

SURVEYORS JOURNAL

VOLUME 15
ISSUE 3
JUNE 2025

THE CHALLENGE OF COMMERCIAL RETROFIT



SCSI

Chartered property,
land and construction
surveyors

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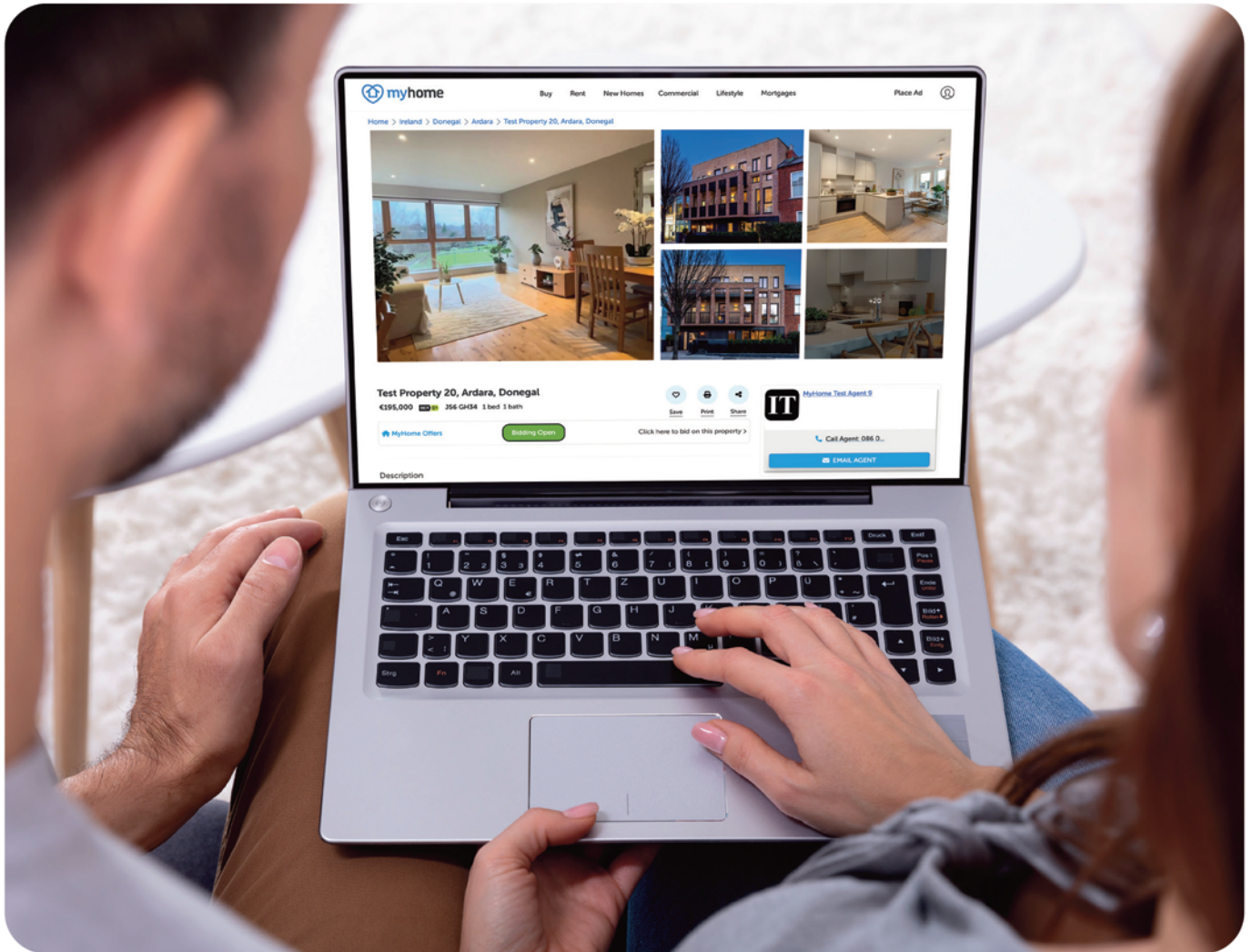
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MATERIAL REUSE



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



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INTERVIEW



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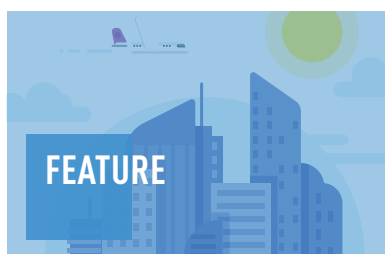
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EDITORIAL



THE LAST WORD



FEATURE

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Published on behalf of the Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland by Think Media

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A BUSY YEAR AHEAD

NEW SCSi PRESIDENT GERARD O'TOOLE LOOKS FORWARD TO CONTINUING THE SCSi'S IMPORTANT WORK.

From the outset, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the opportunity to serve as SCSi President for the coming year. It is a great personal honour to represent our over 7,000 members, and I look forward to engaging with you and continuing with the excellent ongoing work of the Society.

Priorities

One of my key aims is to connect with members in the regions across every county and town. Our industry can often be considered overly Dublin focused but coming from and practising in the West of Ireland, I am acutely aware of the talented, hardworking professionals in the regions who perhaps are a little removed from the activity of the SCSi. I want to encourage as many members as possible to engage with the SCSi, to get involved in the various working groups and committees, and even to consider Council and SCSi Board membership. We need to harness the unique experience and skills of our diverse members to drive the profession forward. I have been actively involved with the SCSi for many years and have always felt I gained more than I have contributed. Undertaking work on behalf of the SCSi has been enriching, rewarding, and a great way to network. I also want to continue the excellent work of my predecessor, Kevin Hollingsworth, in reaching out to the next generation of surveyors. With tremendous opportunities for career development, diversity of work and an ability to have a meaningful

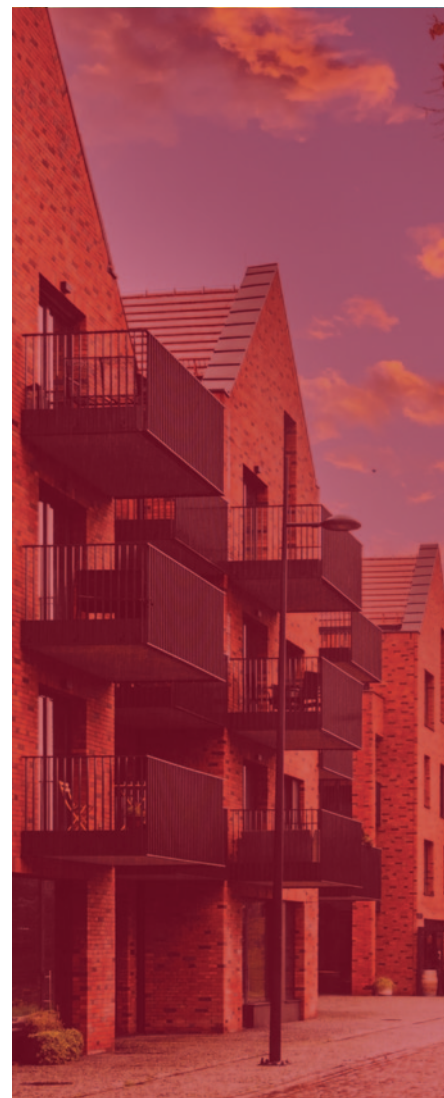
impact on society, surveying has a critical role to play in the future of the built environment. New entrants to the profession will bring different perspectives and unique digital skills, all of which need to be fully harnessed.

Essential work

The work of surveyors has never been more relevant or important. Significant strides have been made to raise awareness of our profession, to deliver impactful data-driven research, and to help inform and shape policy. Through the work of our excellent CEO Shirley Coulter, the senior management team and indeed all staff members, the SCSi has gone from strength to strength. The sheer range of our services and skills sets us apart and will, I believe, continue to put the SCSi at the forefront as the pre-eminent body representing those in land, property and construction.

However, as a profession and indeed society we face significant challenges. Our housing market has seen rampant price inflation, and our inability to ramp up new home supply is a major obstacle to stabilising prices. The delivery of key infrastructure is a major issue that requires urgent action and funding.

Roadmap 2027 sets out the strategic direction of the SCSi over a three-year period. Significant strides have already been made in reaching our objectives but there remains much to be done. I look forward to continuing this work with the Executive, Council and the Board.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Gerard O'Toole
SCSi President



TIME OF CHANGE

AT THIS TIME OF YEAR THERE ARE THE TRADITIONAL CHANGES OF OFFICERSHIPS AT THE SCSi, WITH MEMBERS ELECTED TO NEW ROLES OR COMING TO THE END OF THEIR PERIOD IN OFFICE.

We all owe those leaving an office or starting in a new position a great deal of thanks for their work. In particular, I wish the new President, Gerard O'Toole, good luck as he takes over. It is particularly good to have a President from west of the Shannon this year. Also, I am sure all will agree that Kevin Hollingsworth had a great year, during which he made a significant contribution to the Society. I would like to record thanks to him for all his work over the last couple of years.

In this edition of the *Surveyors Journal* there are very interesting pieces of relevance to the work of all surveyors. A good example is on page 14, where Rachel Hoolahan writes about a solution to the growing concern about the problems of older buildings at the end of their current use. She says that built environment professionals possess the expertise and the responsibility to transform the property and construction industries. They can do this by using their expertise to give a new life to existing buildings at the end of their current usefulness. She points to material reuse as a solution and says that it remains frustratingly underutilised.

Looking more broadly, I think surveyors will agree that radical change is needed in the way we view our cities and how they will be financed, governed and planned. In the report on page 20, the Irish Cities 2070 Group considers how 11 million people, the projected population of Ireland by 2070, could be accommodated.

They say that cities must be recognised as the engines of our social, economic and cultural lives. Without healthy cities, Ireland will not continue to attract domestic and foreign investment to allow the 11 million people to prosper.

They point out that successful European cities have greater autonomy and resources devoted to urban design and project development than in Ireland. Certainly, the current governance of our cities needs reform and this contribution is food for thought.

EDITORIAL

Tom Dunne
Editor



CIRCULAR MATERIAL REUSE RATE IN SELECTED EU COUNTRIES

Netherlands

2010	2023
25.5%	30.6%



Denmark

2010	2023
8%	9.1%



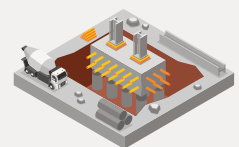
Croatia

2010	2023
1.6%	6.2%



Ireland

2010	2023
1.9%	2.3%



EU average

2010	2023
10.7%	11.8%



Source: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/env_ac_cur__custom_13756252/default/table?lang=en.

2025 PROPERTY & LAND INSIGHTS CONFERENCE

We were delighted to have over 100 members take part in the 2025 Property & Land Insights Conference. This year's Conference took place both in-person at 38 Merrion Square and online, and featured the launch of the 'SCSI/Teagasc Annual Agricultural Land Market Review & Outlook' report. Our thanks to the many members who contributed valuable data and insights to help shape this publication. Access the full report at: scsi.ie/land.



The launch of the 2025 SCSI/Teagasc Agricultural Land Report, presented by Edward McAuley, SCSI Director of Practice & Policy, at the Property & Land Insights Conference.

REGIONAL CONNECTIONS CONFERENCES

It was fantastic to connect with more than 75 members at our Southern and South East Regional Connections Conferences this spring. Thank you to all our speakers for their insights and to all who took part.



Presentation on the latest Real Cost report to members from the Southern Region.




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ENTER THE NEXUS TAG RUGBY TOURNAMENT



Get ready for an exciting evening of tag rugby, networking, and summer fun. The event will take place on Friday, July 25 at the Old Wesley Rugby Club, Dublin 4. A team consists of a maximum of 10 players and each team needs to have at least one female player. A BBQ and drink vouchers will be included with each ticket. This popular event sells out every year, so make sure to book your team today. Organised by Nexus, the SCSi's young professionals network.

JOIN US FOR THE 2025 CONSTRUCTION + QS CONFERENCE



Get ready for a high-impact, half-day hybrid conference that dives deep into the latest trends, challenges, and innovations in the construction sector. From market insights and capacity challenges to real-world case studies and industry updates, this event is packed with practical knowledge and future-focused discussion.

Don't miss this opportunity to connect with industry colleagues, gain fresh perspectives, and stay ahead in a rapidly evolving landscape. The Conference takes place on Wednesday, June 25 in-person at 38 Merrion Square and online.



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SUPPORTS AND SERVICES FOR SCSI MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES



As we gather once again for our annual LionHeart golf event, we want to remind members of the many supports and services available through LionHeart, which helps Chartered Surveyors – past and present – and their families. These supports and services include:

- back to work scheme – includes online help with your CV, tips and guidance on how to get ready for interviews;
- professional counsellors can help you work through any issues in a safe and non-judgmental space – you can access this expert help quickly without being stuck on waiting lists;
- retirement – talk to career consultants who can advise on self-employed or semi-retired plans, or speak with a dedicated support officer to create a package of support tailored to your needs;
- wellness support can help you cope with stress and other issues – SCSi members have found LionHeart's confidential support officers helpful as they can guide you in finding a way forward;
- legal helpline offers you access through Law Express and its partners;
- grants are available for members and their families facing financial hardship due to illness, redundancy, or bereavement – let your family know they can reach out to LionHeart in case of financial need; and,
- coaching is available over the phone or through online video to help you navigate through changes in your work or home life.

You can contact LionHeart by calling 01-223 9446 or emailing info@lionheart.org.uk. All queries are confidential, and nothing is kept on file.



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CONGRATULATIONS NEW FELLOWS



The fellowship grade of SCSI membership represents a prestigious award that reflects the career achievements of a special group of property, land and construction professionals. Attaining the SCSI fellowship is a true mark of distinction.

Congratulations to the new fellows:

- Oliver Held FSCSI FRICS – Building surveying;
- David O'Neill FSCSI FRICS – Quantity surveying; and,
- Conor Gillett FSCSI FRICS – Valuations.

We congratulate you on reaching this milestone and thank you for your service to the profession and to the SCSI. Visit the fellowship page of our website to find out more about becoming a Fellow member of the SCSI and to apply online.

HELP INSPIRE THE NEXT SURVEYORS

In the lead-up to the CAO Change of Mind deadline, we're promoting the wide range of fantastic careers in surveying. Do you know a student trying to finalise their CAO Change of Mind course selection? Share our full list of

accredited courses or encourage a student to book a free online or in-person career one-to-one chat with Ruth Comerford-Morris via our careers help desk. Visit the help desk or contact Ruth at ruth@scsi.ie or by phone on 087-905 4787.



OBITUARY – KEVIN SHERIDAN RIP



It is with great sadness that we receive the news of the passing of Kevin Sheridan, Past Chair, Building Surveying, colleague, and friend within the SCSI. As a colleague, Kevin was a true champion of the construction profession who understood the importance and value of co-operation and interaction. He possessed an innate understanding of the differences and challenges within the industry. Kevin's contribution was immense and will be missed. Kevin's list of achievements and influence within

various construction bodies is remarkable and included a profound understanding of regulation and professional best practices. In particular, Kevin's contribution to building surveying, and by extension the AEEBC, is unequalled. Positive by nature, Kevin led by example, and no problem was ever too great not to be solved. His attention to detail and work ethic was enormous, as was his selflessness. Beyond his commitment, Kevin stood out in his remarkable professional career and his natural gift for

communication inspired trust, respect, and genuine enthusiasm. Kevin extended a generosity of spirit and friendship to everyone he met. He leaves behind many friends and will be sorely missed. We in the SCSI extend our deepest sympathies to his family, friends, and colleagues.

May he rest in peace.

**Kevin Sheridan FSCSI FRICS FCIQB EurBE
MSc CEnv FIET MICE FCABE CBULDE FIBCI
FCInstCES**

GET READY TO SERVE



Dust off your rackets and get your team ready, the 2025 SCSi *Irish Times* Tennis Tournament is set for Thursday, August 21 at Donnybrook Tennis Club. Matches will begin from 3:00pm, and we're looking forward to another exciting afternoon of tennis and networking.

All matches will be doubles, with each team made up of two male and two female players. Teams scheduled between 3:00pm and 3:30pm must be at the club and ready to play by 3:00pm sharp, as matches will start on time.

After the games, players can enjoy a barbecue and prize-giving, with refreshments available throughout the day. Our thanks again to *The Irish Times*, whose support is synonymous with this event. We look forward to welcoming you on the day.

NEW SENIOR ASSOCIATE AT GIA SURVEYORS



GIA Surveyors is pleased to welcome Éanna Dunne as a Senior Associate Director in its Dublin office. Éanna is a Chartered Surveyor with over 17 years of experience, both in Ireland and internationally.

He brings specialist expertise in areas such as lender and investor technical due diligence, project monitoring, frameworks, project management, and design. Éanna has worked across a diverse range of sectors, including corporate real estate (embassies), leisure (aquariums and hotels), and large-scale multi-storey residential developments.

FUNDING FOR ONLINE DKIT BUILDING SURVEYING COURSE



From left: Dr Breda Brennan; Kevin Hollingsworth; and, Dr Phil Bradley.

The School of Engineering at Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT), in partnership with the SCSi, have announced a new Financial Support Scheme for students of the fully-online Postgraduate Diploma in Building Surveying. The Postgraduate Diploma is designed to upskill property professionals (or recent graduates) who wish to convert into building surveying or upskill to become an assigned certifier under the Building Control Regulations. The programme is accredited by the SCSi and successful graduates can progress to Chartership. Via this financial support scheme, companies financially support property professionals or recent graduates to upskill.

Employers agree to sponsor part (€2,000) of the student's course fees and DkIT waive €2,600 of the fee. The student pays the remaining €500 while committing to work within the employer's practice and upskill with the ultimate aim of obtaining a Level 9 degree.

Kevin Hollingsworth, Managing Director of Omega Surveying Services, and graduate of DkIT said: "The calibre of people from this course are exceptional and they are truly industry ready".

Dr Breda Brennan, Head of School of Engineering said: "Due to the programme's popularity and online nature, it can be accessed from anywhere in Ireland".

ON THE ROADMAP

NEW SCSi PRESIDENT GERARD O'TOOLE IS KEEN TO CONTINUE THE WORK OF ROADMAP 2027, AND TO GET MORE PROVINCIAL SCSi MEMBERS ENGAGED WITH THE SOCIETY.



Gerard O'Toole of O'Toole & Co. of Westport, Co. Mayo takes over the presidency of the SCSi as the profession continues to be sought out for informed data and advice on the industry in Ireland. He has a lifetime of experience in the property sector: "I was the only son of a small builder in the west of Ireland. So it was probably natural fit that I was going to end up somewhere in the built environment or construction. From a very early age, I was on sites carrying blocks and mixing concrete. That led to studying construction studies after school in the UK".

Following his graduation, Gerard worked for three years in Britain before he started to get itchy feet: "The travel bug kicked in. I was in my mid-20s, had gone from school to college to work, and thought there was more to life. So I started traveling, and travelled internationally for a couple of years. And when I came back I managed to get a Morrison visa to the US, and that opened up a further travel opportunity and I went to San Francisco, where I lived for four years, and worked for another housing contractor".

Following this, he had a desire to change focus to the real estate side of the business, so went back to university in 1995 to complete a degree in estate management at John Moores University in Liverpool. This began a lengthy career in real estate, which is still going strong: "I came back to Dublin, worked for an investment company for a year, and then took up a job with DTZ Sherry Fitzgerald, now Cushman & Wakefield, where I trained and worked for four years and became a Chartered Surveyor in 2001. In 2002, as part of the Sherry Fitzgerald group, they were expanding their network of franchise members, and they encouraged me to consider that. So I took the leap of faith, I suppose, and went out and opened my own business in 2002 and ran that for five years until 2007, after which I merged with Peter Tuohy from Tuohy & Company, which was a third-

INTERVIEW

Colm Quinn
Senior Journalist,
Think Media Ltd



IT'S JUST GOOD PLANNING THAT WHERE WE HAVE BROWNFIELD URBAN SITES THAT ARE CLOSE TO COMMUNITIES AND TRANSPORT CONNECTIONS, WE SHOULD BE ENCOURAGING HIGHER DENSITIES AND HIGHER SCALE BUILDINGS.



O'Toole & Co.

O'Toole & Co. is a full service practice involved in estate agency, professional services and general property consultancy: "I am the Managing Director and we have a small but highly experienced team. My wife Emma joined the business two years ago. She comes from a design background and has made a huge contribution in a short period of time. Our focus is largely within Connacht and Ulster but from time to time takes us anywhere across the country. We deal with a broad range of clients from the public and private sectors. Running your own business is very rewarding but equally challenging. I have been self employed for 23 years and have no regrets about taking that leap. Looking forward, we want to continue to focus on providing a high-quality director-led service and adding value for our clients".

generation, long-established business. We set up Tuohy O'Toole, which went on to become probably one of the larger, more respected practices of estate agents and surveyors in provincial Ireland. That business lasted for 16 years until about 2023, when I went out in my own direction and set up O'Toole & Co".

SCSI involvement

Gerard first became involved with the Society when he was undertaking his APC. He has been a professional member since 2001, and as his career progressed he became more actively involved: "I was former chair of the North West region, and I've been actively involved in the Assessment of Professional Competence, acting as a counsellor and as an assessor. I've spoken at various conferences and I've contributed to various reports. I applied for fellowship a couple of years ago, and I think that's probably where my involvement in the Society became a little bit greater and moved forward with my election to junior vice president and onto the SCSI Board".

Aims for Presidency

There is still plenty to do on the SCSI's Roadmap 2027, says Gerard. Coming from and living in provincial Ireland, Gerard says the profession can sometimes be seen as Dublin centric: "I think there's a lot of the membership that may be a little bit disconnected and not engaged with the Society. They avail of the membership and call themselves Chartered Surveyors, but maybe outside of undertaking required CPD, there's little engagement. So I want to connect with members. I want to visit, meet, and engage with as many as I can across every county the length and breadth of the country".

Gerard is also keen to continue the good work of his predecessor Kevin Hollingsworth to engage with schools and school leavers: "They're the lifeblood of the industry, and they're the people that are going to be the surveyors of tomorrow. So I want to continue with that work to engage with schools and to encourage school leavers to consider surveying as a viable profession".

Housing and infrastructure are two big challenges for the country, and often two sides of the same coin, says Gerard: "Despite a lot of initiatives, a lot of funding across consecutive governments, we've struggled to ramp up supply. The Society has been heavily involved in collating research and shaping policy. And that's something that I think we'll continue to play a key role in".

In his own town of Westport, Gerard says the infrastructure for new housing is there but the problem is financial viability. This is an issue even though Westport is one of the more expensive urban areas for housing on the western seaboard. Despite high capital values,

there's very little new home development: "There are development sites that are consented and serviced and one particularly significant one. But despite that, at the moment, developers are sitting on the fence, possibly concerned with the broader economic outlook post the Trump election and maybe how that might impact going forward and certainly funding. Any speculative residential development by the conventional pillar banks is a challenge. But this is not unique to Westport. This is countrywide and, of course, is part of the broader issue and housing crisis, be it in the public sector or private sector. We're simply not scaling up that volume of housing, which is absolutely critical".

Gerard believes to help ramp-up supply of housing, the country needs to get better at utilising brownfield sites: "My own personal view is that we should be encouraging high quality design, but also higher densities. And I'm certainly one that would advocate for higher buildings. I know we have some possibilities to do that, but I think it's restricted. And this is not about lining the pockets of landowners or developers. It's just good planning that where we have brownfield urban sites that are close to communities and transport connections, we should be encouraging higher densities and higher scale buildings".

Co-living developments have proved controversial, but Gerard believes they have a part to play: "It seems to be a natural fit between

college and into working life. We obviously have a crisis across the rental sector as well. It's not just those looking to buy. And I think co-living has a place. And ultimately we're competing internationally for talent. And I think the housing crisis and lack of affordable housing, be it rental or for sale, in the longer term, will impact on our ability to attract talent. And I think co-living works in other jurisdictions across Europe. If well-built in the right locations, I think it can and will fulfil an essential element in the housing market".

Bringing broad experience

Gerard says he hopes to bring his wide experience to the role of President. He has worked across Ireland, the UK and US, and says: "That does give you a different perspective. I can't ignore the fact that I'm based in provincial Ireland, and I think that brings a different perspective too, particularly for provincial members. I obviously have a long-standing career within the Society, so know the key personnel, have obviously an excellent relationship with the CEO, our executive board, and the council. And beyond that, lots of energy and commitment. As I said, I'm heavily embedded in the workings of the Society now. And the more involved you become, you understand the issues. You've a better grasp of them, what we're seeking to achieve, what's important, and ultimately, delivering on the objectives of Roadmap 2027". The SCSi is in a

good position and on a trajectory of growth, says Gerard: "We want to, as I said, continue to engage with members and encourage new members coming into the profession.

"I'd certainly like to see continued engagement with the third-level sector and to encourage and open up new routes into membership into the profession, generally. For example, on the property side, there's only two recognised third-level courses, one in Limerick and one in Dublin in TU and it would be great to get a third one".

Passing on knowledge

Gerard advises all young surveyors to complete their APC: "It's incredibly rewarding and will open up networking opportunities, lifelong learning, and I think a more rounded, better professional". Many young surveyors will look at the excitement of international travel, which Gerard did himself, but he hopes most will return: "At the moment, there is a significant skills gap. We have a huge undersupply of graduates across the built environment. And there are buckets and buckets of opportunities in Ireland. I suspect that's not lost on modern surveyors.

"They are well-informed, they know the opportunities, and we encourage many of them to come back to Ireland to work in a tremendously rewarding people-centric industry and help make a contribution and a significant difference to society and help solve the housing crisis. I think they all have a role to play".

A love of travel

Gerard is a lifelong Arsenal fan and an enthusiast of Ireland and Connacht Rugby: "Recreationally, I do a little bit of sailing, fishing, and am a very poor golfer, but love the game".

In his younger years, he worked and travelled outside of Ireland, an experience that helped his career, he says: "I think it was mainly driven by my desire for travel and adventure. And I'd encourage my own kids to travel, and they've done a lot of it. I think it does give you new experiences and different perspectives seeing different parts of the world. You certainly bring back different experiences and different perspectives to the workplace. I had a great time living in San Francisco, California with a wonderful lifestyle and climate. But I took that decision to go back to university and I've certainly no regrets".

One of Gerard's children has taken up surveying: "My son, Daniel has followed me into the profession. He's going into final year at the

University of Reading, doing real estate, having initially been in UCD. So that's been tremendously rewarding. I never encouraged it. It was something that he found himself. And so I've a stake in the profession going forward. And it'll be interesting to see him and his generation, how the profession evolves. In any profession at any point in time there's always challenges. And I think work as a surveyor is evolving, indeed society is evolving".

Each generation faces its own challenges and opportunities, says Gerard: "Younger surveyors are in an information age. They have at their disposal enormous amounts of information and technology that's likely to shape their working lives. For us, it was the internet, now it's AI. And I think we're just at the cusp of what AI is about and what it can do. And I think for all of us, that's going to have enormous bearing on our career. I hope it's good. Largely, I probably see it as good".

MAKING MATERIAL REUSE A REALITY

MATERIAL REUSE IS THE NEXT FRONTIER IN MEETING OUR CLIMATE TARGETS,
AND IS MORE ACHIEVABLE THAN YOU MIGHT THINK.



In a world where our built environment accounts for nearly 40% of global CO₂ emissions, the challenges of sustainable construction have never been more pressing. Yet amidst the urgent calls for net zero targets, one solution remains frustratingly underutilised: material reuse.

As architects, engineers, surveyors, and construction professionals, we possess both the expertise and the responsibility to transform our industry. Having spent years

working on material reuse strategies across London projects from boutique hotels to major commercial developments, I've witnessed firsthand the barriers – but more importantly, the remarkable opportunities – that exist when we approach our buildings as material banks.

FEATURE

Rachel Hoolahan
Associate Director
at Orms



Unlocking the potential at 75 London Wall

Winchester House, now known as 75 London Wall, stands as a compelling case study. Completed in 1999 as Deutsche Bank's headquarters, this 10-floor, 45,600 square metre building is currently being redeveloped by Castleforge and



FOR EXISTING BUILDINGS LIKE 75 LONDON WALL, EVEN BASIC MATERIALS PASSPORTS – RECORDING DIMENSIONS, QUANTITIES, AND CURRENT CONDITION – CAN PREVENT VALUABLE RESOURCES FROM BEING NEEDLESSLY DISCARDED.

Gamuda. The project demonstrates that material reuse isn't merely theoretical – it's happening now, on major commercial schemes in London.

Our team's approach began with careful assessment of what elements could be retained, refurbished, or repurposed. Rather than default to wholesale replacement, we interrogated each component's potential. Take the windows: working with our façade engineers, we determined that refurbishment rather than replacement was viable.

The existing frames could be retained with the insulated glazed units, seals and gaskets replaced, significantly reducing carbon expenditure while upgrading performance.

The building's external and internal limestone also presented opportunities.

Through detailed surveys and passporting by stone specialists, we carefully removed, processed, and reincorporated them into the new design as auditorium linings and

externally on the new facades to the upper floors. Similarly, hidden marble was discovered behind backpainted glass in the existing WCs. The strip out contractor, KpH, salvaged this. Initially earmarked for the new superloo installations, the storage fees were cost prohibitive for the client, and the stone was instead sent to terrazzo and furniture makers. Perhaps the most remarkable carbon success was the ceiling tile strategy.

Through careful removal and refurbishment by the original manufacturers, SAS, the metal ceiling tiles will be cleaned, refinished and reintegrated into the design – overcoming the aesthetic expectations of agents while delivering substantial embodied carbon savings.

Materials passports: the critical tool

These successes wouldn't have been possible without the concepts behind materials passports – digital tools that enhance material

reclamation by providing structured data on characteristics, performance, and reuse potential. They create an identity for materials, ensuring that information follows them through their lifecycle.

Materials passports operate at different scales, from individual materials (glass, aluminium) to products (glass panels), systems (windows), and elements (façades), all ultimately contained within a building passport. Using the Uniclass classification system already familiar to industry professionals on BIM projects, it creates a common language and facilitates wider adoption.

For existing buildings like 75 London Wall, even basic materials passports – recording dimensions, quantities, and current condition – can prevent valuable resources from being needlessly discarded. For new construction, the preparation of comprehensive passports will enable future reuse when those buildings eventually reach end of life.

AT 75 LONDON WALL, WE
CREATED AN ON-SITE REUSE
WAREHOUSE, ENABLING
MATERIALS TO BE STORED,
CATALOGUED, AND
REINCORPORATED
WITHOUT EXCESSIVE
TRANSPORTATION.

Overcoming barriers

It is also important to acknowledge the challenges that we continue to face. Cost perceptions remain problematic – many still believe demolition and new build is cheaper than deconstruction and reuse. Risk aversion persists without reliable data on existing materials. Contemporary construction techniques often favour chemical fixings over mechanical ones, making disassembly difficult. Expertise and logistics present further hurdles in an industry not yet configured for material reuse at scale.

Yet these challenges can be overcome. At 75 London Wall, we created an on-site reuse warehouse, enabling materials to be stored, catalogued, and reincorporated without excessive transportation. The team developed a deconstruction plan informed by pre-redevelopment and pre-demolition audits, creating a roadmap for managing recovered materials efficiently.

Stepping into a reuse world

Surveyors are uniquely positioned to advance material reuse. Consider how you might:

1. Advocate for pre-redevelopment and pre-demolition audits on every project.
2. Develop a materials passports strategy, even starting small with high-reuse-potential materials like raised access floors, ceiling tiles or stone.
3. Encourage the team to prepare flexible specifications that facilitate reused materials.



4. Create deconstruction plans alongside traditional operations and maintenance (O&M) manuals.
5. Connect with specialists who can test and recertify recovered materials.

A great deal of guidance is already available. From the Greater London Authority's (GLA) Circular Economy Statement requirements to detailed frameworks like our Materials Passports Handbook, the tools exist – they simply need committed professionals to implement them.

Scaling up

Our aspiration was that by 2025, every construction project should incorporate materials passports as standard deliverables. This isn't merely aspirational; it's an achievable necessity if we're to meet our climate commitments. The most successful approach won't be through rigid regulation but through informed collaboration. By treating buildings as material banks and creating the digital infrastructure to manage these resources effectively, we transform waste into value.

Our advice is to start small, learn quickly, and expand your approach. Materials passporting need not be comprehensive immediately – focus on high-value, high-potential components first. Remember that doing something is better than doing nothing. Our industry has already demonstrated remarkable adaptation in addressing sustainability. Material reuse represents the next frontier – one that demands your expertise, influence, and commitment. The treasures are there in our existing building stock; we need only the will to find them.

IRISH AGRICULTURE: LAND MARKET TRENDS, REGIONAL INSIGHTS, AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

THE 2025 SCSi/TEAGASC AGRICULTURAL LAND MARKET REVIEW AND OUTLOOK REPORT SHOWS THAT LAND SALE AND RENTAL COSTS HAVE CONTINUED TO RISE.

The Irish agricultural sector has undergone significant changes in recent years, with 2024 marking a year of mixed performance across various farming enterprises. The land market, a critical component of the sector, has seen notable trends in sales and rental values.

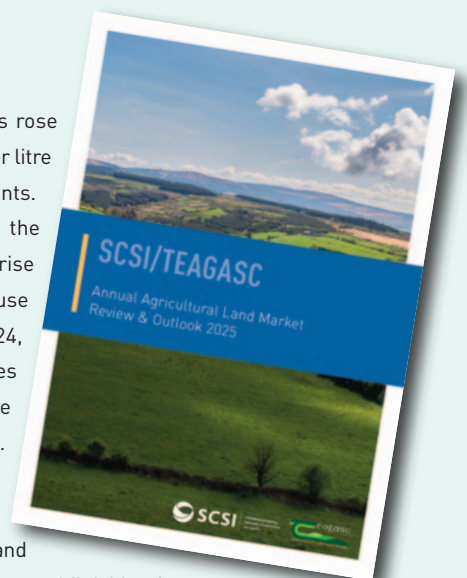
The agricultural sector faced challenging weather conditions in 2024, particularly for grassland systems and winter crops. While winter crop production volumes were below previous years, spring crops performed better due to favourable conditions during harvest. Commodity prices showed mixed trends, with milk and lamb prices increasing significantly, while pig prices declined slightly. Cattle prices also improved, particularly in the second half of the year.

Performance of farming sectors

Dairy farming, which utilises about one-quarter of Ireland's grassland area, experienced a 16% increase in milk prices in 2024 compared to 2023. Despite challenging production conditions in the first half of the

year, milk production costs rose by 1.5%, and net margins per litre increased by 84% to 13.3 cents. Beef farming remains the largest agricultural enterprise in Ireland in terms of land use and farm numbers. In 2024, finished cattle prices increased by 4.5%, while weanling prices rose by 7%. Production costs decreased by approximately 7%, leading to improved gross and net margins for cattle rearing and finishing farms.

Sheep farming saw lamb prices rise by 18% in 2024. Input costs, including feed and fertiliser, decreased, contributing to a 21% increase in gross margins per hectare for mid-season lowland lamb producers. Tillage farming, which accounts for about 7% of Ireland's agricultural land, faced mixed outcomes in 2024. Winter crop yields were lower due to poor weather, but spring crop yields improved. Overall, cereal production volumes increased slightly, although specialist tillage farms struggled to achieve positive net margins (Figure 1).



FEATURE

Edward McAuley
Director of Practice
& Policy, SCSi



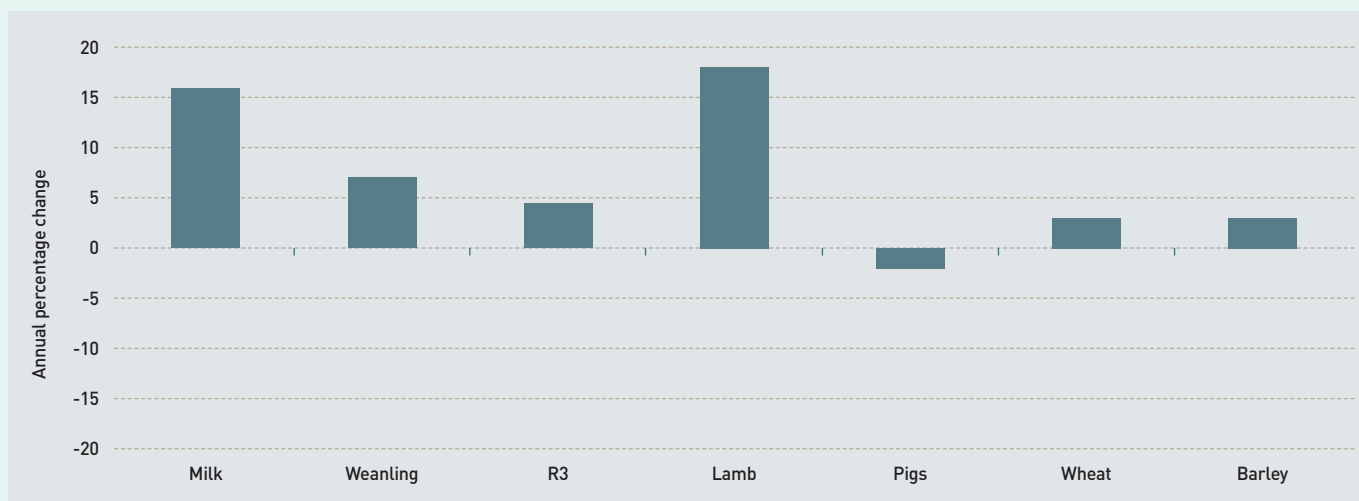


FIGURE 1: Change in farm output prices in Ireland 2024 v 2023.

Source: CSO and DG Agri.

Regional overview

Specialist beef farms dominate across all regions, accounting for 56% of farms nationally. The Midlands region has the highest proportion of beef farms (67%), while the Southwest has the highest concentration of specialist dairy farms (23%). Tillage farming is most prevalent in the Southeast and Mid-East/Dublin regions, where it accounts for 13% and 11% of farms, respectively. Cattle output remains significant across all regions, ranging from 26% in the Southwest to 58% in the West. Milk production is concentrated in the Southwest, Mid-West, and Southeast, where it accounts for 43-53% of agricultural output. Regions with a higher prevalence of dairy and tillage farming tend to have higher incomes per hectare due to the intensive nature of these activities.

Farm incomes vary widely across regions, with dairy-intensive areas such as the Southwest and Southeast reporting higher income per hectare. In 2023, the Dublin/Mid-East region had the highest income per hectare (€817), while the Midlands reported the lowest (€503). Subsidies accounted for 56% of agricultural sector income nationally, with the share highest in the West and Midlands regions.

THE IRISH AGRICULTURAL SECTOR HAS UNDERGONE SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN RECENT YEARS, WITH 2024 MARKING A YEAR OF MIXED PERFORMANCE ACROSS VARIOUS FARMING ENTERPRISES.

Land market trends in 2024

National, provincial and county land value trends

The average value of non-residential farmland in Ireland reached €9,907 per acre in 2024, marking a 7% increase from 2023. Good-quality land averaged €13,178 per acre, while poor-quality land stood at €6,636 per acre. Smaller plots (up to 50 acres) typically command higher prices per acre due to their appeal to a broader range of buyers. Leinster recorded the highest average land values, with good-quality land priced at €15,262 per acre and poor-quality land at €8,356 per acre. Munster followed closely, with good-quality land averaging €15,422 per acre and poor-quality land at €6,818 per acre. Connacht/Ulster reported the lowest values, with good-quality land at €8,851 per acre and poor-quality land at €4,734 per acre.

Waterford emerged as the county with the highest average land values, with good-quality land in the 51-100 acre category priced at €23,500 per acre.

Conversely, Mayo recorded the lowest average

value for poor-quality land in plots over 101 acres, at €3,075 per acre (Tables A1-A3).

Rental market trends

The agricultural land rental market plays a crucial role in providing farmers with access to additional land. Rental values rose by 6% on average in 2024, with provincial variations. Leinster reported the highest rental values, with grazing/meadowing/silage land averaging €295 per acre, up 9% from €270 in 2023. Grazing-only land also saw a 9% increase, reaching €271 per acre. Munster experienced mixed rental trends, with grazing and meadowing/silage land values declining by 3-5%, while land for crops such as sugar beet, maize, and beans rose by 8%. Connacht/Ulster recorded the highest rental inflation, with grazing/meadowing/silage land increasing by 14% to €208 per acre and grazing-only land rising by 13% to €177 per acre.

Buyer and seller activity

The dairy farmer is ranked as the main buyer of land followed by drystock farmers and tillage



farmers. A total of 77% of the respondents ranked 'dairy farmer' as the main buyer type of agricultural land. Dairy farms are projected to have a robust 2025 and will continue to significantly influence the demand for both owned and leased land. Over three-quarters of respondents to our survey (77%) ranked dairy farmers as the main buyer type of agricultural land. In addition, 62% of respondents expect an increase in demand from dairy farmers in 2025, with just 2% of respondents expecting this demand from dairy farmers to decrease. In terms of the sellers of land, the survey of 169 auctioneers and valuers from all over the country found that the volume of farmland going to market increased marginally during 2024, with probate sales continuing to provide the main source of farmland sales.

Outlook for 2025

Land values are projected to rise by an average of 6% in 2025. The report findings highlight that land values are expected to rise again primarily due to better milk prices, strong competition among farmers and investors, and recent reforms to the EU Nitrates Directive. Due to the latter, farmers require more land to meet lower stocking rate thresholds, which further increases demand, especially among dairy farmers in Ireland.

THE REPORT FINDINGS HIGHLIGHT THAT LAND VALUES ARE EXPECTED TO RISE AGAIN PRIMARILY DUE TO BETTER MILK PRICES, STRONG COMPETITION AMONG FARMERS AND INVESTORS, AND RECENT REFORMS TO THE EU NITRATES DIRECTIVE.

TABLE A1: LEINSTER

Table A1: 2024 Land values per acre in Leinster.
Leinster – average price per acre (non-residential).

	Less than 50 acres		Between 51 and 100 acres		Over 101 acres	
	Poor quality	Good quality	Poor quality	Good quality	Poor quality	Good quality
Louth	€9,833	€15,833	€9,833	€15,333	€10,333	€15,167
Meath	€9,813	€16,890	€9,271	€15,550	€9,375	€16,170
Wicklow	€8,000	€15,500	€6,425	€14,700	€7,375	€15,000
Wexford	€9,286	€16,500	€8,625	€15,286	€8,750	€15,458
Kildare	€10,200	€18,680	€10,100	€18,033	€11,403	€17,089
Carlow	€9,100	€17,417	€8,400	€18,300	€7,800	€16,160
Kilkenny	€9,300	€15,200	€8,700	€15,125	€8,500	€14,875
Laois	€8,000	€14,625	€7,488	€14,500	€7,069	€14,725
Offaly	€6,967	€12,042	€6,550	€12,589	€6,450	€12,325
Westmeath	€7,458	€16,171	€8,025	€14,720	€7,500	€15,525
Longford	€6,500	€12,625	€7,000	€12,875	€6,333	€12,667

Source: SCSi Land Market Survey.

TABLE A2: MUNSTER.

Table A2: 2024 Land values per acre in Munster.
Munster – average price per acre (non-residential).

	Less than 50 acres		Between 51 and 100 acres		Over 101 acres	
	Poor quality	Good quality	Poor quality	Good quality	Poor quality	Good quality
Waterford	€8,750	€23,000	€8,750	€23,500	€8,500	€17,750
Cork	€7,650	€17,875	€8,040	€18,200	€7,450	€14,100
Kerry	€6,100	€14,500	€6,625	€13,875	€5,413	€12,750
Tipperary	€7,898	€17,865	€7,583	€18,043	€7,125	€18,375
Limerick	€6,433	€14,833	€5,813	€12,433	€5,000	€13,000
Clare	€6,500	€9,875	€5,900	€10,125	€3,200	€7,500

Source: SCSi Land Market Survey.

TABLE A3: CONNACHT/ULSTER.

Table A3: 2024 Land values per acre in Connacht/Ulster.
Connacht/Ulster – average price per acre (non-residential).

	Less than 50 acres		Between 51 and 100 acres		Over 101 acres	
	Poor quality	Good quality	Poor quality	Good quality	Poor quality	Good quality
Galway	€5,929	€10,500	€4,700	€9,917	€3,250	€9,000
Leitrim	€3,792	€7,625	€3,813	€5,813	€3,767	€4,750
Cavan	€6,500	€10,000	€6,000	€10,000	€6,000	€10,000
Monaghan	€6,000	€10,500	€6,000	€9,750	€6,000	€10,000
Mayo	€3,940	€10,600	€3,630	€8,080	€3,075	€4,625
Roscommon	€4,933	€9,000	€4,767	€8,225	€4,000	€5,667
Sligo	€4,820	€9,900	€4,350	€8,350	€4,500	€8,500
Donegal	€5,000	€13,280	€4,625	€9,500	€4,233	€8,833

Source: SCSi Land Market Survey.



IRISH CITIES IN CRISIS

A NEW PUBLICATION CALLS FOR RADICAL CHANGE IN HOW WE VIEW AND MANAGE OUR CITIES TO MEET THE DEMANDS OF POPULATION GROWTH AND CLIMATE CHANGE.

In October 2024, *Irish Cities in Crisis* was published by the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI). Authored by the Irish Cities 2070 Group (IC70 – see panel), this compendium of essays examines the role of cities in the economic, social and cultural life of Ireland. We suggested how, by 2070, approximately 11 million people could be accommodated in more compact urban settings, able to compete with the best cities in retaining and attracting people and investment. We reviewed the roles of national, regional and local governance, population growth, transport between and within cities, and the role of ports and airports. We also suggested approaches to city centre renewal, the densification of suburbs, and how our cities might grow compactly and with

resilience to provide healthy, safe and enjoyable places in which all citizens might blossom. This is a précis of that much larger volume.

Recognise the crisis

The contribution of cities to our way of life and economy is poorly understood. We have a successful economy and a burgeoning population but, unless we change how we design our cities, Ireland will not be the very attractive place it should be in which to live, work and invest. There is a crisis. Our planning and development systems cannot provide the well-designed living and working environment needed for the future: we cannot continue with land-hungry, low-density urban expansion. Change will not be easy! Courage and great leadership are needed from all levels of Government to develop with society a vision of how Irish cities must transform to meet the challenges of population growth and climate change.

Potential population growth, consequences and opportunities

Our population could grow from 7.2 million to 11 million by 2070. For decades we have underestimated population growth and set targets for infrastructure, housing and development that were too low. Our ports, airports, transport networks, piped and wired infrastructure, public services and housing must get ahead of the already 'baked-in' population growth!

What has gone wrong

Too little autonomy is devolved to regional and local authorities. There are too few planning and urban design staff across all levels of governance, particularly in local authorities, to properly design our urban areas, and the reaping of windfall profits from rezoning or intensification of permissions bedevils implementation of projects. Our planning system facilitates low-density suburban expansion, with little creation of 'place'

FEATURE

The Irish Cities
2070 Group

OUR CITIES OCCUPY COASTAL ESTUARIES AND ARE INCREASINGLY VULNERABLE TO FLOODING AS WEATHER EVENTS INTENSIFY AND SEAS RISE – INTEGRATED PLANNING AND INVESTMENT ARE NEEDED TO AVOID CATASTROPHE.

– the streets, squares and green spaces that underpin public life and well-being. Competition between cities and counties is also detrimental to proper planning as it frequently draws development into the countryside that should be in towns and cities.

Recognise the contrast with European cities

Successful European cities have much greater autonomy and resources devoted to urban design and project development than we do. They collect up to 40% of their capital through local taxes and the uplift in land values from rezoning accrues primarily to the public purse. They design and manage urban development:

- top-down and bottom-up planning is the norm;
- the common good is their touchstone;
- infrastructure and public services are provided before building development commences in new areas;
- compact neighbourhoods are the 'building blocks' of their cities; and,
- they install high-frequency public transport linked to 'active travel' as they adapt to a carbon-free future!

Respond to climate change and destruction of the planet

Our cities occupy coastal estuaries and are increasingly vulnerable to flooding as weather events intensify and seas rise – integrated planning and investment are needed to avoid catastrophe. Cities must decarbonise, conserve land, protect the natural world and enhance biodiversity as they respond to population growth and diminishing household size.

We must densify new and existing suburbs and plan the net zero places in which to live and work, with green infrastructure linking residents to the natural world and public transport corridors offering frequent services.

Training and research

There are too few town planners and urban designers in our regional and local authorities. Training in these and other urban management disciplines must be widened to guide a plan-led future. Good governance and urban design needs co-ordinated research focused on near-term issues and long-term national goals. A publicly funded body should co-ordinate this work.

Planning compact, healthy, sustainable and resilient urban growth

Transformative city planning and urban design can be delivered by:

- dismantling the silo cultures in local, regional and national Government to facilitate collaboration;
- resourcing regional and local authorities to enable them to envision, design and manage their regions, cities and towns;
- equipping planners and urban designers with the leadership to guide the densification of existing suburbs, design the new ones, and facilitate bottom-up and top-down planning;
- ensuring that future city plans include 3D models, digital twins, and express the design parameters of future neighbourhoods, easing planning approval for compliant developers;
- strengthening the form of our cities with urban growth boundaries, designed urban development zones, small blocks, streets, active streetscapes, and a pedestrian-friendly public realm; and,
- developing the public and active transport networks, and demanding high-quality architectural design.



In Freiburg, one of Europe's most sustainable cities, small four-storey walk-up apartment buildings, built by the city, co-ops and private developers, enclosing common gardens and accessed along shared lanes, are the building blocks of new neighbourhoods. These apartments are sometimes interspersed with three- and four-storey terraced townhouses.

Shift in mindset

Radical change is needed in how we view our cities, and how they will be financed, governed and planned. Cities must be recognised as the engines of our social, economic and cultural lives. Without healthy cities, Ireland will not continue to attract domestic and foreign investment. Great cities and towns are our future. Such change demands collaboration between national, regional and local governance, civil society and private sector actors. It also needs considerable investment in planning for our future and the construction of infrastructure and public buildings to deliver effective public services in support of communities. There is much to do, and we hope *Irish Cities in Crisis* helps to chart the way.

Irish Cities in Crisis is available in bookshops and from the RIAI.

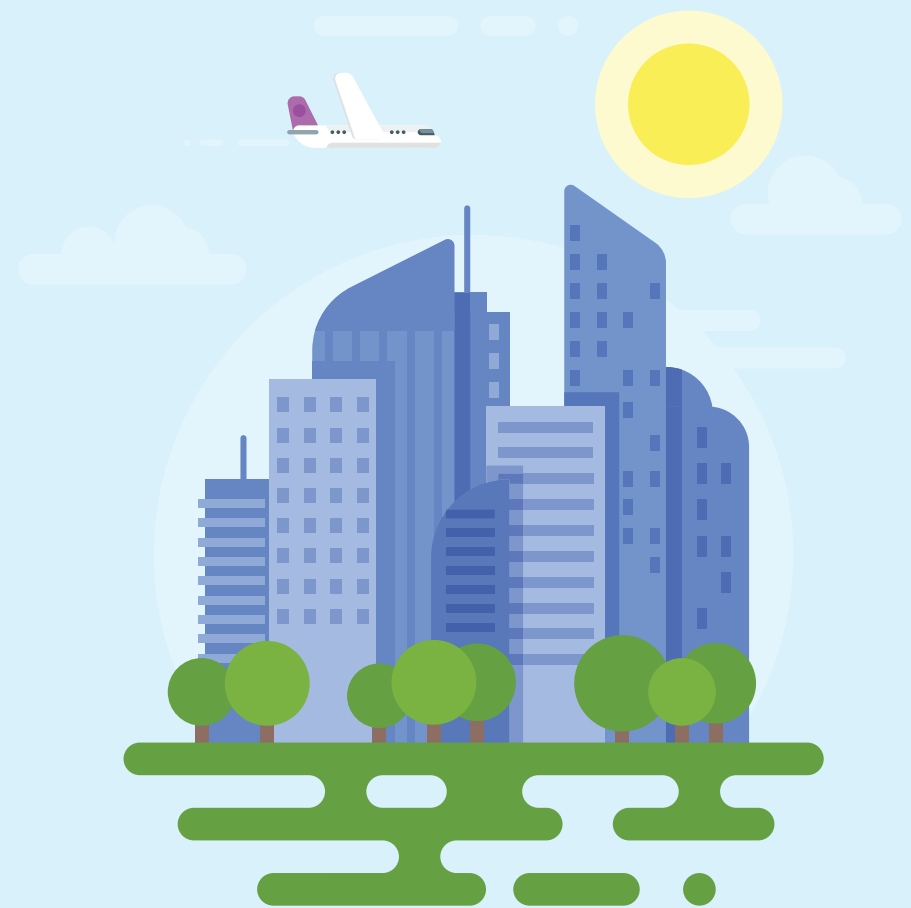
IC70

The Irish Cities 2070 Group (IC70), supported by the RIAI and the Academy of Engineering, has expertise in town planning, urban design, architecture, engineering, economics, property, and quantity surveying and demography. Its purpose is to foster a debate about a holistic, sustainable urban future for Ireland and its cities and towns. Ken MacDonald, Managing Director at Hooke & MacDonald and a Fellow of the SCSi, is a member of the group.

THE CHALLENGE OF COMMERCIAL RETROFIT

THE SCSI'S REPORT INTO THE REAL COSTS OF RETROFITTING OFFICE BLOCKS IS THE FIRST INDEPENDENT, DATA-BASED ANALYSIS OF THIS CRUCIAL ISSUE.

As Chairman of the research committee overseeing the SCSI's 'Real Cost of Retrofitting – Analysis of office block retrofit costs and viability' report, I was presented with the unique opportunity to work closely with our diverse range of surveyors to present this comprehensive analysis into the real costs and financial viability of retrofitting commercial office buildings in Ireland. Our research committee (strongly supported by the SCSI executive team), encompassing quantity surveyors, building surveyors and valuation surveyors, are at the forefront of this critical transition towards a more sustainable built environment. The context of this research is clear: the transition to a more sustainable built environment is no longer aspirational but an urgent societal and commercial necessity, driven by ambitious sustainability requirements in Europe. The commercial property sector in Ireland faces the dual challenge of meeting these requirements while ensuring economic viability. Achieving national net zero ambitions requires improving the energy performance of property, given that nearly 40% of global carbon dioxide emissions come from buildings. While the residential



sector in Ireland has seen positive movements in understanding and improving Building Energy Ratings (BERs), the commercial sector lags considerably, particularly the older building stock, with early certification emphasis focusing on new builds.

Our committee recognised that a key data point lacking in the market was an independent, data-based analysis of the costs involved in commercial retrofitting. This report is an essential first step to address this gap and help

everyone in the Irish property market to understand the importance and challenges of retrofitting office blocks, and to identify some enabling solutions.

Types of offices used in the report

For this research, we received seven real-world case studies from our membership, for offices that were retrofitted (**Table 1**). All of these offices were located in Dublin, but ranged in size, age, and the condition of the

FEATURE

Enda McGuane
Real Cost of Retrofitting
Expert Group Chairperson



Table 1: Summary of buildings included in case studies.

Case study ID	Age	BER change	Size (gross floor area – approximate)	Condition	Location	SCSI valuation hurdle
Case Study 1	60 years	Not available -B2	9,000m ²	Fair condition	Dublin 2	Retrofitting financial viability hurdle not met
Case Study 2	20 years	D-A3	18,000m ²	Good condition	Dublin 1	Retrofitting financial viability hurdle not met
Case Study 3	25 years	D2-A3	12,000m ²	Fair condition	Dublin 1	Retrofitting financial viability hurdle met
Case Study 4	25 years	C2-B2	11,000m ²	Good condition	Dublin 2	Retrofitting financial viability hurdle met
Case Study 5	35 years	E1-B2	5,400m ²	Good condition	Dublin, Glasnevin	Retrofitting financial viability hurdle met
Case Study 6	40 years	D-B	4,000m ²	Poor condition	Dublin, Blackrock	Retrofitting financial viability hurdle not met
Case Study 7	20 years	E1-C1	12,000m ²	Good condition	Dublin 2	Retrofitting financial viability hurdle not met

building. An important consideration of this report was to understand the BER before and after the retrofit. Given the legislation pressures coming from the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) and the requirements surrounding the worst performing buildings reaching a minimum energy performance standard, it was important to understand the journey these offices took to improve their BER, as far as practicable. While

all were located in Dublin, the particular postal code in which each building was located was an important consideration when we explored the potential uplift in valuation.

The costs of a retrofit

To undertake this analysis, we developed a robust methodology involving the collection and evaluation of the case studies. We focused primarily on 'hard costs' – the direct expenses

related to the physical work of the retrofit itself – such as demolition, works on the external enclosure, internal finishes and completions, as well as the costs associated with services (mainly mechanical and electrical works). Following review with one of our expert group's Chartered Quantity Surveyors and the submitter of the case studies, the costs provided were scoped to a Category A fit-out, basing costs on a basic level suitable for

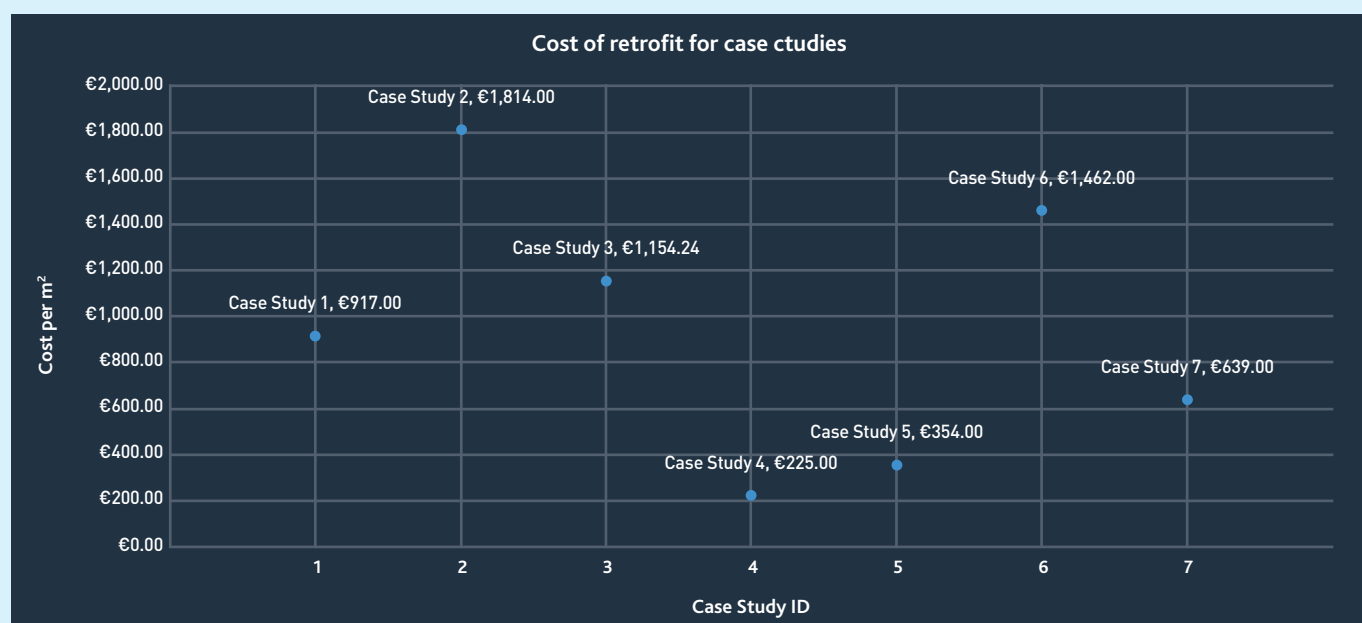


FIGURE 1: Cost per square metre for case studies used in this report.

Table 2: Summary of case studies, including viability assessment post retrofit.

Case study ID	Case Study 1	Case Study 2	Case Study 3	Case Study 4	Case Study 5	Case Study 6	Case Study 7
Net floor area	5,000m ²	12,000m ²	7,000m ²	8,000m ²	4,200m ²	3,000m ²	11,000m ²
% change in estimated value	51.9%	46.5%	72.7%	42.9%	122%	61.1%	5%
% change in potential rent	60.2%	49.8%	50%	0%	66%	18.8%	40%
% change in yield	1.5%	1.0%	4.0%	1.5%	5%	1.5%	1.0%
Net Effect as a % of post-retrofit works	-14.3%	-23.1%	+3.6%	+26.9%	+33.7%	-73.1%	-15.0%
Cost of retrofit	€917/m ²	€1,814/m ²	€1,154/m ²	€225/m ²	€354/m ²	€1,462/m ²	€639/m ²
SCSI valuation hurdle	Retrofitting financial viability hurdle not met	Retrofitting financial viability hurdle not met	Retrofitting financial viability hurdle met	Retrofitting financial viability hurdle met	Retrofitting financial viability hurdle met	Retrofitting financial viability hurdle not met	Retrofitting financial viability hurdle not met

commercial tenants, and excluding 'soft costs' like professional fees, contingency and VAT. Our analysis revealed substantial variations in retrofitting costs, ranging from €225/m² to €1,814/m², largely influenced by the building's characteristics and the scope of work that the office was subject to (**Figure 1**). Grouping the case studies by condition showed that costs spanned €225-€1,814/m² for offices in 'good' condition, €917-€1,154/m² for 'fair' condition, and €1,462/m² for the single 'poor' condition office. Consistently across the case studies, the costs associated with services often represented the most significant cost component, ranging in contribution from 21% to 76%.

Valuation and viability of the retrofit

To understand the financial aspect of carrying out a retrofit, and the potential viability of these projects, a panel of Chartered Valuation Surveyors evaluated the pre- and post-retrofit values, rental incomes, and expected net yields under the assumption of vacant possession. This assumption influences the results, as financing pathways like tenant-generated revenue were not included. We used the 'Net Effect' as a key metric to gauge financial viability, representing the percentage of retrofit costs relative to the uplift in the estimated

value of the property. For a simple example, if a retrofit costs €3 million and the uplift in value of a property following a retrofit was €4 million, the Net Effect would be positive, as the cost of the retrofit could be financed by the change in valuation alone.

Crucially, this research demonstrates a strong positive market sentiment towards commercial properties (**Table 2**). All case studies showed an increase in estimated value (5% to 122%) and improvement in the net yield (between 1% and 5%) following the retrofit. Most case studies also demonstrated a sentiment towards a positive change in the expected rental incomes (between 18.8% and 60.2%) following a retrofit.

However, based on the Net Effect calculation using the vacant possession assumption, financial viability varied significantly. Three of the seven case studies were deemed financially viable, while four did not meet this threshold. Other areas that could increase the financial viability of these projects could be the use of grants to reduce costs or considering the value engineering pieces of an office (such as end of trip facilities), which would be expected to have a greater impact on expected rental incomes or post-retrofit valuations.

A fabric first approach

A key recommendation of this report is looking at a fabric first approach to understanding and funding retrofits in commercial office spaces. This approach is important because it prioritises enhancing the building's thermal envelope to maximise the inherent energy efficiency of the structure itself. Improving elements such as walls and roofs leads to significantly reduced long-term energy consumption and demands. This strategy is seen as crucial for futureproofing assets against an ever-evolving legislative landscape and can result in lower energy bills, offering longer-term benefits compared to strategies that focus primarily on service replacement. Overall, this report marks an important first step in broadening our understanding of the challenges facing the commercial office space as we move towards a more sustainable built environment. Over the coming years and months the SCSI will play its part via further data-driven research in expanding our understanding and also identifying solutions that can help practitioners, policymakers and investors to navigate a path to a better built environment.

COPENHAGEN IN QUANTITY

ROSS GRIFFIN OF KOSMOS HAS TAKEN QUANTITY SURVEYING TO DENMARK,
WHERE IT IS OFTEN UNHEARD OF.

When the recession hit in 2008, quantity surveyor Ross Griffin started looking further afield for work: "I sent out my CV on the international market and ended up getting an opportunity to go to Copenhagen for six months".

This led to him working for Pihl and Son in Copenhagen for four and a half years, mainly on the international market: "Across the African continent and South America, and then a little bit in Asia and in the Middle East, and I ended up going to Azerbaijan for a year".

In 2014, he started work for another Danish company called COWI: "Something you should know about the Nordics and a lot of the world is that quantity surveying, cost management isn't something that is taught. It's not a discipline, it's not a profession. And so we were trying to grow that within COWI while working on the Danish projects in a Danish environment, whereas my previous experience was with a Danish company on an international environment. So that was quite interesting. We built a team around 12, 13 QSs, cost managers, and planners over a course of about four years, trying to grow the understanding of the discipline and sell internally and externally to the marketplace".

In 2019, Ross and some colleagues set up KOSMOS in Copenhagen, one of the first Danish cost consultancies, and in 2021 he moved back to set up an Irish office in Limerick. The company has added an office in Dublin since, and has a number of employees dotted throughout Europe.

Learning from each other

Ross says Ireland can learn a lot about collaborative culture from Denmark: "We can learn a lot about the 'We're coming together to improve the system'. I think we really struggle with that in Ireland. There's lots of parties doing lots of different things, but we're in our silos".

In terms of what the Danes can learn from us: "That is the governance and due diligence piece around the commercial management aspect. I think that the trust between stakeholder groups is super important, but so is the due diligence piece by each stakeholder group to make sure what you're getting is accurate, correct, and in accordance with the agreement. I think that that part in Denmark can be greatly improved".

Denmark has been faster to adopt new construction technologies, says Ross. The country had its first BIM mandate in around 2007, whereas Ireland's was introduced last year: "But nevertheless, if you look across Europe, we're [Ireland] still quite an early mover, which is mind boggling. I think once Danish society is given something and it's agreed upon as a collective, then they do it".



The Irish are a bit different, says Ross: "We don't like authority. In fact we hate it. I guess that comes from 800 years of colonialism. So if someone says, 'As a collective, this is what we need to do'. There's always someone saying: 'Who are they telling us what to do?' So it takes an awful lot longer to get things up and running. And we can now see it with the housing issue or our planning problems. In reality, in Denmark, that would all be solved quite quickly once the problem was identified". Ross says there are opportunities aplenty for quantity surveyors to drive the industry into the future: "There's only a few countries in the world that produce QSs, but the entire global market has become accustomed to them because of companies like KOSMOS. The markets are growing and the demand is growing dramatically. So it's there for us for the taking, I would say, and as SCSl members, we have the responsibility to get involved in writing the future for our discipline".

SURVEYOR PROFILE

Colm Quinn
Senior Journalist,
Think Media Ltd



GENERATIONAL RENEWAL AND THE AGRICULTURAL LAND MARKET

IRISH FARMERS ARE AN AGEING COHORT, BUT MANY ARE RELUCTANT TO HAND OVER THE REINS TO THE NEXT GENERATION.

The Irish farming population is ageing, and the proportion of young farmers has declined in recent decades. There is concern around delayed succession and generational renewal on farms. Farm partnerships are an option for older farmers to consider in planning the future direction of the farm. Farmers may also consider a change in farming system to reduce workload, and improve safety and their well-being. In the absence of a successor, other options include the leasing out or selling of land.

While many farmers delay farm succession due to emotional, financial, and practical barriers, structured succession planning, in the form of registered farm partnerships and other collaborative arrangements, improves land transfers and business continuity.

The self-employed in Ireland have lower levels of pensions than employees, and as a sub-group, self-employed farmers have the lowest pension cover, with many not planning to 'ever retire'.

The expansion in land leasing activity has helped some young farmers to enter the farming occupation. The option of land leasing can also support the income of older farmers who have

decided to scale back or retire. In the annual SCSi/Teagasc Land Market reports, recent editions indicate that leasing has increased. From the perspective of younger farmers, the availability of rented land is usually considered important. Young farmers may not have the resources to purchase land and often must compete in land rental markets with relatively older farmers.

Insights from the Teagasc Small Farms Survey

In this Survey, small farms are defined as those with less than the equivalent of four dairy cows or 10 suckler cows. While small, these farms occupy 15% of Irish farmland, and insights into the motivation of these farm operators and their expectations around future land use are valuable in the context of generational renewal and improved land availability for younger farmers. Enjoyment of farm work and the continuation of family traditions are significant motivators for small farm operators. Many prioritise quality of life over maximising farm income.

Intentions around how they envisage the operation of their farm over the course of the next five years were investigated. More than one-third (35%) of small farmers said they intend to continue farming as now. Some 27% expect to have retired and/or to have leased out their land. A further 21% intend to change farm system or scale up, whereas 9% are planning to scale back. A small

proportion (6%) intend farming with a successor, with the remaining 3% unsure.

Some 56% of small farm operators have identified a successor. A total of 44% have not yet identified a successor.

Conclusions

Generational renewal in agriculture is complex, requiring policy reform, financial incentives, but also cultural shifts. The challenge is compounded due to an ageing cohort of farmers, who are reluctant to transfer land. Addressing pension issues and integrating with other tax reforms and land mobility policies should be considered in the effort to improve farm succession rates. Collaborative and structured succession models show promise in overcoming barriers.

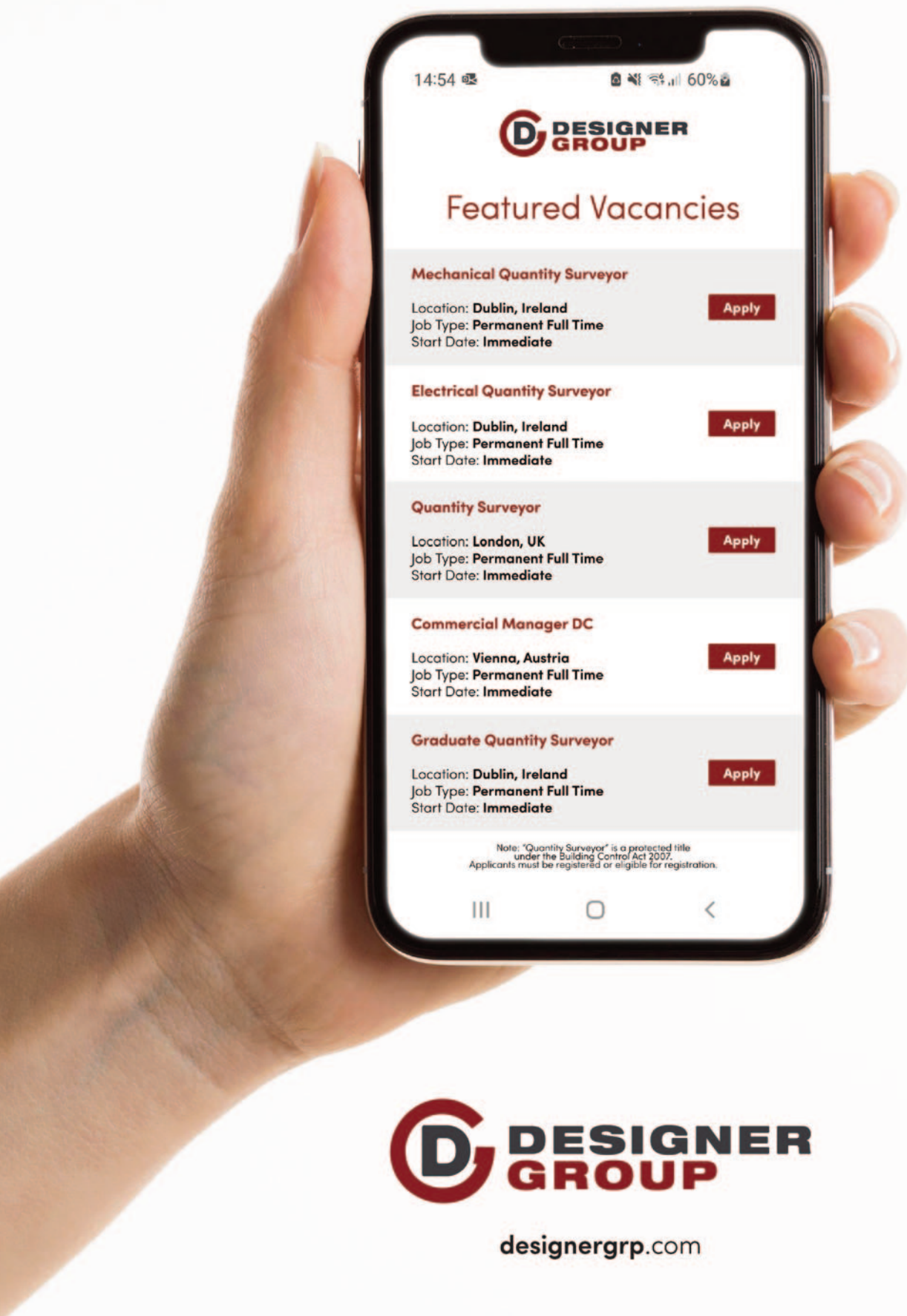
Policy changes in taxation and financial incentives appear necessary. However, there is also a requirement to provide further support services to ensure ongoing communications and thus more sustainable farm transitions.

The findings from the Teagasc National Farm Survey (NFS) indicate that younger farmers are slightly more active in land rental markets in comparison to older farmers. However, the difference in rental activity is less than expected, and supports the conclusion that younger farmers find it difficult to compete in the land rental and sales markets.

THE LAST WORD

Jason Loughrey, Emma Dillon
and Anne Kinsella
Teagasc

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