant planning and fire cert applications, build it how they wanted, and then have the certifier come in at the end of the works when everything is covered up, and certify based on a visual inspection, which gives no

tangible protection. The local authorities were de-resourced and inadequately funded, and there was no oversight and a lack of credible enforcement".

Recommendations

The 260-page report makes 10 recommendations, all of which, Kevin says, are important, but he singles out some in particular, such as the recommendation that a central organisation be set up to support and advise owners' management companies (OMCs), both those who have discovered defects and those who are considering an audit or investigation of their building: "A lot of OMC members are lay people, non-construction professionals with day jobs, and sometimes they don't know where to look or what to do. So that organisation, initially as a guidance and then, I would imagine, as a source and administration body for any funding, is essential".

Recommendation 5 calls for interim measures to be taken, where possible, to make buildings safer until full remedial works can be carried out. Kevin says that there are a range of simple measures, such as upgrading fire alarm systems, that could make a difference. He also cautions that it's unrealistic to assume that only full compliance will be acceptable in all cases. Recommendation 7 calls for a practical and reasonable approach to works, and Recommendation 8 calls for the development of a code of practice to support this: "It was an acceptance in the Working Group that the pursuit of perfection is the enemy. It's nearly impossible to get full compliance in an existing building that's non-compliant. It's too costly and it's too disruptive".

The final two recommendations are that all works should be carried out and certified by competent professionals, and that certification should follow a prescribed format, so that owners, and prospective purchasers, can be reassured that all works have been carried out properly: "The owners' management companies have to prove to any new purchasers, to any insurers, to the fire authorities, that 'we've done X, Y and Z' and here's our certification to say so', and to say that a professional has seen it and stands over it".

The report also makes a number of suggestions regarding how the work might be funded, including low-cost loans, an industry levy, State-funded grants and taxation measures, or a combination of these.

What happens next?

The response to the report from the sector, and from Government, has been very positive, with the Minister for Housing stating his commitment to helping those affected. Kevin feels that certain things can and should be done as soon as possible, such as the setting up of an implementation group to turn the recommendations into actions. Practical steps can also be taken immediately, such as setting up supports for OMCs.

Another element that Kevin says is vital is to address the issue of retrospection. Many OMCs have already undertaken or are in the process of undertaking remedial works, often at enormous expense, and fear that they will be left out of any scheme. Many more, Kevin fears, will put off works while they wait for details of a redress scheme to be announced, potentially leaving occupants in danger from fire or other safety issues: "Retrospection can be offered in terms of tax credits in the upcoming Budget or the Finance Bill, so that works don't stall. People who are at the starting line are waiting and they're also at risk of the massive construction inflation costs. The longer they leave it, the bigger the bill is going to be for the State. By bringing in retrospection, and allowing work to proceed, the State could actually save money. By the Government not undertaking immediate action, they are also potentially leaving that moral hazard of people being unsafe for that period while they run the implementation group and figure out the practicalities of how the scheme can run".

SCSI members will no doubt have key roles to play in this process: "Property managers are always at the coalface and their initial advice and direction on how to deal with the issues will be important. Then Chartered Building Surveyors and Chartered Quantity Surveyors can advise on the technical and cost aspects. I think it was acknowledged through the engagement that the SCSI are over the full spectrum of this problem, which is quite unique in the industry".

There's one more thing that Kevin feels needs to be done, and that is to reverse the de-resourcing of local authorities, to enable them to carry out inspections, and ensure that this situation is not allowed to arise again: "Currently all the local authorities get for every commencement notice is €30, and they have to fund a functional building control authority. That's just not sustainable. A really positive example is Dublin City Council who now have six building control officers, and they go out looking for problems in high-risk properties where people sleep. On €30 per commencement notice, that's loss-making. They're having to fund that, and well done to them for establishing the need to do that, but not every local authority would have those resources. That's a critical thing, that the resources need to be there".

Advice

For OMCs, whether they've already found defects, or are worried about what an audit might reveal, Kevin's advice is to bite the bullet, and engage a competent professional: "A lot of those directors don't understand that they are personally responsible for the welfare of the people in the property. If they're going to investigate something, do it with a registered and

competent professional, such as a Chartered Building Surveyor, who can demonstrate that they have done this type of work and are aware of the nuances both of the fire safety issues, but also of the complications and nuances of owners' management companies. Anyone they do get on board should do whatever audit or risk assessment that they do in compliance with some of the existing documentation out there, such as the Code of Practice for Fire Safety Assessment of Premises and Buildings, and the Framework for Enhancing Fire Safety in Buildings where Concerns Arise. With the best will in the world, any scheme is going to take 18 months to two years to actually be implemented, so any board that is going to do works now and hopefully avail of retrospection by following those codes, in my opinion, they would then be able to be in any future scheme, they will be able to demonstrate that they've followed best practice. It's not just about getting it done and getting it done right, it's about not precluding yourself from any future scheme".



KEVIN HOLLINGSWORTH

From Raheny in Dublin, Kevin Hollingsworth MSCSI MRICS is a Chartered Building Surveyor and a Chartered Project Management Surveyor, and is Managing Director of Omega Surveying Services. A former Chair of the Building Surveying Group of the SCSI, and former member of the Editorial Board of the *Surveyors Journal*, Kevin is currently SCSI Second Vice President, and Chair of the Public Affairs Standing Committee.

Read the full report of the Working Group at <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/97c19-working-group-to-examine-defects-in-housing/>.

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COUNTDOWN TO BUDGET 2023

THE SCSi HAS A NUMBER OF PLANS FOR LOBBYING AND EARLY ENGAGEMENT AHEAD OF BUDGET DAY, INCLUDING ISSUING ITS PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION. EDWARD McAULEY, SCSi DIRECTOR OF PRACTICE AND POLICY, EXPLAINS.

The activity of lobbying Government to address challenges in the property, land and construction sector is one of four strategic priorities of the SCSi. Lobbying, once carried out in a fully transparent manner, can have significant public benefits to ensure that new policies are appropriate, measured and carried out in a way that mitigates against unintended consequences as far as possible. The SCSi's advocacy programme includes pre-Budget representations to Government departments, including the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, the Department of Finance, and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. A critical aspect of lobbying is that any recommendations made to Government are backed up by evidence-based, real-time information. The various SCSi reports published each year on the property, land, and construction markets provide a sound basis for the recommendations in our pre-Budget submission.

Although advocacy is a year-round engagement for the SCSi, pre-Budget engagement began in earnest in June. Attendance at and contributions to the National Economic Dialogue, hosted by Government, provided the opportunity to help influence high-level policy positions ahead of inter-department Budget planning. Measuring the level of success of advocacy activities can be difficult; however, it was encouraging to see multiple references to SCSi reports in official Government papers circulated for the National Economic Dialogue discussions. This highlights the importance and recognition of the expert data provided by SCSi members across the country. Government departments receive a high volume of pre-Budget submissions each year. It is therefore crucial for any organisation that their message is clear, crisp and, where feasible, costed, so that recommendations and changes to

taxation or spending are well considered and the impact to the Exchequer is known and clear.

SCSi recommendations

The SCSi's pre-Budget submission focused on three areas: residential accommodation; the commercial property market; and, climate change.

Residential accommodation

An adequate supply of new homes to meet demand will address the current affordability issues in the housing market. Figure 1 outlines that based on current projections, new housing delivery will need to increase by 7.6% each year until 2030 if the Government's Housing for All targets are to be met.

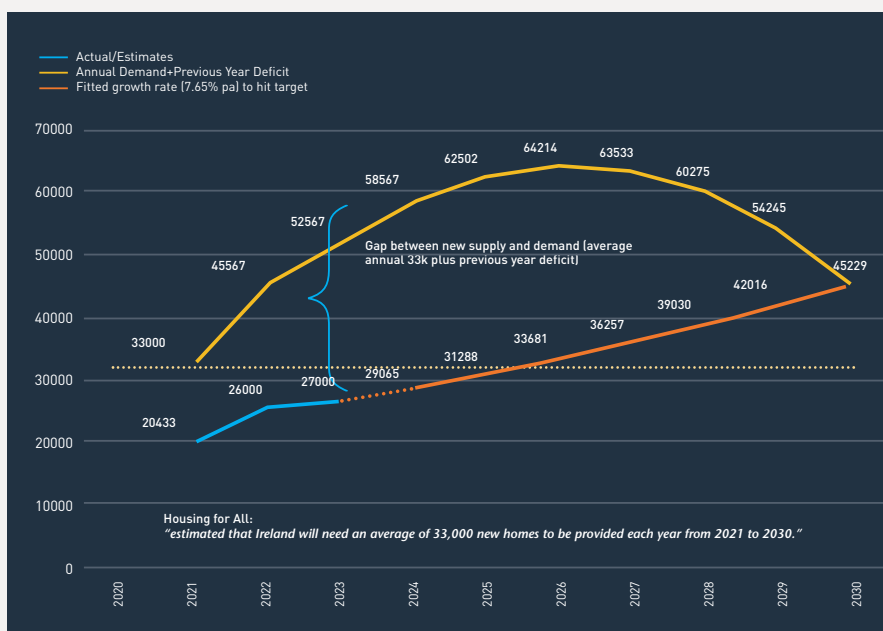


FIGURE 1: Catching up with the cumulative undersupply of new housing units per annum. Source: SCSi research. Anticipated new housing supply for 2022 and 2023 – ESRI forecasts. 7.65% annual growth rate on new housing supply required to meet 2030 Housing for All target.



This clearly sets the context for the size of the challenge facing Government to address the demand/supply imbalance.

The Help to Buy scheme has become an important initiative, which the new housing sector relies upon to ensure that a high-quality housing product can be delivered to a market that can afford to purchase it. Its extension would provide a greater degree of comfort to the sector, which is currently dealing with an ever-increasing viability issue, with high labour and material inflation taking hold (Figure 2).

Affordability of housing is a significant concern, and one that the SCSi continues to highlight. Our submission tracks the affordability levels of new three-bed semi-detached homes across some of the major urban/suburban centres, including Cork, Kildare and Meath. The rolling forecasts of property price movement expectations is another important piece of information shared with Government and the Central Bank of Ireland, which helps policymakers to become more agile to market movements as far ahead as 12 months.

The rental market has come under sharp focus again of late, with Residential Tenancies Board (RTB) evidence now showing an outflow of smaller landlords from the market. The SCSi is concerned that not enough is being done to tackle this exodus of landlords, a trend the SCSi has publicised for many years now. A 'root and branch' review

of the Residential Tenancies (as amended) Acts should be seriously considered, as this is one of the main reasons cited to the SCSi by agents for landlords deciding to sell their investment property and leave the sector.

Commercial property

Many members will recall Budget day announcements in recent years making changes to stamp duty rates for commercial property. Although the tax increases were used to fund important services on behalf of the State, the increases had to be absorbed by the sector quite quickly. The impact of lockdowns, the move to online retail and increased remote working, compounded by general uncertainty, has led to adjustments in rental values and capital valuations across several sectors.

This has led to challenging times for this market, particularly asset types such as retail, offices, hospitality, and leisure. Conversely, other sectors, particularly industrial and logistics, have performed relatively well over the course of 2021 and 2022, as demand and activity largely continued.

The SCSi continues to share impartial, independent market data with Government to ensure that the most accurate data is to hand ahead of any further taxation treatment of property, including commercial property. Some aspects of commercial property are more fragile than others, and it is important that this is fully acknowledged and understood ahead of any changes to tax treatment.

Climate change

The SCSi highlighted the need to get more vacant and derelict residential units back to use, and that SCSi research due in the autumn will shed light on the regulation and financial challenges facing the renovation of such units.

More supports for local authorities to support unit owners considering renovation is required in Budget 2023, as is ensuring that more professional input is a requirement of any State funding schemes to ensure that works are carried out to acceptable levels. Finally, the SCSi calls for further investment in research and innovation for the circular economy, especially in the area of construction, which can have a high waste level for construction /demolition works.

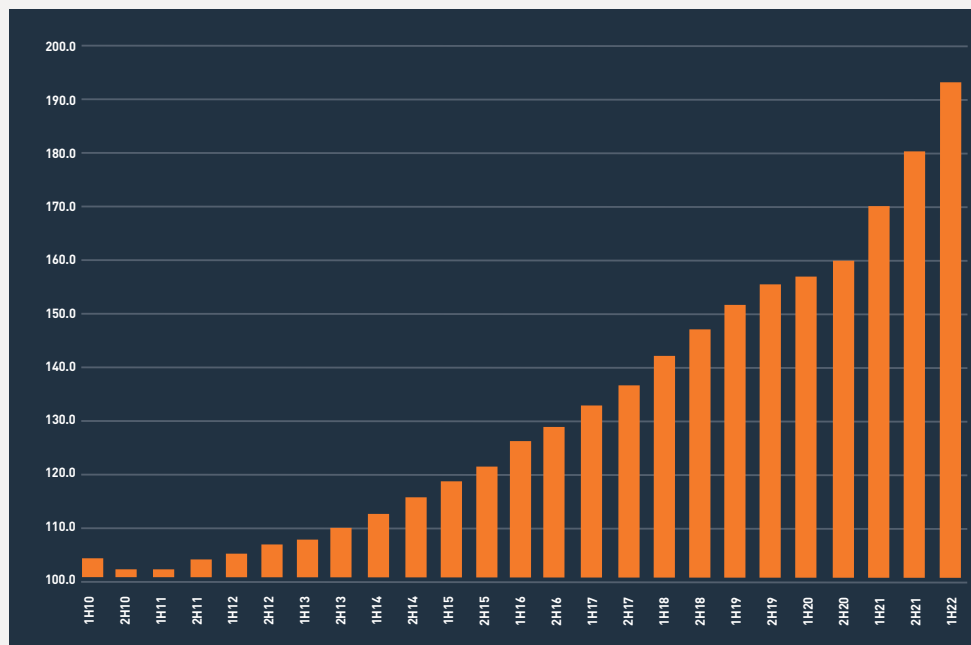
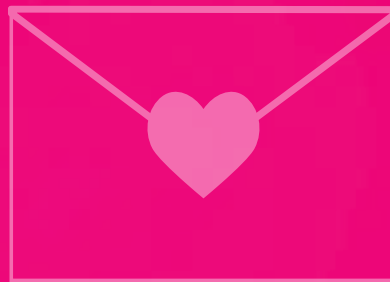


FIGURE 2: SCSi Tender Price Index 1H2022. Source: SCSi Tender Price Index: 14% annual national inflation up to first half of 2022. Base year 1998 = 100.

Budget 2023 is on Tuesday, September 27. More information on the details of the SCSi's pre-Budget submission can be found at www.scsi.ie.

LESSONS IN LOVE

THIS YEAR IRELAND IS SEEING A RISE IN LOVE LETTERS. THE RECIPIENTS OF THESE LETTERS? HOMEOWNERS WHO HAVE PUT THEIR HOUSE UP FOR SALE.



This is an open letter to estate agents about the rise in love letters to homeowners and the unintended risk that this may create for both the agent and the seller with regard to potential discrimination.

'Love letters' in real estate are letters written by a potential buyer that detail their sentimental attachment to the property, and the future plan that the potential buyer has for that property. This is often a young couple. Oftentimes these letters detail why the neighbourhood is ideal for the young family, the proximity to primary schools, how the home is reminiscent of their own childhood home, and so on. This allows the seller to consider the sentimental offer in addition to the financial offer. Home buyers' love letters have been commonplace in the US market for some years. They are a tactic used by some in an attempt to stand out to a seller, particularly in high-demand markets and during bidding wars.

Potential liability

Once seen as harmless, these letters are now causing major concerns for real estate agents and their seller clients in the US, and professionals in Ireland should pay attention to this development, as US home sellers and agents face potential liability under fair housing laws.

The US Fair Housing Act explicitly prohibits sellers from accepting or rejecting offers on the basis of protected characteristics such as race, religion or family status. Agents in the US must advise sellers of the fair

housing law, which is very similar to anti-discrimination laws in Ireland. Some states in the US have now banned love letters, and the National Association of Realtors of America has issued a statement advising agents that accepting love letters could expose them and their clients to fair housing violations, which can lead to heavy fines.

Perhaps the SCSi, Property Services Regulatory Authority (PSRA), and Institute of Professional Auctioneers and Valuers (IPAV) need to consider issuing similar advice to their members?

It is understandable that buyers might wish to persuade a seller to choose their offer by writing a love letter, and many buyer agents in the US have argued that these letters constitute freedom of speech. However, buyers sometimes write love letters outlining reasons why the seller should pick them. While this may seem harmless, these letters can actually pose a discrimination risk because they often contain personal information and disclose characteristics of the buyer, such as their ethnicity, religion, or family status, which could consciously or unconsciously impact on the seller's decision to accept or reject the offer.

Consider a buyer who writes to the seller, stating that they can picture their children running in the garden, or hosting Easter dinners for years to come. This reveals the buyer's family status and religion.

Or consider a buyer who writes to the seller informing them that they went to the local Irish Catholic school as a child and would love to send their own children there. Again, this could result in a biased decision if higher or similar offers were made by a non-Irish family with no local connection.

Using ethnicity or family status as a basis to accept or reject an offer, as opposed to price and terms, could violate anti-discrimination laws. I think guidance from the SCSi and IPAV on this is required.

FEATURE

Shane Fleming
MSCSI MRICS





The law in Ireland

The Equal Status Acts 2000-2018 prohibit discrimination in the provision of goods and services, accommodation and education. One cannot discriminate against potential tenants on grounds of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, or membership of the Traveller community. While I understand that this Act applies to the letting of properties, it was quoted by official bodies in 2020 when agents were asking for proof of funds before arranging viewings for properties. This is why I believe that guidance from the member bodies is needed.

Favouring large investors?

As some states in the US have banned love letters, one could suggest a darker side to this trend – that this ban or move away from love letters favours large investors. Perhaps there is some merit to this, and I wouldn't rule it out. That said, it does not seem as though a seller picking an owner-occupier over an investor purchaser would qualify as discrimination.

Concern

I know of many situations where love letters have worked in a buyer's favour and many people would say they would not have gotten the house without writing one. They can be fruitful and from the buyer's side I do not see an issue. However, my concern is for my fellow agents and their clients, who need to be very careful that they do not find themselves facing an accusation of discrimination. It is important to remember that love letters may be a useful tactic for some buyers. However, others may feel that providing personal information could work against them, such as a non-Irish name, if they fear the seller could be biased.



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INFLATIONARY TIMES

CONSTRUCTION COST INFLATION IS A MAJOR ISSUE AT THE MOMENT, AND NEEDS TO BE SEEN IN CONTEXT.

High inflation continues to negatively impact on construction input costs, and consequently on every sector across Ireland. There are some risks that could push construction costs even higher than forecast; however, I believe these risks also need to be considered against deflationary pressures, the macroeconomic outlook, and the impact this could have on future demand for construction.

The SCSi Tender Price Index (TPI), published in July 2022, shows a 14% annual increase or c.20% over the previous 18 months, and many of the pressures noted in that report continue to impact tender pricing. A levelling off in tender price inflation is predicted but to what extent is increasingly difficult to answer. This is partly due to the uncertain economic outlook, and unless there is a significant drop-off in demand, and material supply chain issues are resolved, there will be no significant reduction in construction costs.

Housing demand

To touch on some future demand, residential accommodation remains in crisis in certain parts of the country, as supply of owner occupation and rental stock is well below adequate levels. High tender price inflation has delayed many projects progressing or has made them unviable at a time when we need twice as many new homes to be built over the next several years. This view is supported by the SCSi's pre-Budget submission, which highlights that at current housing output levels of c.26,000 expected to be delivered to the market in 2022, 64,000 new units will be required at peak delivery by 2026 to meet Housing for All targets of 300,000 new homes in the nine-year plan. Housing output will need to be over double current levels in three years, which is a considerable challenge.

Uncertainty affecting confidence

The largest contributor to tender inflation over the past 12 months is material prices. All building materials experienced some degree of



inflation. Rising energy costs have had a significant impact on energy-intensive materials such as metals (steel, aluminium, copper, etc.), concrete and cement, facades and curtain walling, which have been affected the most. With regard to labour costs, strong order books have allowed workers to demand higher rates and skilled labourers are choosing to be more localised, rather than travelling greater distances. Unless there is a period of contraction for new work it is unlikely that labour market rates will reduce. Many companies are also grappling with increased inflation generally and increased operational costs.

The conflict in Ukraine has been ongoing for over six months, and there are still a lot of unknowns concerning the resilience of key European supply chains. While some appear to have adapted in the short term, the embargos and trade sanctions against Russia have resulted in less availability of key commodities and higher costs. The high inflationary commodity and material price spikes now appear to have stabilised and reduced. It is difficult say for how long these will remain stable, and this uncertainty has seen a lag between reduced commodity costs and input costs in new tenders.

In recent months, there has been a notable loss of confidence due to increased input costs for building. There remains high demand in some sectors, i.e., residential, logistics, industrial, high tech. Ireland is no exception to this conundrum, which is playing out in the UK and across parts of Europe. Following a strong post-pandemic rebound, some construction activity has plateaued, which is threatening the future pipeline of projects across Ireland.

On a positive note, there are investors keen to put their capital to work

FEATURE

Kevin James
SCSi President
MD, Cogent Associates





in Ireland; however, it remains to be seen how many can keep their projects viable in the current climate.

Pressures on contracts

With current high inflation, it has been increasingly difficult to agree terms between clients and contractors. Contractors are pricing in higher margins and significant risk premiums and, consequently, a lot of projects have required intensive value engineering/cost reduction measures to help pass the viability threshold. It is likely that some of these projects will incur future cost increases if the value engineering and redesign process has not been robust. In the short to medium term, I believe that input costs are unlikely to fall dramatically; therefore, the affordability and viability of many projects remain at risk for the foreseeable future. For comparison, Table 1 lists a range of construction delivery inflationary pressures that currently outweigh any deflationary pressures in the sector.

Impact and outlook

When reviewing the impact of current tender inflation and associated challenges, it is important to recognise that it takes a long time to build capacity in the industry, and even if Covid-19 and the war in Ukraine disappeared tomorrow, our supply chain problems are likely to last into 2023/2024. We have limited capacity in the industry and some contractors are experiencing financial difficulty, having priced projects and subsequently been exposed to higher material and energy prices, resulting in a financial loss. This is not to suggest that all contractors are

unprofitable. While demand remains high, tier one and two contractors can be selective of projects, offering less risk and greater margins.

To conclude, there is a broad consensus that the rate of construction inflation may have peaked, or may be very close to peaking, and supply issues will gradually ease. Having rallied from the Covid-19 pandemic, our industry faces significant challenges over the next few years.

Table 1: Inflationary and deflationary pressures currently affecting construction delivery.

| Inflationary pressures | Deflationary pressures |
|--|--|
| High material prices | Risk of recession (US, Eurozone, China) |
| Increasing labour costs | Reduced demand from investors due to lack of confidence in Irish market and unviable projects |
| High energy and production costs | Increased investment in technologies to improve productivity |
| Limited capacity in supply chain | Reduced margin and risk premiums tendered by main contractors and specialist sub-contractors <i>Note: dependent on capacity opening up in contractor's order books and the economic outlook generally</i> |
| Global supply chain pressures encouraging higher profit margins and premiums for risk from main contractors and specialist sub-contractors | |
| Strong demand from FDI companies, IT, logistics | |
| Strong pipeline of public sector spending; Government capital expenditure programme | |
| Residential sector in crisis and twice as many houses needed | |
| ESG and zero carbon targets 2030 | |
| Terms and conditions associated with public sector contracts | |

SEEKING RESOLUTION

THE PRACTICE OF DISPUTE RESOLUTION REQUIRES A NUMBER OF KEY SOFT SKILLS.

Following Martin Waldron's excellent article in the last edition of the *Surveyors Journal* on the SCSI's Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Information Paper, and the ADR options available to disputants in Ireland, this article examines the soft skills required for effective dispute resolution practice.

Labelling the ADR processes

As outlined in the SCSI's Information Paper, there are different mechanisms or processes for ADR in Ireland. Those processes broadly fall into two categories: interests based; and, rights based.

Interests-based processes

In Ireland, the interests-based processes are mediation and conciliation. 'Interests' are the wants, needs, concerns and/or desires that lie behind a disputant's stated position. A mediator or conciliator will seek to move from the disputant's intractable position to the interests that lie behind that position. The only way to elicit interests is to actively listen.

An important point to note is that interests can be satisfied in many ways and these processes can facilitate creativity and genuine value creation for both parties. However, this potential for business-friendly versatility and value creation is limited by the vision and emotional intelligence of the parties involved.

It should also be added that conciliation remains an interests-based process only until the parties fail to reach an agreement, when the process turns into a rights-based one, i.e., when the conciliator issues a recommendation. It is perhaps more accurately characterised as a hybrid process, depending on how many of the parties' interests the conciliator uses in his/her recommendation.

Rights-based processes

Rights-based processes in Ireland include conciliation, adjudication, arbitration and litigation (although it is acknowledged that litigation does not come under the ADR umbrella). A rights-based approach is when a third party makes a determination of rights – a determination of who is right and wrong – based on some objective standard.

Power-based processes

There are also power-based processes for resolving disputes. A power-based approach is when one or both parties use power to influence their opponent's behaviour by forcing them to make choices that satisfy the other party's interests. The most obvious example of this is strikes or industrial action.

The Covid-19 pandemic appears to have empowered and emboldened employees, and we can anticipate a rise in power-based industrial action. As a further aside, commercial litigation nearly always involves a power-based approach to diminishing an opponent's case through interlocutory communications and court applications. It is my experience that the more monetary value involved in the dispute, the greater the power play.

Soft skills and emotional intelligence

Soft skills are any personal skills or behaviours that we use to deliver our technical, industry-specific skills. These make us more personally effective at doing things like mapping a piece of land in a dispute, or bringing a new commercial premises to the market. Rather than giving an exhaustive list of key soft skills required for dispute resolution, I want to speak generally about emotional intelligence and why it is a vital starting point for all soft skills.

Emotional intelligence

Here is a two-limbed definition of emotional intelligence. Limb one is the ability to identify our emotions as they arise and to respond in an appropriate manner. Limb two is the ability to read the emotions of others in our interactions, and to respond with empathy.

It is important to note that emotional intelligence has a dual impact: it makes us more personally effective in a professional sense and it provides for greater resilience and self-worth.

This article will focus on the second limb of emotional intelligence, as it is an easier element to digest if this is your first introduction to the subject.

Empathy

Empathy is a word and practice that generates a lot of resistance in people, especially in the corporate world. I believe that this stems from a misunderstanding of what empathy is and why we use it. Broadly speaking, there are two definitions of empathy.

Firstly, it is a purely rational practice: we articulate to a disputant our understanding of their view or position. Secondly, it can exist on an emotional level: we either acknowledge a disputant's feelings or we mirror or feel what they are feeling.

FEATURE

Ronan Gallagher
Barrister, author
and trainer





Whatever form of empathy we aim to practise (if at all) will depend on the personality types involved in the process, as well as on the context. By empathising, we allow disputants to feel understood and valued, thereby removing much of the emotional resistance that is ever present in any human interaction or dispute.

When the emotional resistance is lessened, the parties' rigid positions are softened, and they can get on with the real business of settling disputes and creating value.

Active listening

A key element in practising or displaying empathy is active listening. Broadly speaking, active listening is exclusively focusing our attention (as much as our minds will allow) on what the disputants are saying. We actively listen to:

1. Elicit information and the parties' interests.
2. Unpack a disputant's emotionally entrenched position; that is, to allow them to vent.
3. Test understanding of what has been said.
4. Show empathy; that is, communicate understanding and respect.

So, if rationally we can understand why active listening is important to make us effective at resolving disputes and communicating generally, why are we poor at it and why do we prefer to advise?

There are many reasons why we cannot focus our minds exclusively on

listening, but the key factor is that our unconscious emotions upset our ability to focus our conscious minds, i.e., the emotional brain overrides the rational brain. The main reasons for this are:

1. We have a preconceived notion of what a disputant will say and needs.
2. We cannot suspend our own needs long enough to respond with active listening.
3. What we hear triggers us emotionally, leading to a defensive response.

There are many different skills involved in active listening, but the principal skills are asking open-ended questions and paraphrasing what you have heard. The important point to remember is that it must be practised with authenticity – it cannot be feigned attentiveness. It is vital that our only goal and focus is to fully understand what is being said. Focusing on trying to make the disputant feel heard will often lead to you sounding contrived or condescending. A disputant will feel heard and valued by you committing to understand them.

Summary

Emotions are an unconscious yet integral aspect to everything we do in our professional lives. If we continue to ignore our emotions, and their interaction with the beliefs and behaviours that make up our personality structure, we go about our work of dispute resolution with a blunt axe.

CONNECTION, COLLABORATION, CULTURE AND CONVENIENCE

A RECENT SURVEY OF SCSi PROPERTY AND FACILITIES MANAGEMENT MEMBERS CONTAINS FASCINATING INSIGHTS INTO THE POST-COVID-19 RETURN TO THE OFFICE.



As the return to the office continues, trends and patterns are emerging and taking shape within workplace experience. In short, connection, collaboration, culture and convenience are king.

In July 2022, we ran a survey across SCSi property and facilities management (PMFM) members to understand how Covid-19 was impacting on the workplace experience, the lived experience of SCSi members, and to gain their insight on emerging patterns. The research covers the period of Covid-19 lockdown in Ireland (March 2020 to February 2022) and was based on a mixed-method research strategy, including open-ended survey questions and interviews with stakeholders from the SCSi PMFM Group and Dublin tech sector occupiers. Respondents primarily fell into five categories: property management (36%); facilities management (32%); mechanical and electrical (M&E) providers (9%); landlords (9%); and, occupiers (6%), with the balance made up of others, including occupancy planning and soft service providers.

Immediate transition and practical focus

The research found that the transition to remote working was immediate, and that the initial focus for the industry was practical in terms of social distancing, signage and cleaning. Hybrid working, while not new, was accelerated by the pandemic and is now accepted as the future of work.

Return to office remains fluid

The research demonstrates that the return to the office is fluid and elastic, and that while traction is building, the pace of return varies greatly. Some 69% of respondents noted a hybrid state, 24% a full return, and 27% a transition from remote to office (Figure 1). Of particular note is the

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|----|
| Fully returned to office | 24% | 11 |
| Transitioning from remote to office | 27% | 12 |
| Hybrid | 69% | 31 |
| Growth in office space | 11% | 5 |
| Reduction in office space | 24% | 11 |
| Increasing hybrid working | 38% | 17 |
| Increasing remote working | 20% | 9 |
| Adding events/meeting room space | 13% | 6 |
| Adding wellness spaces | 13% | 6 |
| Adding food/beverage spaces | 4% | 2 |
| Other (please specify) | | 3> |

FIGURE 1: Return to the office varied among respondents.

FEATURE

Lily Ellis
Global Alliance Director, CBRE



divergence between those increasing and decreasing their portfolios, a real indicator of the evolving patterns and workplace experiences.

New workplace metrics

While post-Covid-19 workplace strategies are being measured across various metrics, occupancy and employee satisfaction remain key (77% of survey respondents measure occupancy, 69% measure employee satisfaction). Utilisation has, however, replaced occupancy as the key metric in terms of how spaces are used rather than how much space is required based on headcount – 37% of respondents are actively measuring the usage of collaboration spaces. Collating meaningful data on other new metrics around indoor air quality, heating, lighting, noise, water conservation and waste minimisation will require investment by the industry. Technology is actively being sought out by SCSl members to provide a user-friendly, convenient one-stop-shop to gather and share this data simply and meaningfully.

Designing for inclusion

With changes in the allocation of space comes the opportunity to be deliberate in terms of inclusion, accessibility and neurodiversity, a hugely welcome trend emerging from the survey findings (Figure 2).

| | | |
|---|-----|----|
| Creation of neighbourhoods | 31% | 12 |
| Creation of quiet zone | 23% | 9 |
| Creation of focus zones | 26% | 10 |
| Creation of inclusion spaces (mother room/prayer room, etc.) | 23% | 9 |
| Creation of neurodiverse/mobility spaces | 15% | 6 |

FIGURE 2: Changes in space allocation is leading to positive change as regards inclusion, accessibility and diversity.

Curating workplace experience

Clear patterns are emerging in terms of occupancy trends and workplace redesign. Traditional 1:1 seating has been replaced by neighbourhood activity-based working, promoting social interactions, collaboration and organisational culture. This is evidenced in the CBRE Occupier Sentiment Survey (2022), which states that the “best driver to get people back to the office is other people”, and in the curation of workplace experiences, as seen in the survey results.

Occupiers' gold standards

Health, well-being, sustainability, and independent certified building accreditation are the new gold standard measures for occupiers. The survey results indicate a clear shift within industry towards well-being, biodiversity and sustainability programmes as a result of Covid-19.

Green premium and need for sustainability

The associated rental premium for sustainable healthy spaces is increasingly emerging, with JLL (2022) estimating “green assets attracting a rental premium in the region of 8%”. CBRE (2022) occupier insights underpin this with “63% of occupiers willing to pay a premium for superior sustainability credentials”. Electrification and the move away from carbon is a similar emerging trend, one likely to grow given the ever-rising cost of utilities and the Government's recently announced Sectoral Emissions

Ceilings (Buildings Commercial and Public 45% reduction/Residential 40% reduction on 2018 levels).

Looking ahead with technology

The use of technology, while very much a feature of industry research, also needs to be considered as a product in the return to office transition. While all interviewees and survey respondents noted that technology has been adopted, there is a divergence between industry implementation and what occupiers actually want to achieve. Industry is focused on tactical metrics, whereas tech sector occupiers are focused on employee experience and employee convenience (i.e., technology that improves the experience while in the workplace) (Figure 3).

| | | |
|---|-----|----|
| Employee experience app (e.g., heating, cooling, cleaning, other workplace requests) | 14% | 5 |
| Desk booking app | 62% | 23 |
| Meeting room booking app | 65% | 24 |
| IT support tickets | 35% | 13 |
| Event management (meeting/events setup, travel, other) | 24% | 9 |
| Mailroom/parcel delivery app | 5% | 2 |
| Occupancy monitoring | 54% | 20 |
| Cleaning frequency monitoring | 41% | 15 |
| Indoor air quality/humidity level monitoring | 35% | 13 |
| Noise level monitoring | 11% | 4 |
| Smart building technology (lighting, heating, air, noise, blinds – other controls from BMS) | 32% | 12 |
| Digital twin technology (3D modelling, other technology) | 8% | 3 |

FIGURE 3: Use of technology.

Looking ahead

As stated at the outset, hybrid working is not new. It was, however, accelerated by the pandemic and is here to stay. The traditional open-plan office has been redesigned for activity-based working, giving employees a choice of environments in which to work.

Post Covid-19 workplace purpose is evolving from ‘me to we’ spaces to facilitate social experiences, teamwork, collaboration and innovation, generating a sense of inclusion and belonging in response to clear indications of anxiety, burnout and loneliness during the pandemic.

Employee expectations around human-centric health, safety and well-being are mirroring the environmental, social and governance (ESG) values of employers, and are being brought to life in the workplace by way of healthy building materials, embodied carbon considerations, electrification of services, reduction of waste, water conservation, and the creation of outdoor spaces and biodiversity programmes.

Leading organisations are embracing data, experimenting and iterating to intentionally plan a workplace that will support employees to spend meaningful, productive, innovative time together in person. This ‘placemaking’ is acting as a ‘nudge’ to encourage people back to the office and to embrace organisational culture.

All of these factors add up to exciting times for those in PM and FM to shape the future of the workplace experience.

LANDSCAPE AS A RESOURCE

THE USE OF MATERIALS FROM, IN AND OF THE LANDSCAPE MUST BE CONDUCTED IN A MANAGED AND MEASURED WAY.

This article explores some of the concepts underlying how we can manage our landscape resources. Of key importance is that we develop clear and comprehensive knowledge of our landscapes. To do so we must observe our landscape and the changes that are occurring, both positive and negative. Such observation requires that we collect and analyse data on all aspects of our landscape – physical, chemical and biological. The Council of Europe (CoE) promotes such observation through the International Landscape Observatory.¹ This analysis and observation is intended to provide positive outcomes in terms of overall landscape management. This may be considered of key importance to surveyors, as the profession that records and quantifies changes in our landscapes.

In Ireland, we have a landscape that is knitted into our heritage. The land is seen, consciously and subconsciously, as providing the resources we need for life and commerce.

Eskers

“The eskers of Ireland have always attracted attention on account of their singular appearance in the great central plain...”²

One of the key features of our landscapes are the eskers that lie across the midlands. The presence of our stunning eskers and their topography (steep sides) allows for the establishment of native ecologies and, particularly, the climax vegetation of native woodland. Cross (1992) explains that eskers may extend for many kilometres as the ridges are too steep for cultivation and “patches of native woodland occur, some being several kilometres in length”.³

We also have a wealth of biodiversity in our hedgerows, which, depending on their management, may act as either a carbon sink or

an overall emitter. Thus, our management of such features is vital to our biodiversity strategy, pollinator plan, and in achieving our climate goals. The importance of hedgerow management is emphasised and the importance of hedgerows in the landscape recognised in Black *et al.* (2022): “Perennial landscape features, such as hedgerows, can play a role in enhancing terrestrial carbon sinks, especially in north-western Europe, where they form a large part of the agricultural landscape”.⁴

Anthropogenic effects on the landscape

Human activity may be considered the main driver of change in the Irish landscape and so we must be aware of our effects on the basic fabric of the landscape and its key physical components. Our activities can, in some cases, cause irreversible damage to ecosystems and reduce the overall biological resources. This is especially true when we consider the need to ensure that our crops are pollinated, and that agriculture and biodiversity can be carried out in a harmonious manner.⁵

Our impacts on the landscape resource and the potential negative effects on the underlying ecology can be acute, and thus our activities require a careful balance of commercial activity and ecological conservation and restoration.

For some time now, human activity has had a significant effect on eskers due to the removal of quantities of gravel and sand. In 2019, *RTÉ Investigates* found that some quarry operators can circumvent the regulations in a system that is not fit for purpose, finding that over 150 quarries across the country are unauthorised.

The distribution and ecological significance of eskers as they relate to sites for native woodland is also outlined by Cross.³ The ecological significance of their removal would be a loss to the landscape resource. Ongoing extraction must be linked to effective management of resources and not the apparent ‘free for all’ driven by market forces as they currently exist. There are many infractions in planning and enforcement as they relate to these activities.

In tandem with ‘improvements’ to agricultural land, removal of hedgerows and planned monoculture have a significant effect on the connectivity of the landscape (as wildlife passages and reservoirs). The effects on the landscape can be seen particularly from aerial photography and are apparent in **Figures 1, 2 and 3.**

FEATURE

Tony Williams BANatSci
MLArch MILI
IFLA CCWG European
Voting Member



FOR SOME TIME NOW, HUMAN ACTIVITY HAS HAD A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON ESKERS DUE TO THE REMOVAL OF QUANTITIES OF GRAVEL AND SAND.



FIGURE 1: Significant effects of quarrying and hedgerow removal in Co. Laois.



FIGURE 2: Beginning of an excavation along an esker in Co. Laois. Lines of trees/woodland may be esker-rich woodland.



FIGURE 3: Co. Offaly.

The presence of eskers and related glacial landscape features provides a range of terrestrial and aquatic ecologies. An analysis of esker ecologies is presented in Muyliaert and Tubridy.⁶ However, it is acknowledged that the presence of eskers and their inherent deposits are valuable as a source of building materials: "The value of eskers lies in their importance to local history, farming and quarrying, the local landscape, biodiversity and earth science conservation".

Any changes to our use of the landscape resource must thus be within an overall masterplan for our landscapes. Lines of trees/woodland may be esker-rich woodland and can be the basis for landscape tourism, and so provide alternative incomes from the landscape resource.

The circular economy

Tools to measure resource depletion

Using life cycle analysis (LCA), the effect of extraction may be measured. Apart from the effects on ecologies as above, abiotic resource depletion is one of the key measurements and provides us with a tool to manage these resources, using up our valuable materials.

As eskers are a finite feature, we must use and conserve them in a managed manner. One of the means of reducing our demand is to reuse materials as they become available through our construction works and activities in operations. This circular economy is a key aspect of the European Green Deal.⁷

Landscape architects

I represent European members as part of the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA) Climate Change Working Group (CCWG). We have embarked on a series of position papers, which inform our members of the issues we can influence through our projects. The first of these papers has been on the circular economy and how we must use materials wisely:

"Landscape architects plan, design and manage natural, rural and built environments, applying aesthetic and scientific principles to address the sustainability, quality and health of landscapes, collective memory, heritage and culture, and territorial justice. Having a know-how that bridges technical, analytical and biological skill-sets, landscape architects are able to co-ordinate, plan, design and manage the interactions between natural and cultural environments. This intersection presents landscape architects with the opportunity to play a crucial role in implementing holistic circularity concepts. These will be an important prerequisite to achieving adaptation and mitigation related to current crises in climate change whilst providing a continuity and stability of ecosystems and lead to improvements in socioeconomic and community health and welfare. Our role as landscape architects makes us almost uniquely competent in achieving this balance in the society we ultimately serve.

"..... as landscape architects, we are able to assimilate the various components of our design and the receiving landscape/area/place and provide the 'tools' for realising the visions and needs of the population living with our designs. Using materials in a creative and responsible way is key to achieving these aspirations".⁸

In an infrastructural landscape, such as roads, materials are used in vast quantities and are in constant demand. In order to reduce our depletion rate of materials, Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) has



Aerial view of a quarry in Ireland.

been investigating the reuse of road surfaces and this is being piloted in order to test the methodology and viability.⁹

The reuse of materials in buildings is also receiving much attention and so the reuse, restoration and minimising of new materials use is being presented as the responsible way to construct our cities, urban areas and infrastructure. The Irish Green Building Council (IGBC) has promoted such policies and methods for some time,¹⁰ and with current requirements under the Climate Act 2015, it behoves us to respond.

Data-driven management of the land/landscape

The development of landscape observatories can be a powerful tool in enabling many opinions to be combined as an agreed agenda for land and landscape management.¹ This model is driven both by managing data on landscape and land use, and ensuring that the many stakeholders within the wider landscape are accounted for.

The Irish Landscape Institute has promoted such an approach and is hopeful that this will become a policy that is implemented. Such data-driven management is a must in order to ensure that we can respond to the climate and biodiversity emergency declared by the Irish Government in 2019. This would be a brave move but requires careful balancing of the many needs of the physical landscape and of all its inhabitants.

The role of Chartered Surveyors is key, as they record and analyse the landscape in a quantitative manner. The management of change in our landscape is a necessity if we are to retain its unique features. Having the data on the effects of our activities and designing our processes to have minimal impact or positive impacts is possible with careful thought.

Further information on the IFA World Climate Change Working Group is available at: <https://www.iflaworld.com/climate-change-working-group>.

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BUILDING INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

PAUL MCDOWELL HAS BEEN HEAVILY INVOLVED FOR MANY YEARS WITH THE SOCIETY OF INDUSTRIAL AND OFFICE REALTORS, WHICH RECENTLY HELD A SUCCESSFUL CONFERENCE IN DUBLIN.

Paul McDowell joined the Society of Industrial and Office Realtors (SIOR) around the turn of the millennium: "SIOR has approximately 3,600 members across the world. There's over 100 of those who are European. We are in 45 countries and 722 cities. A lot of those cities are across the US. It's focused very much on commercial transactions only, industrial and office mainly".

Paul has had a long career working with people from Ireland and around the world. He was a founder of Ganly Walters, and held roles in Knight Frank after it bought the company: "In 2013, I stepped down to form my own boutique investment consultancy. During those years, my main job would have been investment, a lot of international investment. I had considerable work acquiring for Irish capital in the UK, Germany, France, Belgium and Switzerland. That was my international investment background. My own investment consultancy now is very much focused on cross-border business, either bringing Irish capital into Europe, or bringing European or American capital into Ireland".

From 2018-2020, Paul was President of the European region of the SIOR: "It was an interesting time to be President because SIOR global HQ had a plan to push international growth. I was very much involved with my European committee in formulating the plans, and indeed the budget, to try and grow that

platform. Of course, we were no sooner out of the blocks when we got hit with Covid, so that obviously rather put our plans on ice. Having said that, the momentum is now picking up and we're beginning to grow the membership".

Conference

Having been delayed by the pandemic, the SIOR finally held its European conference in Dublin earlier this year. Paul describes it as an extraordinary success: "It fulfilled all our ambitions. We had in the region of 340 delegates. We were based in the Conrad Hotel. The gala dinner was spectacular in Christchurch Cathedral, where we had the Cathedral's choir and we also had the international singer Tommy Fleming sponsored by TSL Projects. It was quite spectacular. One of our main keynote speakers was David McWilliams. We also had Paul McNeive and a couple of others who wouldn't be as well known to people in Ireland, but included James Scott and Mike Berners-Lee".

Before the conference, there was a sponsored cycle to Kilkenny and back, and between that and a golfing event €40,000 was raised for Ukrainian causes.

The majority of the attendees came from the US and Paul believes they were impressed: "I think they were blown away by Ireland. We put on a good show. We had terrific support from our sponsors, which included Bank of Ireland and the SCSI, who were very generous sponsors of our welcome party".

Paul is also very proud of the conference's student programme. Places are available where real estate students attend the conference all expenses paid. These students came from all over Europe, and Paul would like to remind Irish students that this programme is open to them as well.

On the value of networking and international relationships for surveyors, Paul says: "Ireland is a small pool and if you want to up your game, particularly in these days, all the capital coming into Ireland is international capital, all the foreign direct investment coming into Ireland, and in order to try access some of that, there's no better way than meeting people and networking. I believe very firmly that people do business with people they like".



Paul McDowell.

SURVEYOR PROFILE

Colm Quinn
Journalist and Sub-Editor,
Think Media



REBUILDING HOMES – BEHIND THE NUMBERS



FOR MANY HOMEOWNERS, THE ANNUAL HEADACHE OF RENEWING THEIR HOME INSURANCE IS MADE LESS PAINFUL BY THE SCSI'S GUIDE TO HOUSE REBUILDING COSTS FOR INSURANCE PURPOSES AND HOUSE REBUILDING CALCULATOR.

The SCSI Guide to House Rebuilding Costs for Insurance Purposes was first published in 1989, providing average costs in Dublin. This was expanded to include the Cork region from 1992 and the Galway region from 1996.

From 2005 onwards, average rebuilding rates were provided for Limerick and Waterford, and the consumer guide was further expanded to cover the northwest and northeast from 2012. The guide provides average rebuilding rates based on six estate-type homes, from two-bedroom terraces to four-bedroom detached homes.

Member commitment

The annual collection of rebuilding rates information from chartered quantity surveying members across the country begins months in advance of annual releases. Members generously give of their time to complete a detailed Excel 'Pricing Schedule', which amounts to over 200 construction component line items, all of which are individually priced to

arrive at a total average reinstatement cost for six estate-type homes. Behind the 'minimum base' cost provided in the rebuilding calculator is a very complex dataset of construction, labour and material rates and quantities for each house type and each region to ensure high levels of accuracy.

This is not a simple or short exercise, and members commit to provide up-to-date cost information, *pro bono*. This falls within the public interest remit of the SCSI and once the data begins to stream back to SCSI offices, it's analysed by staff and a working group of chartered quantity surveying members.

Complex

Many consumers could be forgiven for assuming that average rebuilding costs can be universally applied to most building types, i.e., two-storey estate homes and one-off properties in the countryside.

This is simply not possible as variations on house designs, sizes, choice of materials and specifications can have a significant bearing on the appropriate rebuilding cost of that home. As

a practising quantity surveyor, I am aware of a home that costed at €650k to rebuild compared to €300k for its estate-type equivalent – the difference in this case was the high specification within the home and the choice of materials used to construct it.

Pride in our members

As chair of the working group that oversees the updating of the guide, I am very proud to see yet another example whereby one part of the SCSI, in this case Chartered Quantity Surveyors, is producing real-time, accurate cost information, which is also relied upon by Chartered Valuation Surveyors in reporting to clients.

The guide and calculator remain one of the highest drivers of web traffic to the SCSI website, attracting over 250k visits each year, which we are also very proud of. From 2023, the SCSI is looking to further expand the construction cost study to incorporate additional house types – so more is yet to come!

The 2022 rebuilding rates are available at www.scsi.ie.

THE LAST WORD

Kevin Brady MSCSI MRICS
Chairperson, Quantity
Surveying Professional
Group



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