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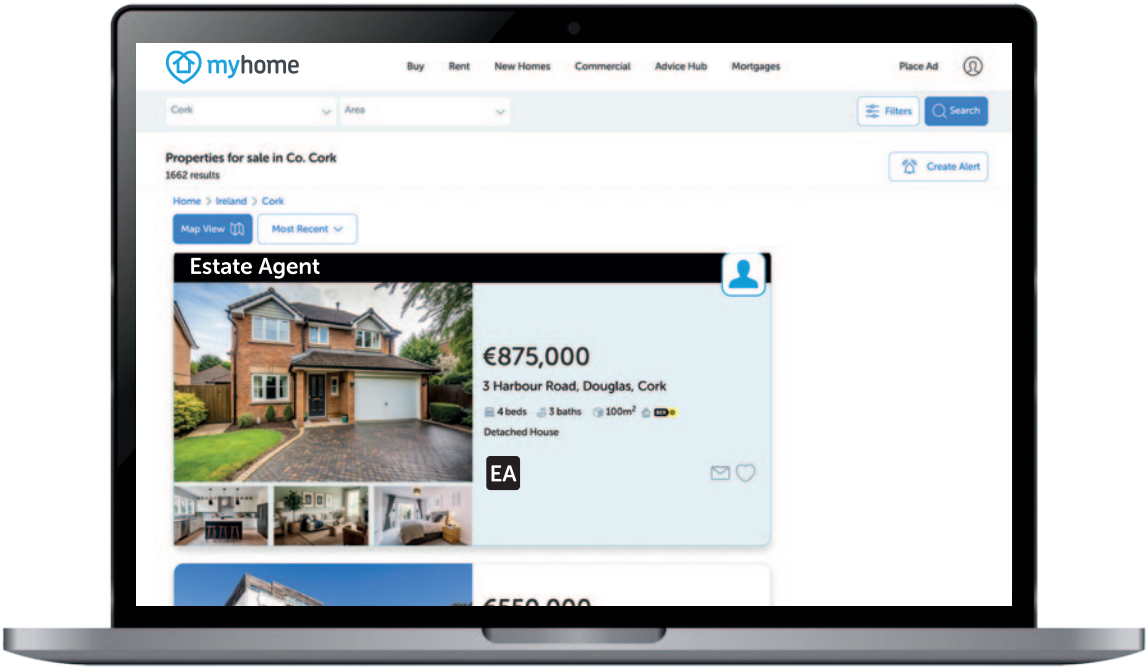
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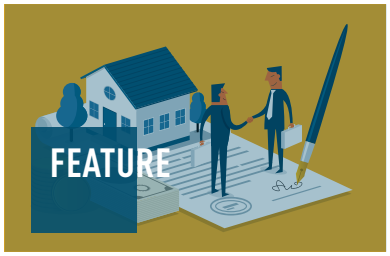
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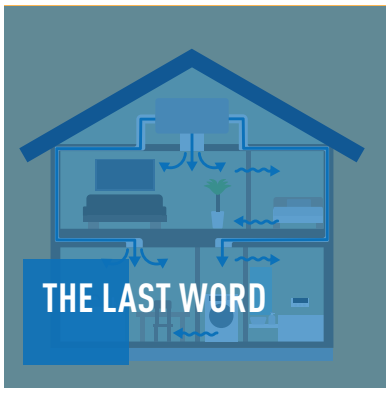
















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RECOGNISING EXCELLENCE, PROMOTING THE PROFESSION

IT'S TIME TO CELEBRATE OUR COLLEAGUES AND OUR PROFESSION.

Over the past few months, members have helped to shape some of the SCSI's most important work. Their expertise has informed major publications including our 'Employment Outlook for the Surveying Profession', 'Residential Property Market Monitor' and 'Tender Price Index' reports, providing evidence and insight that have generated significant national media coverage and informed public debate.

There are very positive signs for the profession's future. As students returned to education this autumn, demand for surveying courses strengthened significantly, with CAO points rising across most programmes and continuing the strong upward trend seen in recent years. Interest in the SCSI's new quantity surveying apprenticeship has also surpassed expectations, with the current intake reaching capacity and plans already underway to expand places next year. Alongside this, the SCSI continued its engagement with Government and key stakeholders in the run-up to Budget 2027, while regional committees have been developing a programme of events and activities to support members across the country.

Much of this work is supported by volunteers. Members contribute through professional groups, regional committees, APC assessments, regulatory functions, working groups, judging panels, and research surveys. This support often happens quietly behind the scenes, but its impact is significant. It helps to maintain professional standards, strengthens public trust, informs decision-makers and demonstrates the value of Chartered Surveyors. This is one of the great strengths of the SCSI: so much of what we achieve is member led. The SCSI's influence and reputation have been built through members' willingness to share their expertise, give their time, and contribute to the profession beyond their day-to-day roles.

That spirit of contribution and professionalism is also reflected in the Surveying Excellence Awards. As entries open for the 2026 Awards, we have an opportunity to celebrate not only outstanding projects and achievements, but also the people behind them. The Awards showcase the innovation, expertise, and commitment that Chartered Surveyors bring to communities, businesses and clients throughout Ireland. In my interview in the previous edition of the *Surveyors Journal*, I emphasised the importance of promotion and engagement within the profession. The Awards offer a tangible opportunity to achieve both. I encourage members to consider submitting an entry or nominating a colleague. I appreciate that many of you give generously without seeking recognition, but I hope you will see the Awards as an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of your teams, your organisations and our profession.

Visit scsi.ie/awards to learn more.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Tomás Kelly
SCSI President

A GROWING PROFESSION

FROM NEW ROUTES TO ENTRY AND INCREASED DEMAND FOR COURSES, TO APC GRADUATES, SURVEYING IS ON AN UPWARD TRAJECTORY.

This is the first time an article has appeared in the Irish language in this publication. Marion Ní Chadhain, who is Suitability and Strategic Programmes Manager at Údarás Na Gaeltachta, tells us of the work they do to preserve and strengthen Gaeltacht communities. Many thanks to Marion for this and she certainly has a very interesting role.

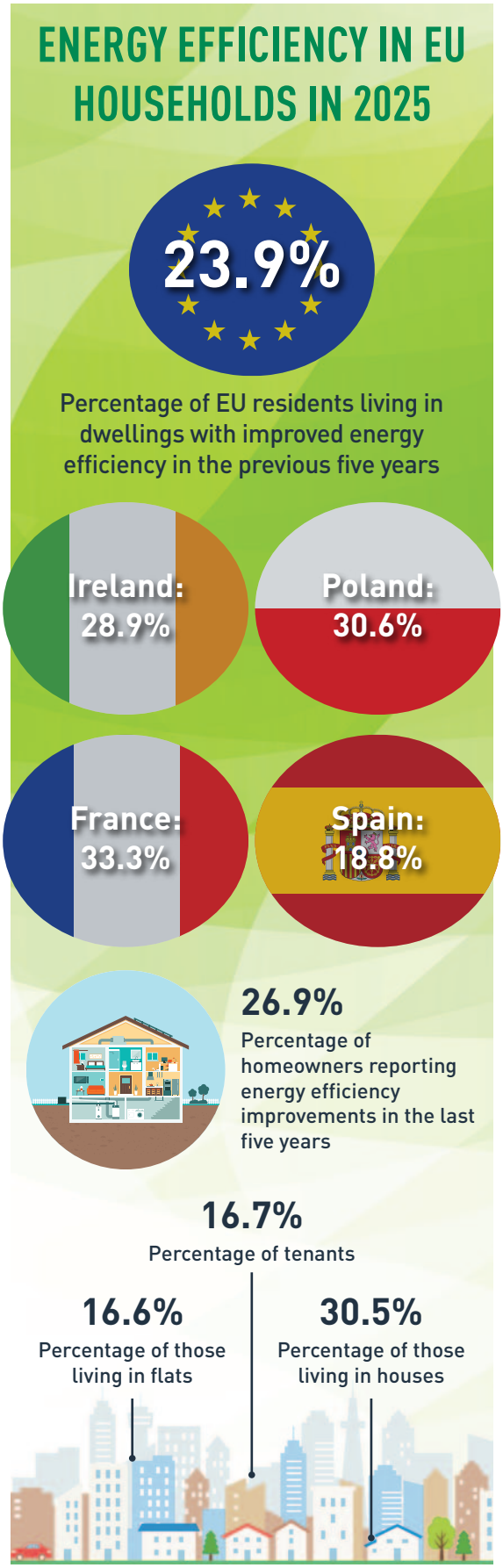
I am sure busy practitioners are aware that there is a shortage of surveyors and, not surprisingly, as SCSI President Tomás Kelly observes in this edition of the *Surveyors Journal*, demand for surveying courses has strengthened significantly, continuing the upward trend of recent years. In particular, it is very good to see that demand for the SCSI's new quantity surveying apprenticeship has exceeded expectations. Increasing routes to entry to the profession is very important, and this demand will be welcomed by employers and also by those seeking a route to qualification other than the traditional one of taking a third-level course straight from school.

Continuing the theme of the shortage of surveyors, I note that Director of Education and CPD James Lonergan and Tegwyn Stephenson, who is Head of Ireland & Germany at Talent Beyond Boundaries, say in their feature on page 12 that this shortage has been formally recognised by the Irish Government, which has placed quantity surveying and geospatial surveying on the Critical Skills Occupations List. From all this I am sure that we can look forward to a growing diversity of people joining the profession in the future.

In an interesting Last Word piece Seamus Harrington, Head of Quantity Surveying at TU Dublin, points out that increasing air tightness without effective ventilation frequently results in elevated concentration of pollutants and moisture in dwellings. He says that recent studies have reported increases in carbon dioxide, formaldehyde, radon gas and other contaminants where air exchanges decline following a retrofit. Worryingly, findings in post-occupancy studies have identified cases where gaps can exist between ventilation specified, ventilation installed, and ventilation ultimately delivered. Seamus recommends that ventilation systems should be treated as critical dwelling services that require periodic inspection, maintenance and performance verification throughout their operational lives.

Finally, congratulations to all the newly qualified surveyors who completed their APC and were awarded their diplomas recently. Congratulations also to those who were awarded fellowships. It's heartening to see the large numbers coming through the system.





Source: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Living_conditions_in_Europe_-_energy_efficiency_in_households.

REMEMBERING JOHN P. YOUNGE



It is with great sadness that we inform members of the passing of John P. Younge, a Fellow of the SCSI and former President of the Irish Auctioneers and Valuers Institute (IAVI 2001/2002), who passed away in September. John made a significant contribution to both the surveying profession and its representative bodies throughout a long and distinguished career, including helping to bring about the amalgamation of the SCS and IAVI to form the SCSI.

Widely respected across the property sector, John was the son of a hotelier and drew on that early exposure, together with his intellect and expertise as an auctioneer, valuer and property professional, to build a reputation as one of Ireland's leading specialists in hotels and licensed premises. While clients and peers valued his knowledge of the sector, and his renowned appreciation of Portuguese wine, many will remember him most for the decency, kindness and professionalism he brought to his dealings with others, particularly during difficult times.

Former IAVI President (2000/2001) and friend of more than 55 years, Eddie Barrett, described him as "an impeccable human being". John, Eddie and Laurence McCabe served as international ambassadors for the profession through their work with REALTORS® in the United States and FIABCI across Europe, Asia and Africa. His contribution to the profession and his lasting impact on colleagues, clients and the wider surveying community form a fitting legacy.

John remained a familiar and valued presence at SCSI events, and those who knew him spoke warmly of his professionalism, generosity, friendship and unwavering commitment to the profession. SCSI President Tomás Kelly, on behalf of the Society's membership, extends his condolences to John's wife Dorothea, his family and friends, and to all who had the privilege of knowing him and were better for it.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam.

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NEW REPORTS AND GUIDANCE FOR MEMBERS



The SCSI has continued to expand its library of research and professional practice resources, with recent publications addressing residential and commercial property markets, construction costs, sustainability regulation, and apartment management.

Among the latest professional guidance resources are the Building Investment Fund Reports Guidance Note and accompanying Client Guide, developed to support greater consistency in preparing Building Investment Fund Reports and to assist owners, management companies, and stakeholders in planning for the long-term maintenance of multi-unit developments.

The 'Residential Property Mid-Year Market Monitor 2026' found that estate agents expect national residential property prices to increase by an average of 5% over the coming 12 months, with housing supply constraints and affordability challenges continuing to shape market conditions.

In August, the 'Tender Price Index' reported that commercial construction tender prices rose by 3% during the first half of 2026, marking the strongest six-month increase in more than three years.

September also saw the publication of the 'Commercial Property Mid-Year Market Monitor', which suggests that the commercial property sector continues to stabilise, as surveyors anticipate growth in both rents and capital values across prime office, industrial and retail assets over the coming year.

Also published was the Sustainability Legislation in Europe Practice Information Paper, providing members with an overview of the principal European sustainability legislation affecting the built environment and the evolving obligations facing property and construction professionals.

All SCSI research reports, guidance notes and practice information papers are available from the SCSI publications library on the SCSI Reports & Research page at https://scsi.ie/reports/, with the data available at the SCSI Data & Insights Hub at https://scsi.ie/data-insights-hub/.

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NEW SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT RESOURCES PAGE FOR MEMBERS

With the start of a new school year, the SCSI has launched a School Engagement Resources page to support members in promoting surveying as a career choice to secondary school students.

As students across the country consider their post-Leaving Certificate options for next year, the new resource page aims to equip members with practical tools and guidance to engage with prospective surveyors and raise awareness of the profession at the local level.

The page includes materials for members interested in delivering talks in schools, hosting Transition Year students for work experience placements, or becoming approved employers for surveying apprenticeships. It also highlights local events where surveying could be represented.

The initiative forms part of SCSI's ongoing work to raise the profile of surveying nationwide by empowering members to share their experiences and showcase the diverse career opportunities available across the profession.

Members are encouraged to explore the new careers resource page and consider how they can support the next generation of surveyors through school engagement, mentoring opportunities, and workplace experiences.

Visit the careers resource page at https://scsi.ie/school-engagement-resources/. Alternatively, contact education@scsi.ie for further information on how to get involved.

SCSI GOLF DAY 2026 IN AID OF LIONHEART

Eighteen teams took part in the 2026 Annual Golf Day in aid of LionHeart. Congratulations to the winning team from Paradigm Chartered Building Surveyors Ltd and to the runners-up from John Paul Construction. Additional prizes were won by Dane Flanagan from MMP for the 'nearest to the pin' challenge and to Brenden Carstens from Rogerson Reddan for the 'longest drive' challenge.

Thank you to everyone who took part in this year's event and supported an important cause.

Members facing difficulties can avail of support from LionHeart. Learn more about the services available to SCSI members at https://scsi.ie/lionheart/.



Winners Keith Coffey (left) and Brian Kennedy (right) receive the trophy from SCSI President Tomás Kelly.



APC GRADUATION AND FELLOWSHIP CEREMONY

The SCSI APC Graduation and Fellowship Ceremony took place in June, recognising 83 APC graduates who were awarded their diplomas and 16 members who attained Fellowship status.

The ceremony marked an important professional milestone for the graduates and reflected the continued commitment of candidates, members, assessors and the SCSI Education Team to supporting professional standards across the surveying profession.

Members can visit the APC Hub to book a one-to-one session or arrange a free APC workshop this autumn to support their team. Whether preparing for your final assessment or considering next steps, the SCSI Education Team is available to help.



Joining this year's APC graduates were (front row): SCSI Deputy Director of Education Ruth Comerford-Morris (left); SCSI President Tomás Kelly (second left); and, SCSI Chief Executive Barry Dempsey (right).

Fellowships awarded at the 2026 ceremony

Niall Brereton, Valuation Surveying; Alexandra Brindley, Residential Agency; Brigid Browne, Building Surveying; Emer Byrne, Valuation Surveying; Edward Campbell, Valuation Surveying; Eoin Darby, Quantity Surveying; Paul Johnston, Quantity Surveying; Ciaran Leech, Quantity Surveying; Tim McCarthy, Geomatics; Finbar McGrath, Quantity Surveying; Peter Moloney, Property & Facilities Management; Lisa O'Shea, Quantity Surveying; John O'Sullivan, Residential Agency; Emmett Page, Valuation Surveying; Patrick Ryan, Commercial Property Practice; and, Declan Stone, Valuation Surveying.

APC graduates 2026

Izzy Agnew, Commercial Property Practice; Olivia Bestic, Quantity Surveying; Eamon Bookle, Building Control; Seoirse Boyle, Quantity Surveying; Thomas Brady, Commercial Property Practice; Nicole Buckley, Commercial Property Practice; Sean Burns, Quantity Surveying; Tom Cadell, Commercial Property Practice; Sarah Caffrey, Quantity Surveying; Ian Cooney, Commercial Property Practice; Simon Creighton, Commercial Property Practice; Niall Cummins, Building Surveying; Shaun Cunningham, Quantity Surveying; Steven Denehan, Valuation Surveying; Jonathan Donnelly, Commercial Property Practice; John Dooley, Quantity Surveying; Tom Downs, Quantity Surveying; Katie Doyle, Commercial Property Practice; Jane Dunne, Property Management; Grahame Durcan, Quantity Surveying; Noel Earley, Building Surveying; Peadar Espey, Building Surveying; Donal Fitzgerald, Building Surveying; Rory Flannery, Property Finance & Investment; Jamie Gannon, Property Finance & Investment; Sean Gormley, Valuation Surveying; Eamon Harkin, Quantity Surveying; Seamus Harrington, Quantity Surveying; Marlí Heyneke, Quantity Surveying; Stephen Hughes, Valuation Surveying; Eric James, Quantity Surveying; Aisling Joyce, Commercial Property Practice; Sean Keane, Quantity Surveying; Niall Kellegher, Valuation Surveying; Richard Kelly, Quantity Surveying; Darren Kelly, Commercial Property Practice; Alannah Kennedy, Commercial Property Practice; Brendan Kennedy, Geomatics; Amy Kerr, Commercial Property Practice; Marcin Klebowski, Geomatics; James Larkin, Commercial Property Practice; Conor Leavy, Quantity Surveying; Walter Leiper, Building Surveying; Cliona Lenehan, Commercial Property Practice; Conor Loughrey, Quantity Surveying; Shane Lynch, Valuation Surveying; Padraig Lynch, Quantity Surveying; Roderick Main, Valuation Surveying; Claire McDowell, Commercial Property Practice; Thomas McGarry, Building Surveying; Padraig McKeever, Quantity Surveying; Sean Molony, Commercial Property Practice; Gavan Mooney, Building Surveying; Kim Moran, Commercial Property Practice; Juliana Motta, Quantity Surveying; Jennifer Mulder, Building Surveying; David Munro, Commercial Property Practice; Colin Murphy, Building Surveying; Oksana Musyt, Quantity Surveying; Beatriz Navas Cortes, Quantity Surveying; Megan O'Brien, Quantity Surveying; Ian O'Connor, Quantity Surveying; Eoghan O'Mahony, Quantity Surveying; Conor O'Reilly, Geomatics; Ellen O'Shea, Valuation Surveying; Vinoj Pallegama Durayalage, Quantity Surveying; Christopher Parker, Quantity Surveying; Joubert Pienaar, Quantity Surveying; Theunis Pretorius, Quantity Surveying; Leah Pullen, Commercial Property Practice; Stephen Redmond, Quantity Surveying; Derek Richardson, Building Surveying; Paul Ryan, Quantity Surveying; Catherine Sherry, Property Finance & Investment; John Sweeney, Building Control; Luke Taheny, Commercial Property Practice; Harry Talbot, Valuation Surveying; Seamus Watters, Building Surveying; Nicolaas Wentzel, Quantity Surveying; Christopher Williams, Building Surveying; Hugo Wylie, Commercial Property Practice; Aisling Young, Quantity Surveying; and, Siobhan Young, Commercial Property Practice.

SCSI/*IRISH TIMES* TENNIS TOURNAMENT

The 37th SCSI/*Irish Times* Annual Tennis Tournament took place in August at Donnybrook Tennis Club, with 11 teams competing. Congratulations to the winning team from Sherry FitzGerald.



From left: Colm Byrne; Rena O'Kelly; SCSI President Tomás Kelly; Marguerite Stafford of *The Irish Times*; Harriet Grant; and, Denis Moloney.



RECOGNITION FOR GEOSPATIAL SURVEYING

In May 2026, geospatial surveyors were added to Ireland's Critical Skills Occupations List following a review by the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment. Announcing the addition, Minister Peter Burke said: "To assist with the ongoing skills and labour shortages in the construction sector, I am announcing that Construction Planner/Scheduler and Geospatial Surveyor (also known as Land Surveyor and Geomatics Surveyor) are being added to the Critical Skills Occupations List".

The inclusion follows the publication of the Council of European Geodetic Surveyors (CLGE) Dublin Declaration last year and engagement between the SCSI and the Department on workforce and skills issues affecting the surveying profession. The move recognises the role of Geospatial Surveyors within Ireland's built environment, and is expected to support efforts to address skills shortages across the sector. The announcement forms part of wider work being undertaken to support the profession's future. The SCSI has also been engaged in initiatives to expand educational pathways into geomatics and increase the pipeline of qualified professionals entering the sector.

The SCSI acknowledged the contribution of members and staff involved in the process, whose expertise and engagement helped to support the profession's case during discussions on the review of the list.

NEXUS SUMMER SPORTS TOURNAMENTS

The 2026 Nexus Tag Rugby and Soccer Tournaments brought together surveyors and industry teams for two evenings of friendly competition this summer. The Tag Rugby Tournament saw 10 teams take part, with Knight Frank winning, while the Soccer Tournament welcomed 16 teams, with Cumming Group taking first place and Avison Young finishing as runners-up. Organised by Nexus, the SCSI's young professional network, the tournaments foster industry connections and camaraderie among early-career surveyors. To support future Nexus events, including the upcoming Nexus Ball, visit scsi.ie/sponsor.



Winning soccer team, Cumming Group. From left: Joey Cullinan; Aodhán Keane; Camila Duarte; Aaron Dowling; Jana Maritz; Tom Gallagher; Michael Broderick; Micheal Hallissey; Jack McCann; and, Brendan McDonnell.



Winning tag rugby team, Knight Frank. From left: Grace Costelloe; Heidi McLellan; John Shanahan; Jodi Vink; Harry Dawson; Stephen O'Connor; Tom Gavigan; and, Malcolm Rowe.

TACKLING CONVEYANCING DELAYS: SCSI BRINGING MEMBER EXPERIENCE TO THE TABLE



From left: Edward McAuley, SCSI Director of Practice and Policy; Siobhan O'Sullivan, SCSI Chartered Surveyor and Estate Agent; Marcus O'Connor, SCSI Chartered Surveyor and Residential Agency Chairperson; and, Val O'Brien, Chartered and Registered Building Surveyor.

Reducing the duration it takes to buy and sell a home remains an important priority for Government, consumers, and the property sector. The SCSI continues to contribute to this work through its membership of the Government's Implementation Group on Conveyancing and Probate, established to implement the recommendations of the Expert Group on Conveyancing and Probate.

The Group brings together professional and industry representative bodies, regulators, State agencies and Government departments. Its work is directed towards an ambitious national target of completing conveyancing within eight weeks from acceptance of an offer to closing. Progress to date has included work on improved consumer information, a Best Practice Charter, and proposals for a national eConveyancing system.

As part of this continuing engagement, the SCSI was represented at a recent workshop in Leinster House by Edward McAuley, Marcus O'Connor, Siobhan O'Sullivan and Val O'Brien. The workshop provided an important opportunity to examine the practical bottlenecks still being experienced across residential transactions.

The SCSI brought fresh evidence from members to the discussion. Recent SCSI research found that 63% of respondents reported that the average period from sale agreed to closing had increased over the previous 12 months, while 59% considered solicitors' turnaround times to have worsened.

The strongest message from members is the need for earlier preparation. Sellers should have title deeds, planning and building regulation records, and other essential documentation, assembled as early as possible, and should engage their solicitor before, or at the point of, putting a property on the market. Buyers similarly need greater certainty around funding, particularly given the gap that can arise between approval in principle and a formal loan offer.

Other issues highlighted included delays with multi-unit development information, the time required to deal with historic planning and compliance matters, and emerging concerns around purchasers bidding on, or placing deposits on, multiple properties simultaneously.

Importantly, the engagement is not simply about identifying problems. A programme of work is continuing to address them. This includes the proposed publication of a Legal Services Regulatory Authority Code of Practice for Conveyancing, with an important emphasis on providing clients with appropriate information at an early stage of the process. For vendors, this should reinforce the importance of preparing documentation before a sale is agreed, and can include existing joint Law Society and SCSI guidance on speeding up property sales.

There is therefore real potential to improve the experience for both buyers and sellers. Earlier preparation, clearer expectations, and better co-ordination between all parties can remove avoidable delays. The SCSI will continue to bring the practical experience of members to this work, and support reforms that make residential transactions faster, more transparent, and more certain for everyone involved.

UNLOCKING GLOBAL TALENT



AMID ACUTE SKILLS SHORTAGES ACROSS IRELAND'S CONSTRUCTION AND ENGINEERING SECTORS, AN INNOVATIVE EU CO-FUNDED PROGRAMME OFFERS A ZERO-FEE, EMPLOYER-LED SOLUTION TO RECRUIT INTERNATIONAL PROFESSIONALS.

In an economy operating at almost full employment with joblessness hovering at 5%, finding suitably qualified and experienced professionals has become a pressing issue for many Irish employers. Engineers Ireland estimates that 22,300 engineers will be required over the next 10 years to deliver various Government housing and building programmes. The SCSI recently highlighted an expected shortfall of 2,200 surveyors over the next four years. These shortages have been formally recognised by the Irish Government, which has placed engineering and quantity surveying roles and, more recently, geospatial surveying roles, on the Critical Skills Occupations List.

For organisations charged with delivering critical national infrastructure, commercial developments, and green transition projects, these deficits pose a direct barrier to project delivery and business growth. To overcome shortages, many employers are expanding recruitment beyond Ireland. One potential solution is trying recruitment via STEP (Skills, Talent and Empowerment through Pathways). STEP is an EU co-funded, Irish Government-supported programme designed to address critical labour shortages by connecting employers directly with skilled displaced persons and refugees worldwide. In Ireland we use the employment permit and visa system to bring skilled workers to Ireland.

A new international talent pool

Delivered in Ireland through a partnership involving Talent Beyond Boundaries (TBB) and The Open Community (TOC), and supported by immigration specialists Fragomen and the Department of Justice, STEP provides Irish employers with direct access to an extensive global talent pool via TBB's Talent Catalogue. The Talent Catalogue is a global database of skilled displaced candidates. For example, the engineering talent pool on the Talent Catalogue exceeds 11,000 professionals, and over 200 surveying professionals, such as:

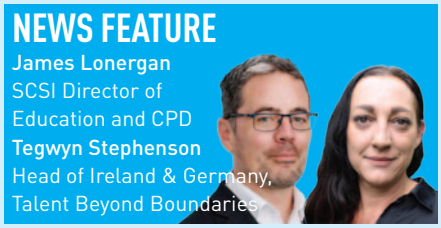
- civil engineers – 2,900+ professionals;
- mechanical engineers – 2,200+ professionals;
- electrical engineers – 2,000+ professionals; and,
- quantity surveyors – 200+ professionals.

Many of these university-educated candidates bring extensive international experience, ranging from Project Management Professional (PMP)-certified project managers to quantity surveyors, commercial cost estimators, and site managers. Many candidates have overseen complex infrastructure projects across Europe, the Middle East, and East Africa.

How the STEP programme works

STEP operates as a practical, employer-led pathway with no sourcing or recruitment fees, offering end-to-end supports to employers and candidates, including during the employment permit and visa application processes, and in relocation and post-arrival stages. The process is structured to integrate into existing recruitment and HR workflows:

1. Initial discussion: Employers consult with the STEP team. If interested, STEP can review job descriptions, salary requirements, permit eligibility, and timelines.



2. Candidate matching and interviews: STEP searches its Talent Catalogue and shares a tailored shortlist of CVs. Employers conduct interviews and manage selection using their own processes.

3. Permit and visa facilitation: Upon extending a job offer, STEP and Fragomen guide the employer and candidate through securing a Critical Skills Employment Permit followed by a Long Stay Employment Visa.

4. Relocation and integration support: STEP provides pre-departure orientation, arrival assistance and post-arrival support, and can support in sourcing temporary initial accommodation via the rent a room scheme.

Employer costs

Employers typically cover standard international recruitment and relocation costs including employment permit fees, visa costs, one-way flights, and the candidate's first month of accommodation.

Unmatched retention and performance

The business impact of the STEP initiative goes beyond filling vacancies, providing strong retention outcomes. European retention rates after one year stand at 97%, with 100% retention for all candidates who have relocated to Ireland to date. European data show that 97% of participating employers express complete satisfaction with candidates' technical expertise.

By embracing international talent through STEP, Irish engineering and quantity surveying firms can build resilient, highly skilled teams, drive innovation, and solve hiring challenges while offering displaced professionals a life-changing career in Ireland.

Building a sustainable talent pipeline for the surveying profession

While international mobility initiatives such as STEP provide an important mechanism for addressing immediate skills shortages, they form just one part of a broader response that is required to meet Ireland's future workforce needs. The challenge facing the surveying profession is not simply about filling vacancies today, it is also about creating sustainable pathways that attract, develop and retain talent.

Recent research undertaken by the SCSI highlights the scale of the challenge. The 'Employment Outlook for the Surveying Profession 2026-2029' report identified significant projected demand in the profession, driven by Government investment in housing, infrastructure, climate action, energy projects, and commercial development. Pressures are evident across all disciplines and specialisms as employers compete for an increasingly limited pool of experienced professionals.

The response to these challenges requires collaboration. No single organisation can solve Ireland's skills shortages in isolation. Instead, progress has been achieved through partnerships between employers, professional bodies, higher education institutions, and Government agencies and organisations. Whether through international talent initiatives, traditional degree programmes or innovative apprenticeship pathways, success depends on stakeholders working together towards a common goal.

Apprenticeship opportunities

One of the most significant developments in recent years has been the expansion of apprenticeship opportunities within the surveying profession. Apprenticeships provide an alternative route into careers by enabling individuals to earn while they learn, gaining academic qualifications alongside practical experience. For employers, apprenticeships offer the opportunity to develop talent while building capacity.

The launch of the Level 8 QS Apprenticeship delivered by Atlantic Technological University (ATU) Sligo represents a particularly encouraging development. The programme has attracted strong interest from employers and prospective apprentices, commencing with a fully subscribed cohort and a waiting list of candidates. This demand demonstrates that there is significant appetite for alternative pathways into the profession when opportunities are made available. It also highlights the willingness of employers to invest in developing talent.

In addition, the Level 9 Advanced QS Apprenticeship is also available. The programme creates both a progression pathway for graduates and an upskilling opportunity for existing professionals to gain a master's level qualification while remaining in employment. This is an important evolution for apprenticeships, demonstrating that work-based learning can support development at the highest academic levels as well as entry into the profession.

These initiatives are not operating in isolation. They complement existing accredited degree pathways, creating a diverse talent pipeline. A school leaver entering a Level 8 apprenticeship, a graduate progressing through a master's apprenticeship, an experienced international quantity surveyor relocating through a programme such as STEP, and a traditional undergraduate student can all contribute to addressing the same challenges through different routes.

The lesson from recent years is that collaboration works. Employers have helped shape programme design to ensure that graduates possess the skills industry requires. Higher education institutions have demonstrated innovation in developing new delivery models. Professional bodies have supported programme development and quality assurance, while organisations such as TBB have shown how international mobility can connect skilled professionals with opportunities where they are needed most.

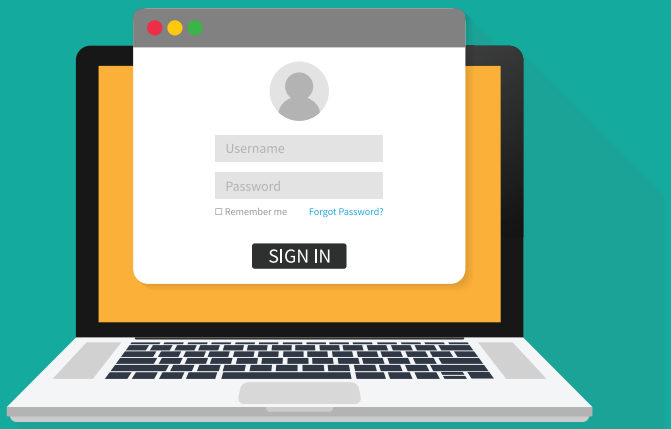
Ireland's ability to deliver its housing, infrastructure and sustainability ambitions will depend on having sufficient skilled professionals to plan, manage and deliver projects. Expanding routes, embracing innovation in education and continuing to strengthen collaboration are critical.

For anyone interested in learning more about international recruitment via STEP and the candidates on the Talent Catalogue, please contact Tegwyn Stephenson, Talent Beyond Boundaries at tstephenson@talentbeyondboundaries.org.

For anyone interested in finding out more about surveying apprenticeships, contact James Lonergan at james@scsi.ie or apprentiecship@scsi.ie, or visit scsi.ie/apprenticeship.

REGISTERING CONSTRUCTION

THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY REGISTER IRELAND (CIRI) REPRESENTS A NEW ERA OF STATUTORY REGISTRATION FOR IRELAND'S BUILDING INDUSTRY.



Ireland's construction industry is approaching an important change. During 2027, applications are expected to begin opening on a phased basis for the Construction Industry Register Ireland, or CIRI, as it moves towards becoming Ireland's statutory register for providers of building works.

For those who have followed CIRI over the years, the name itself is not new. What is new is its statutory footing and what that will mean in practice.

The legislation underpinning the Register, the Regulation of Providers of Building Works and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2022, was signed into law in July 2022. It provides not simply for a register, but for a regulatory system encompassing admission, competence, continuing professional development, complaints, investigations, and sanctions. The Government subsequently appointed the Construction Industry Federation (CIF) as the registration body, and an Admissions and Registration Board was established to oversee key aspects of the new system (https://cif.ie/ciri-2/admissions-and-registration-board/).

That distinction matters. CIRI will not simply be a list of builders or contractors who have chosen to sign up. For building works that come within the statutory regime, registration will become a legal requirement, subject to the relevant provisions of the Act and regulations.

Turning legislation into a workable system

Much of what goes into establishing a new regulatory regime happens long before the public sees it. Behind CIRI has been a considerable programme of work involving the Admissions and Registration Board, the CIRI office, and the Department of Housing. The challenge has been to translate the legislation into requirements and arrangements that can work in practice across a diverse construction industry.

The first six divisions are intended to relate to residential building provision, including duplex and triplex buildings, housing developments of ten or more dwellings, and apartment developments. Applications are expected to open during 2027 on a phased basis.

For builders, contractors and other providers of building works, this brings an important change. Eligibility and competence will be assessed within a formal statutory system and registration will have an ongoing dimension, with the 2022 Act also providing for renewal and continuing professional development.

For businesses already committed to good standards, there is also a positive side to that change: registration provides a means of demonstrating that the necessary requirements have been met and that competence continues to be maintained.

Where surveyors may come in

There is one part of CIRI that I think will be of particular interest to readers of the *Surveyors Journal*: the role of the **competent person**.

NEWS FEATURE

Gwen Wilson
SCSI Director of Regulation and Registrar



FOR THOSE WHO HAVE FOLLOWED CIRI OVER THE YEARS, THE NAME ITSELF IS NOT NEW. WHAT IS NEW IS ITS STATUTORY FOOTING AND WHAT THAT WILL MEAN IN PRACTICE.



The legislation allows certain building entities to rely on an eligible person or employee to satisfy the competence criteria for registration.

This is particularly relevant to Quantity Surveyors, Building Surveyors and other suitably qualified and experienced construction professionals, including engineers and architects. By providing the professional competence an entity relies on to demonstrate its eligibility for registration, these professionals may play a key role within registered entities.

The competent person(s) will be central to the integrity of the new system. This is not simply a name to be included on an application, but an important professional role that enables an entity to demonstrate the competence required for registration. The developing assessment framework recognises the value of relevant qualifications, practical construction experience, and evidence of competence for the particular division concerned. Surveyors and other professionals who take on this role will therefore make a meaningful contribution to maintaining standards, strengthening confidence in registered entities, and supporting the successful operation of CIRI.

Why this matters beyond the industry

Of course, there is a bigger reason for introducing statutory registration. Construction represents a very significant investment for consumers. Until now, the public has not had the benefit of a comprehensive statutory register identifying providers of building works who have satisfied prescribed registration requirements. CIRI is intended to address that. The Register will be publicly accessible online, giving consumers and those procuring building works a means of identifying registered providers. But its value should go beyond the ability to search for a name. The legislation also establishes ongoing requirements around competence, renewal and accountability.

That is ultimately where the public-interest value of CIRI lies: greater transparency about who is providing building works and a statutory structure within which standards can be maintained. The Admissions and Registration Board has similarly identified consumer protection and increased public confidence among the wider objectives of the Register.

The next chapter

There will inevitably be a period of adjustment as the industry becomes familiar with the new requirements. For businesses, this will mean understanding what registration requires and preparing for the move to the statutory system. For surveyors and other suitably qualified and experienced construction professionals, it will also mean considering where their expertise may fit, particularly where they are asked to act as a competent person.

A considerable amount of work has already taken place behind the scenes to get CIRI to this point. As implementation moves closer, communication with the industry will become increasingly important.

CIRI represents an important change, but in many respects its purpose is straightforward: to create a clear statutory basis for registration, to place competence and continuing standards at the heart of that registration, and to give the public greater transparency when choosing a provider of building works.

THE LEGISLATION ALLOWS CERTAIN BUILDING ENTITIES TO RELY ON AN ELIGIBLE PERSON OR EMPLOYEE TO SATISFY THE COMPETENCE CRITERIA FOR REGISTRATION.

PLANNING TO BE FLEXIBLE

THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT (EXEMPTED DEVELOPMENT (ACT OF 2000)) REGULATIONS 2026 ARE DESIGNED TO HELP OPTIMISE RESIDENTIAL SPACES AND REDUCE PRESSURE ON PLANNING AUTHORITIES.

Ireland recently updated its planning laws to make life easier for homeowners looking to upgrade, expand, or repurpose their living space. In simple terms, you can now carry out several major home projects without having to apply for full planning permission, saving you time, local authority fees, and the usual red tape and stress that go along with this. In particular, the new regulations provide property owners with significantly expanded flexibility to alter and extend their properties. Designed to optimise existing residential footprints and alleviate housing pressures, these updated rules come at a time when supply and affordability challenges remain key concerns for the Irish public.

There are seven amendment regulations in total (Statutory Instruments 338 to 344 of 2026), and these came into effect on July 27, 2026. A circular issued by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage states that these new changes rest on two core policy principles:

1. Administrative efficiency: Easing the regulatory burden on citizens while freeing planning authorities to focus resources on more complex cases.

2. Maximising housing stock: Optimising existing residential space through expansions, upgrades, or adaptations over time.

A summary of the key provisions across the seven amendment regulations is discussed below. It is important to keep in mind that every exemption carries strict conditions that must be adhered to (only some are listed here). Anyone planning such developments should review the specific requirements carefully before starting work.

1. SI No. 338 – House Extensions and Outbuildings (Class 1 and Class 3)

- **Extensions (Class 1):** The maximum allowable floor area for an extension to the rear of a house, or conversion for use as part of the house of any garage, or other similar structure attached to the house, increases from 40m² to 45m².
- **Outbuildings (Class 3):** The floor area allowance for non-habitable garden structures, such as garages, stores, workshops, gyms or greenhouses, increases from 25m² to 30m², provided they do not exceed height caps or reduce private open space to the rear or side of the house to less than 25m².



FEATURE
Andrew O'Gorman
Chartered Building Surveyor
Andrew O'Gorman
Surveyors Ltd



2. SI No. 339 – Internal Subdivision of Dwellings (Class 1A)

- Homeowners may convert a single principal residential dwelling into two self-contained units strictly within the existing building envelope. Each resulting unit must meet a minimum gross floor area of 32m², be self-contained, and not reliant on internal shared space, other than for access. The developer must also submit a 14-day prior written notification to the relevant local planning authority before commencing works.



3. SI No. 340 – Detached Garden Dwellings (Class 3A)

- This introduces a new exemption category permitting the construction of a detached, habitable living unit within the rear curtilage of a primary house. The unit must measure between 32m² and 45m², and maintain maximum height caps of 4m for pitched roofs, or 3m for flat roofs. The dwelling must share water, drainage, and electrical services with the primary home, cannot be sold separately or used for short-term commercial lettings, and requires a 14-day prior notification to the local authority.

4. SI No. 341 – Front Storage Enclosures and External Insulation (Class 62 and Class 63)

- **Cycle and Waste Storage (Class 62):** This provides an explicit exemption for compact front or rear curtilage storage units (for bicycles and refuse bins) up to 3.5m² in area and 1.4m in height.
- **External Wall Insulation (Class 63):** This permits external wall insulation (EWI) systems up to a maximum thickness of 150mm across all elevations, provided the system does not project onto public roads or adjacent property boundaries.

5. SI No. 342 – Heat Pump Location Flexibility (Class 2d)

- This removes previous statutory restrictions that essentially confined air-source and ground-source heat pump compressors to the rear elevation. Heat pump units up to 2.5m² can now be sited on front elevations and even rooftops, provided they maintain a minimum setback of 0.5m from roof or wall edges, do not encroach onto public roads, and adhere to specific noise threshold levels.

6. SI No. 343 – Removal of Chimneys (Class 2A)

- This exempts the removal of chimneys, but no chimney shall be removed where it forms part of a joint chimney stack with a separate dwelling, and roof reinstatement materials must match the existing finish. This exemption is also subject to the Wildlife Act 1976.

7. SI No. 344 – Dormer Extensions and Front Rooflights (Class 1B and Class 1C)

- **Dormer Roof Extensions (Class 1B):** This permits side- or rear-facing dormer roof box additions up to a maximum internal volume of 30m³, provided the structure maintains a 20cm setback from the eaves line and does not exceed the main roof ridge line.
- **Front Elevation Rooflights (Class 1C):** This allows up to two rooflights on the front roof plane, capped at maximum individual dimensions of 1,000mm in length by 900mm in width.

While these developments bypass the formal planning application procedure, it is important to note that exempted development does not mean unregulated. All works must still strictly comply with Building Regulations where relevant. They must also comply with the various limitations or parameters of the exempt development, as mentioned. The limitations of Class 1A (subdivision of a house) and 3A (detached house in rear garden) in particular, should be noted.

While proponents will welcome the reduction in red tape for straightforward projects, there will no doubt be critics of the amendments. Ultimately, whether these regulatory changes mark a practical, smarter shift for Irish housing remains to be seen.

MORE THAN A PLANNING CHANGE

WHAT WILL THE NEW PLANNING EXEMPTIONS MEAN FOR THE RESIDENTIAL MARKET?

For those of us working in the residential property market, the changes to Ireland's exempted development rules introduced in July are significant not simply because they allow homeowners to do more without planning permission, but because they could change the way people think about the homes they already own.

At a time when affordability remains a major issue and housing supply continues to fall short of demand, we need to look at every opportunity to use our existing housing stock more effectively. Sometimes the answer to a family's changing housing needs may not be another house. It may be finding a better way to use the property they already have.

The new regulations, which came into effect on July 27, represent the first substantial revision of residential exempted development rules in almost 25 years. They sit within the framework of the Planning and Development Act 2000. The changes were introduced following public consultation in 2025 and, for homeowners, the result is greater flexibility to adapt, extend and make better use of their properties without having to go through the full planning permission process, provided the relevant conditions are met.

For homeowners, the practical question is: what can I now do with my property?

FEATURE



Rowena Quinn
Managing Partner,
Hunters Estate Agents

Making existing homes work harder

The increase in the maximum exempt extension from 40m² to 45m², where a dwelling has not previously been extended, is a relatively modest change on paper. In reality, an additional five square metres can be extremely useful when designing a kitchen, family room, utility room, or more flexible living accommodation.

That matters because greater flexibility can encourage movement in the market, giving buyers more confidence to consider properties that can be adapted to their needs and giving sellers an additional point of appeal when bringing their home to market.

There is also greater flexibility for upper-floor windows, with the required separation from a boundary reduced from 11m to 8m.

But the most interesting change, from a residential market perspective, is undoubtedly the new exemption for auxiliary habitable dwellings. Subject to approximately 20 conditions, homeowners may now be able to construct a detached dwelling of between 32m² and 45m² to the rear of their principal home, connected to the services of the main house, without applying for planning permission. I believe this could prove particularly relevant to the established residential market.

A response to changing family life

In south Dublin, for example, we sell many older homes on comparatively generous sites. Traditionally, purchasers might have looked at a large back garden primarily in terms of extension



potential. They may now begin to look at that same space differently. Could it accommodate an independent living space for an elderly parent? Could it eventually provide accommodation for an adult son or daughter? Could it allow a family to remain together while giving different generations greater independence? These are questions we are already hearing increasingly from purchasers.

Ireland's housing needs have changed considerably since many of our existing suburban homes were built. Adult children are living at home for longer, while at the other end of the spectrum families are looking for ways to support ageing parents without necessarily moving them into residential care. A well-designed auxiliary dwelling could provide a very practical response to both situations.

It could also make 'rightsizing' more interesting. One of the difficulties with encouraging older homeowners to rightsize is that moving from a much-loved family home can be an enormous emotional as well as financial decision. Greater flexibility around how a property can accommodate different generations could create alternatives to the traditional choice between staying in a house that has become too large or leaving it altogether.



Could it increase property values?

Inevitably, purchasers and vendors will ask whether these changes make certain properties more valuable. My view is that they could certainly make some homes more attractive. A large garden with genuine potential for additional accommodation may appeal to a broader range of purchasers, particularly where multigenerational living is a consideration.

However, agents and valuers need to be extremely careful about automatically attaching a value to that potential. The headline figure of 32m² to 45m² does not mean that every large back garden can accommodate another dwelling. The exemption is subject to numerous conditions. The auxiliary dwelling must remain associated with the principal residence and cannot be sold or subdivided separately. The principal property must be the owner's sole or main residence when development commences, and normal Building Regulations and Building Control requirements continue to apply. The exemption is also time limited, applying to qualifying development commenced and completed by December 31, 2030. Site dimensions, existing extensions, garden structures, boundaries, access, drainage and services may all determine whether a particular property qualifies.

This distinction is particularly important when marketing property. There is a considerable difference between saying that a garden "offers potential for an auxiliary dwelling, subject to compliance with the relevant regulations" and presenting that accommodation as something a purchaser is automatically entitled to build.

More than garden dwellings

Other changes should not be overlooked. The exempted development limit for structures such as sheds, stores, home offices and gyms has increased from 25m² to 30m². That reflects how our homes are being used differently. Home and hybrid working are now established parts of working life and, for some buyers, a good home office is no longer an optional extra There are also expanded exemptions around heat pumps and external wall insulation, as well as provisions for bicycle and bin storage.

Potentially significant too are provisions facilitating additional residential units within existing housing stock, subject to conditions, including a minimum floor area of 32m² for each resulting dwelling. For larger older properties, this may present opportunities to bring underused accommodation into more productive use.

Possibility, not entitlement

The wider direction of the reforms is positive. Ireland cannot solve its housing difficulties through new construction alone. We also need to make better use of the homes, buildings and infrastructure we already have. For surveyors, estate agents and valuers, however, these changes also bring responsibility. Planning compliance is already a material issue in residential transactions. Indeed, the SCSI's 2026 Residential Market Monitor identified non-compliance with planning permissions as the leading reason cited by agents for transactions failing after reaching sale agreed, with non-compliance with Building Regulations also among the top three. The last thing the market needs is a new generation of homeowners assuming that "exempted development" means "anything goes". It does not.

The opportunity created by these regulations is considerable, particularly for larger properties and established suburban areas. But whether that opportunity exists must be determined property by property. When advising a purchaser or vendor, I would therefore describe these changes as creating potential rather than entitlement. Where that potential is important to a purchasing decision, valuation or sale, it should be properly investigated and appropriate professional advice obtained.

If we get that balance right, these new exemptions could help families adapt their homes, support multigenerational living, and make better use of existing housing stock. And in a market where affordability and supply remain two of our greatest challenges, enabling the homes we already have to work harder could ultimately prove every bit as important as the additional square metres themselves.

SURVEYING TEMPLE BAR: PART 2

PART 2 OF THIS ARTICLE SETS OUT FURTHER DETAIL ON THE METHODOLOGY OF THIS SURVEY, AND THE SUCCESSFUL FINAL RESULT.

Part 1 of this article set out the background to the Temple Bar Square Area Improvement Scheme, as well as outlining the first five steps of a successful surveying methodology for urban street improvement. Part 2 explains the remaining steps in that proposed methodology.

Stage 6 – establishing the baseline control

In any urban scheme, the control network is the foundation on which everything else depends. In Temple Bar, relatively tall buildings and narrow streets made Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) work within the square itself impractical. Instead, suitable open-sky locations were identified along the adjacent River Liffey.

Two primary GNSS stations were established approximately 150m apart and observed for extended periods of approximately three hours each using Trimble R10 dual-frequency receivers. During observation, positional precision and satellite geometry were monitored to ensure stable fixed solutions. The derived co-ordinates in Irish Transverse Mercator and Malin Head Datum were checked for consistency before being accepted for project control.

FEATURE

Conor O'Reilly MSCSI
Chartered Geomatics Surveyor and Civil Engineer
Assistant Project Manager – Design & Construction, Iarnród Éireann Capital Investments – Network Enhancements section





Care was taken to ensure consistency between grid and ground distances when transferring this control into the site network.

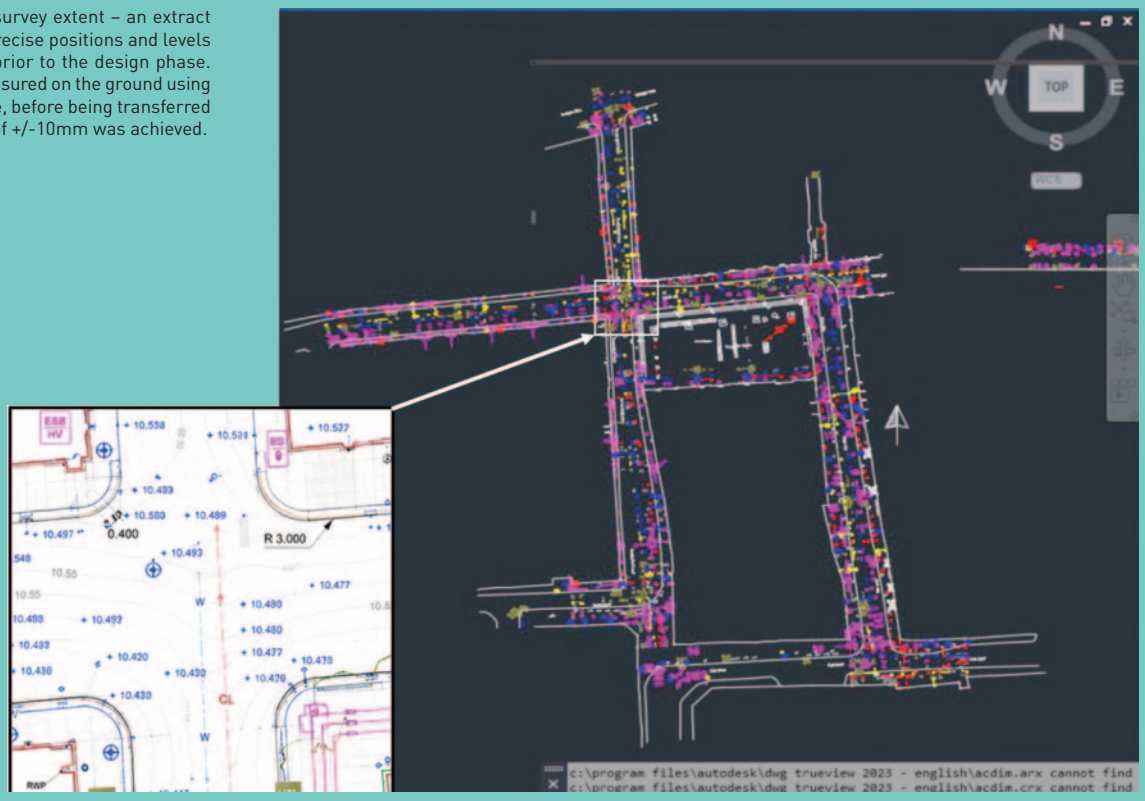
Stage 7 – building the primary control network

With GNSS control established, the site control network was extended using a total station. The project was configured in grid co-ordinates with consistent treatment of projection and scale so that all observations were processed within the same reference framework.

The total station was set up on Station 1 and oriented to Station 2. A number of observations were recorded and checks made to confirm that measured and computed values were within tolerance. A new station was then set out in a secure long-term location away from the River Liffey and located in the corner of Temple Bar Square.

From this station, a further six permanent control stations were installed across the site using double-face observations and good traverse geometry. The traverse was closed back to GPS1 and the misclosure was within acceptable tolerance. The network was processed and adjusted in Survey Control Centre (SCC), holding the GNSS points fixed and applying a least squares adjustment to distribute residuals.

FIGURE 5: Topographical survey extent – an extract from the survey showing precise positions and levels of existing infrastructure prior to the design phase. GPS co-ordinates were measured on the ground using satellite signals from space, before being transferred to site where an accuracy of +/-10mm was achieved.



The datum for the project was determined from GNSS observations of Station 1. For vertical control, a levelling loop was run from Station 1 and closed within tolerance. This produced a stable, accurate and internally consistent horizontal and vertical control framework.

Stage 8 – designing for resilience: secondary control

Urban sites are dynamic. On Temple Bar Square, utility works and construction activity resulted in several primary control points being damaged or removed during the project. This risk had been anticipated. Secondary control points were installed off site and tied in to the main network. In addition, a series of non-invasive adhesive targets were installed on surrounding building façades. These elevated targets proved extremely valuable: they were less susceptible to damage, maintained intervisibility and allowed rapid resections from almost anywhere in the Square. In many cases they eliminated the need to re-establish traverse setups, greatly improving efficiency and reducing disruption in a heavily pedestrianised environment. This layered approach to control proved critical to maintaining continuity over a long and disruptive programme.

Stage 9 – detailed topographical survey

The main topographical survey was carried out using a robotic total station. Data capture was undertaken from multiple set-ups, using a mix of conventional occupied stations and resection set-ups where geometry allowed. For quality control, orientation was always confirmed by observing known control points before and after a set of observations were recorded.

The robotic function, tracking a prism on a survey pole, was used for approximately 90% of all detail capture including kerbs, channels, paving edges, street furniture, building entrance thresholds and surface breaklines. Heights were recorded for all features, producing a full three-dimensional dataset suitable for drainage gradient design and surface modelling.

Reflectorless measurement was used deliberately in two important situations. First, for observing the elevated façade control targets. Second, for measuring wall/back-of-path junctions. In these locations, a prism pole introduces a systematic positional error because the prism centre cannot physically occupy the true corner or junction. In narrow streets and tight building lines this offset becomes significant. By measuring directly to the surface using the reflectorless laser, the true position of these critical breaklines could be captured.

The back-of-path line was treated as a controlling feature throughout the survey, as it directly governs crossfalls and surface drainage behaviour. Small errors here would have had disproportionate consequences during construction. This method took a little longer but accuracy was crucial at this point.

The topographical survey was exported from SCC to Bentley MicroStation for editing (**Figure 5**).

> IN TEMPLE BAR, RELATIVELY TALL BUILDINGS AND NARROW STREETS MADE GLOBAL NAVIGATION SATELLITE SYSTEM (GNSS) WORK WITHIN THE SQUARE ITSELF IMPRACTICAL.

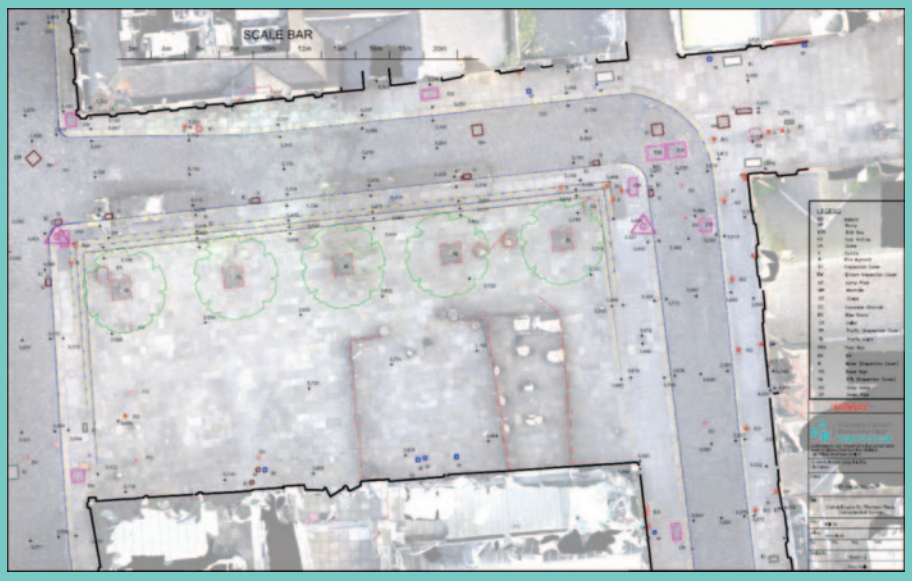


FIGURE 6: Drone survey: circa 3,000 aerial photographs were captured from a drone. This is an ortho image. It has been corrected so it can be used like a scaled plan, with features shown in their true position, helping design engineers to interpret the site with greater confidence.

Stage 10 – drone survey

A drone-based photogrammetry survey was carried out to supplement the ground survey and provide rapid surface modelling and visualisation. The drone's onboard GNSS was used for flight control, navigation and image geotagging. The drone captured circa 3,000 photographs of the site with an aim of 80% overlap among these photographs (**Figure 6**).

To achieve the required geometric accuracy and ensure full consistency with the ground survey, a set of clearly identifiable ground control points (GCPs) were established on permanent site features such as manhole corners and pavement joints. These points were surveyed using the total station and assigned precise ITM co-ordinates from the site control network.

A 3D mesh was produced through Bentley iTwin Modeler. During photogrammetric processing, the GCPs were used to constrain and accurately geo-reference the photographs into the correct co-ordinate system. As a result, the 3D mesh aligned precisely with the total station survey.

Stage 11 – laser scanning: a late but valuable addition

Laser scanning was not included in the original method due to cost, availability and concerns about pedestrian noise. However, a constrained area near Temple Bar and Essex Street East required higher geometric detail where drone capture was unreliable and conventional surveying was inefficient.

In winter, with short daylight hours and constant pedestrian presence, a scan was carried out using a Leica RTC360 scanner. Although this required late programme changes, the resulting point cloud provided an exceptionally detailed and useful dataset.

The lesson was clear: in dense urban environments, laser scanning should be considered earlier as a complementary tool, not as a last resort.

Stage 12 – design outputs and ongoing support

Rather than delivering a single drawing, the survey outputs were provided as a suite of spatially aligned datasets:

- 3D topographical survey in multiple file formats;
- 3D mesh, ortho imagery and point clouds;
- longitudinal and latitudinal sections;
- layered CAD files for option testing;
- hard copies for site visits and management meetings; and,
- design models for setting out at construction and verification stages.

These outputs became active design tools rather than background references. Survey involvement continued throughout detailed design, with targeted re-surveys, verification of assumptions and cross-checking of emerging models. This iterative interaction reduced design risk and improved confidence in the final solution.

Stage 13 – construction, setting out and heritage reinstatement

During construction, setting out was undertaken by the contractor. The surveyor's role focused on independent checking and quality control, concentrating on performance-critical elements: gradients, kerb upstands,





FIGURE 7: Setting-out checks: setting out precise positions, levels and gradients for underground drainage systems and pavement elements.



FIGURE 8: Construction workers carrying out the reinstatement of the historic cobblestones.



FIGURE 9: The finished reinstatement of the historic cobblestones on Fownes Street Upper. The original stones were carefully treated and re-laid using a more suitable fresh mortar material.

drainage inverts, gullies and thresholds (**Figure 7**). The reinstatement of historic cobblestones and new granite paving was treated as a controlled engineering operation rather than a visual exercise (**Figures 8** and **9**). Survey control lines and levels ensured correct geometry, particularly following the introduction of a new crossfall across the square. Close liaison with the resident engineer on site ensured that issues were identified early and corrected before becoming rooted.

Stage 14 – verification and closeout

On completion, post-construction surveys verified that surfaces, gradients, thresholds and drainage features matched the design intent. This provided objective confirmation that the Scheme met its performance and accessibility goals before reopening to the public.

Conclusion

The Temple Bar Square Area Improvement Scheme has achieved its objectives as an urban improvement scheme. Its design and construction were underpinned at each stage from pre-design to construction completion by detailed site survey work, setting-out and accuracy verification of its various elements. For the thousands of people who visit Temple Bar daily and appreciate it as an amenity, whether for recreation, business or otherwise, it serves as an example of the role of the City Council in making Dublin a better place for its citizens and its visitors.

THE TEMPLE BAR SQUARE AREA IMPROVEMENT SCHEME HAS ACHIEVED ITS OBJECTIVES AS AN URBAN IMPROVEMENT SCHEME.

COMMERCIAL PROPERTY GATHERS MOMENTUM

SCSI RESEARCH SHOWS POSITIVITY IN THE COMMERCIAL MARKET, ALTHOUGH SUPPLY REMAINS AN ISSUE.

The Irish commercial property market has entered a new phase of growth and stability. Rising occupier confidence, increasing investment volumes, and improved market sentiment signal that the turbulence of 2022 and 2023 is firmly in the past. Findings from the SCSI 'Commercial Property Mid-Year Market Monitor 2026' reinforce this view, revealing a market supported by resilient fundamentals and strengthening performance across all three key commercial property sectors.

The SCSI survey of Chartered Commercial and Valuation Surveyors recorded a national occupier demand net balance of +23%, up from +13% at the same point last year, with positive sentiment across office, industrial and retail (**Figure 1**). Office is the standout performer, with sentiment rising to +31%. Six out of ten respondents believe the market is in upturn or approaching peak, and 57% regard current valuations as fair. Prime office rents are forecast to grow by 6% over the next 12 months, with capital values expected to rise by 4%.

The driver behind improved office demand is not widespread business expansion, it is a pronounced flight to quality. Occupiers are consolidating into modern, sustainable buildings that support employee well-being and justify attendance. Recent transactions from State Street, Bloomberg and Asana reflect this trend, as does the growing role of financial services and AI-related businesses as significant new sources of demand. Active requirements across Dublin are approaching 210,000m^2, with more than 100,000m^2 reserved in core locations.

Deal of the year

The headline transaction of 2026 captures this dynamic precisely. The acquisition of One Molesworth Street for approximately €100m – with CBRE acting for MEAG and JLL acting for Henderson Park – was the largest Dublin office deal since 2022. It demonstrates that institutional capital continues to target Ireland, prioritising buildings with strong environmental, social and governance (ESG) credentials and long-term occupier appeal, regardless of wider geopolitical uncertainty. The transaction provides clear evidence of continued liquidity for prime central business district (CBD) office assets and sustained investor appetite for Ireland.

Supply: the defining constraint

Supply remains the defining challenge. SCSI agents reported availability at a net balance of -17% (**Figure 2**), non-residential construction output fell 12% year on year in Q1 2026, and Dublin industrial vacancy sits at just over 3%, with only approximately 50,000m^2 under construction. Development viability, elevated construction costs, financing requirements, and planning timelines continue to suppress new commencements across all sectors. The pipeline remains relatively shallow, particularly in industrial, where occupier demand continues to outpace new supply.



The quality gap is sharpening

The quality divide is only widening. Three-quarters of SCSI respondents expect occupiers to pay a premium for buildings with strong sustainability and well-being credentials, a finding that 96% of surveyors say will intensify further (**Figure 3**). Prime assets with secure income and modern specifications will continue to outperform. For secondary stock, the choice is stark: invest to compete or accept declining relevance. This divergence is the most profound development in recent surveys, and is the theme that will define the Irish commercial property market over the next 12 months.

Sources

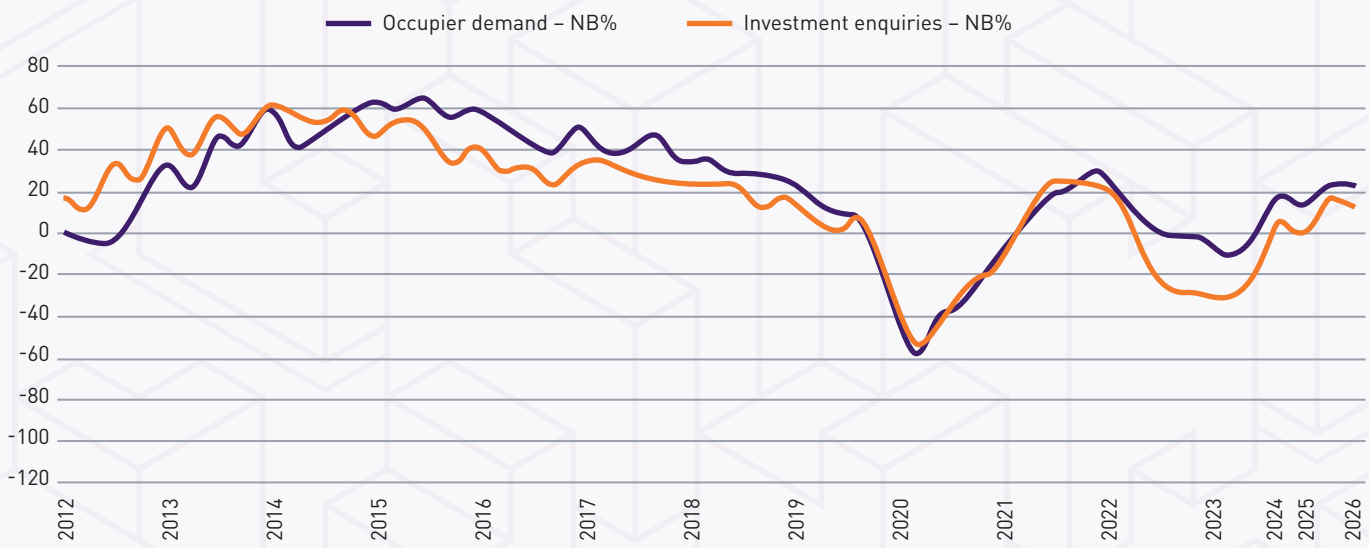
SCSI Commercial Property Mid-Year Market Monitor 2026.

CBRE Ireland Q2 2026 Investment Report.

FEATURE
Bernadine Hogan
Chair, SCSI Commercial Agency Committee
CBRE Ireland

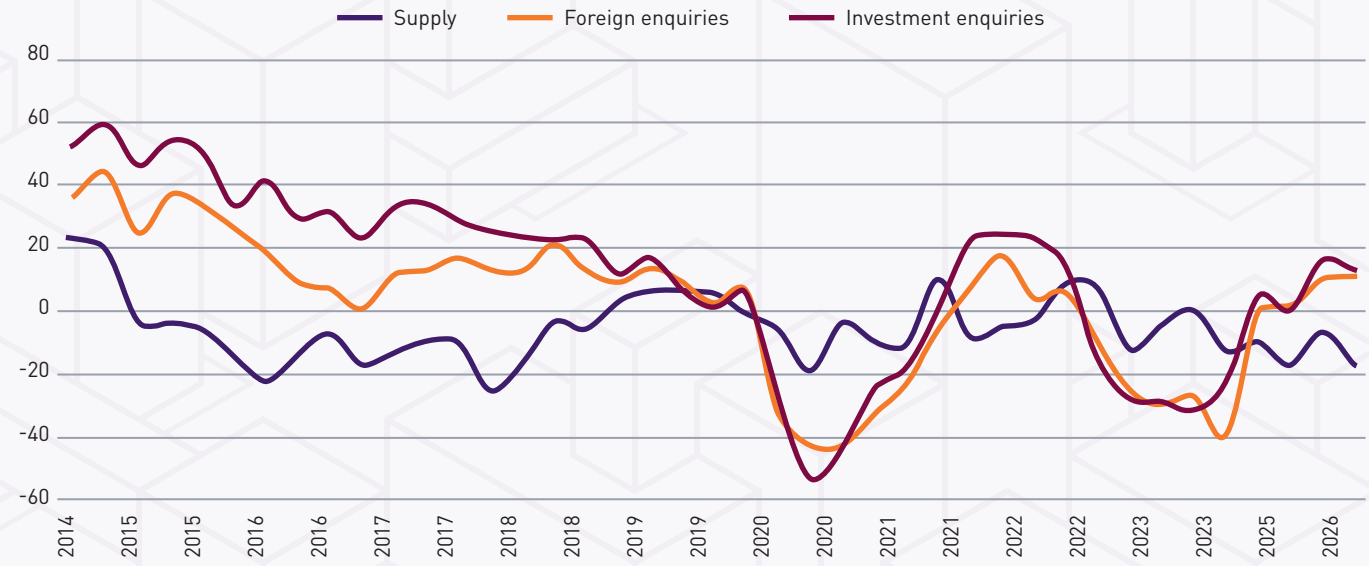


FIGURE 1: National occupier and investor demand sentiment indices – % net balance.



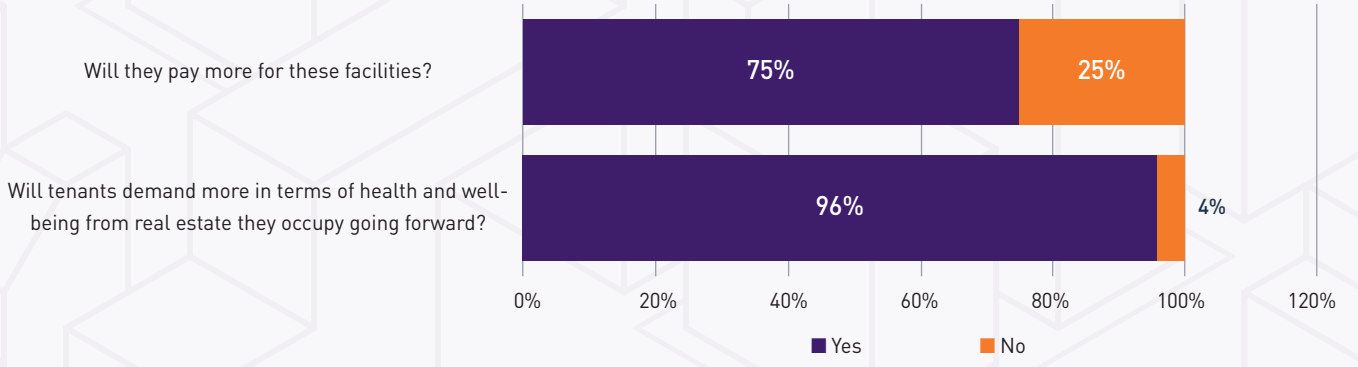
Source: SCSI research.

FIGURE 2: Investment enquiries, supply, and foreign investment enquiries across office, retail and industrial.



Source: SCSI research.

FIGURE 3: Demand for better health and well-being facilities and willingness to pay more for these facilities.



Source: SCSI research.

RATING ENERGY

THE BER SYSTEM FOR BOTH NON-RESIDENTIAL AND RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS HAS CHANGED. HERE'S WHAT SURVEYORS NEED TO KNOW.

For surveyors working across commercial and non-residential property, the Building Energy Rating (BER) system for non-residential buildings is being updated: not in how it calculates a building's performance, but in how that performance is presented.[1] The familiar A to G letter scale is staying, and the underlying methodology is unchanged; what is changing is the basis on which each grade boundary is set, moving from a ratio relative to a notional reference building to a graded kWh per square metre per year metric. At the same time, a new top-tier band, A0, has been introduced to formally recognise zero emission buildings (ZEBs) – the target for all buildings by 2050.

From ratio-based grading to graded absolute thresholds

Under the current system, a building's letter grade is essentially a comparison: how does this building's calculated energy performance stack up against a notional building of the same type, size and use, built to a reference specification? That approach has served a useful purpose, but it has also long been a source of confusion, because two buildings with identical ratings can have quite different theoretical energy loads depending on the notional benchmark applied to their typology.

The new framework addresses this by grading buildings against absolute kWh/m²/year thresholds rather than a ratio. The letter scale itself is retained (a building will still receive an A to G grade, now extending to the new A0 band), but the boundary of each grade will be set by a defined kWh/m²/year figure rather than a percentage of a notional building's performance. This is a far more transparent basis for anyone conducting due diligence, benchmarking a portfolio, or explaining a rating to a non-technical client, because the energy intensity behind a given grade becomes explicit rather than implied. A surveyor advising an investor on a proposed office acquisition will be able to point to the rated kWh/m²/year figure driving that grade, rather than relying solely on a ratio with no absolute reference point.

It's worth being clear about what is not changing. The underlying calculation methodology, Non-Domestic Energy Assessment Procedure (NEAP), and its Simplified Building Energy Model (SBEM) engine, remain fundamentally unchanged. This is a change in how performance is expressed and reported, not a replacement of the assessment engine surveyors already work with. Equally important: existing BER certificates remain valid for their full ten-year lifespan. There is no requirement to re-certify a building simply because the framework has changed, which should reassure clients concerned about immediate compliance costs on assets already holding a valid cert.

What the updated certificate will show

Updated BER certificates will also present a Smart Readiness Indicator or SRI score. The SRI score quantifies a building's capacity to respond to external signals



FEATURE

Dr Ciara Ahern CEng
Lead, Smart Connected Cities and Communities of the Future in the Rinn Energy Research Centre, and Founder of the Irish Building Stock Observatory hosted at TU Dublin



and dynamically adjust its energy consumption. This is a meaningful addition. As electricity grids become more variable in supply, with growing renewable generation, and more dynamic in pricing, a building's ability to shift or modulate demand in response to external signals is increasingly relevant to both its operational cost profile and its value proposition. For surveyors, this smart-readiness indicator is likely to become a genuine due diligence consideration, not just a technical footnote, particularly for institutional investors with net-zero and grid flexibility commitments.

The new A0/zero-emission building threshold

The most consequential addition for valuation and investment purposes is the introduction of a typology-specific A0 rating band, denoting ZEB status. Crucially, the threshold is typology specific rather than a single blanket figure applied across all building types. Two examples illustrate the point: offices must achieve a maximum energy performance of 40kWh/m²/year to qualify, while retail buildings are held to a threshold of 70kWh/m²/year. Reaching A0 is not simply a matter of hitting the energy intensity figure, however. To qualify as a ZEB, a building must satisfy a fuller set of criteria:

- no fossil fuels present on site;
- a CarbonEq emissions value of no more than 4.5kg CO_2eq/m²/year;
- energy demand met through carbon-free sources, or otherwise compliant with national renewable energy criteria;
- demonstrated capability to respond to external signals and dynamically adjust energy consumption, linking back to the smart-readiness reporting noted above; and,
- full compliance with Part L Nearly Zero Energy Building (nZEB) requirements.

ZEB and nZEB are not the same thing

Part L nZEB compliance is a baseline regulatory requirement under the Building Regulations that all new buildings must meet. ZEB/A0 is a BER classification that sits above it: nZEB compliance is a prerequisite for A0, so every A0-rated building is nZEB compliant, but an nZEB-compliant building is not automatically a ZEB. It still has to clear the additional bars of the energy threshold, the carbon emissions ceiling, the fossil fuel exclusion, and the smart-readiness capability.

It is worth distinguishing this from the parallel reform taking place on the residential side. The domestic BER scale, which currently runs to 15 classifications, is being simplified to a more streamlined A0 to G scale of eight classifications, from May 24, 2026, with the A1, A2 and A3 sub-ratings removed. Unlike the non-residential framework, however, this is a straightforward simplification of how ratings are presented, not a shift from ratio-based to absolute kWh/m²/year grading. The A0/ZEB band sits at the top of the domestic scale in much the same way, denoting homes with a very high energy performance that do not use fossil fuels, while the underlying Dwelling Energy Assessment Procedure (DEAP) methodology remains unchanged.



Practical implications

For surveyors, the shift carries several practical consequences worth flagging to clients now. Absolute kWh/m²/year figures will make cross-portfolio benchmarking more straightforward and will likely feature more prominently in investment memoranda and environmental, social and governance (ESG) reporting than ratio-based ratings have to date. The A0/ZEB classification is set to become a genuine differentiator in premium commercial lettings and disposals, particularly where occupiers or investors hold net-zero commitments, and surveyors advising on new-build or major refurbishment schemes should treat the typology-specific thresholds as an early design consideration rather than a certification exercise applied after the fact.

Finally, because existing certificates remain valid, there is no immediate wave of re-assessment to manage. Surveyors should, however, expect growing client interest in understanding where their assets sit against the new metrics well ahead of any renewal cycle and against forthcoming Minimum Energy Performance Standards (MEPS) that require the bottom 26% of the stock to be renovated by 2030.

Reference

1. Gov.ie. Simplified Building Energy Rating for non-residential buildings to be introduced from 24 May 2026. Available from: https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-housing-local-government-and-heritage/press-releases/simplified-building-energy-rating-for-non-residential-buildings-to-be-introduced-from-24th-may-2026/.

BUDGET 2027: WELCOME MEASURES, BUT MORE NEEDED TO UNLOCK HOUSING DELIVERY

Budget 2027 contains several welcome measures for housing, property and investment, but from the SCSI's perspective, the central challenge remains translating increased investment and fiscal measures into viable housing delivery.

Ahead of the Budget, the SCSI made a detailed submission to Government in July setting out practical measures informed by members working across the property, construction, and land sectors. Our recommendations focused particularly on housing viability and affordability, vacant and derelict buildings, infrastructure, commercial retrofit, agricultural land mobility, and support for SMEs. The SCSI's Pre-Budget Submission 2027 called for measures including extended development levy and utility connection waivers, better alignment of affordability supports with market conditions, and targeted tax incentives to bring vacant buildings back into productive use.

There are positive elements in the Budget. For example, for



FEATURE

Edward McAuley
SCSI Director of Practice & Policy



first-time buyers, the maximum Help to Buy refund increased by €5,000 to €35,000. The Rent Tax Credit rises by €150 to €1,150 for an individual and €2,300 for couples, while the Rent-a-Room tax-free threshold increases from €14,000 to €16,000.

The SCSI welcomes these measures, particularly at a time when affordability remains a major challenge. However, our submission had also sought indexation of relevant support scheme thresholds to construction cost inflation to ensure that they remain aligned with changing market conditions; this is yet to be included.

Vacancy and dereliction

One of our strongest pre-Budget messages related to the opportunity presented by Ireland's vacant and derelict building stock. SCSI research shows that viability remains the central challenge in refurbishing larger and more complex properties, with construction costs, VAT, finance and regulatory compliance combining to inhibit redevelopment. The SCSI is due to publish an update to this report later in the year.

The SCSI sought a co-ordinated tax package including time-limited Capital Gains Tax (CGT) relief, tax relief on rental income from



refurbished properties, mortgage interest relief for refurbishment loans, reduced stamp duty for vacant commercial buildings, and a 9% VAT rate on refurbished residential units.

Against that backdrop, the SCSI was disappointed that Budget 2027 did not contain more targeted measures for larger vacant buildings. Existing supports have helped individual properties, but larger buildings capable of delivering housing at scale require more targeted intervention. The decision to proceed with the new Derelict Property Tax is nevertheless welcome. It will apply at 7%, with preliminary dereliction registers due to be published on September 1, 2027.

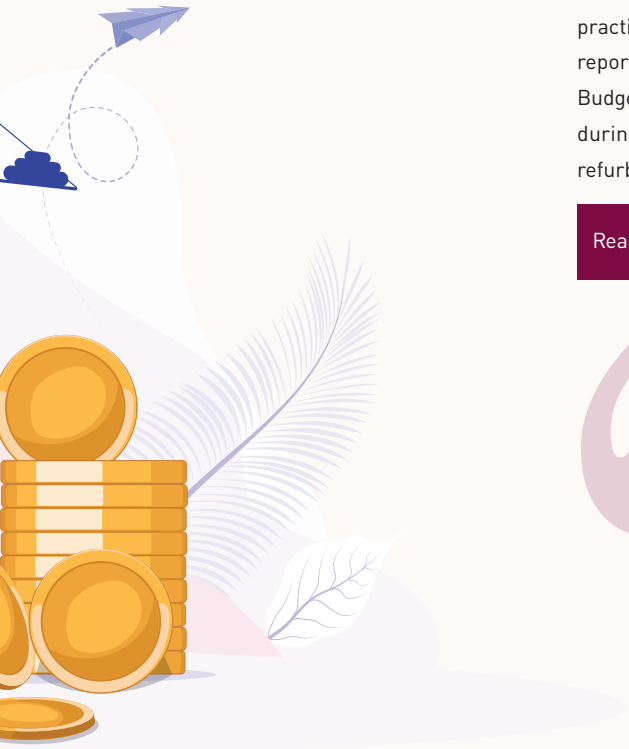
Viability remains the key test

The reduction in the standard CGT rate from 33% to 31% is also welcome. The SCSI believes that this broadly supports our call for measures to improve agricultural land mobility and encourage investment, although we are disappointed that development land is excluded from the reduction.

Ultimately, however, the success of Budget 2027 must be judged by delivery. SCSI research estimates that removing development levies and utility connection charges could reduce housing delivery costs by approximately €17,500 per unit in the Greater Dublin Area. We had therefore sought an extension of these waivers alongside investment in infrastructure and measures to improve planning capacity.

Budget 2027 is likely to support progress in several important areas, but further targeted action will be required to address viability, unlock existing buildings, and translate investment into additional homes. The SCSI will continue to engage constructively with Government to advance practical, evidence-based solutions. With the publication of our next 'Real Cost of Renovation' report in the coming months, we are hopeful that the significant funding commitments made in Budget 2027 will provide scope for further targeted schemes and policy measures to be developed during the year, informed by emerging evidence on the measures needed to make more refurbishment projects viable.

Read the SCSI Pre-Budget Submission at: https://scsi.ie/scsi-pre-budget-submission-2027/.



BUDGET 2027 IS LIKELY TO SUPPORT PROGRESS IN SEVERAL IMPORTANT AREAS, BUT FURTHER TARGETED ACTION WILL BE REQUIRED TO ADDRESS VIABILITY, UNLOCK EXISTING BUILDINGS, AND TRANSLATE INVESTMENT INTO ADDITIONAL HOMES.

UNDER THE WIRES

DO OVERHEAD POWER LINES REALLY AFFECT GNSS HEIGHTS? A TU DUBLIN DISSERTATION HAS SOME ANSWERS.

A field test of two medium-voltage lines found no clear loss of vertical accuracy – but it did expose something more useful about short occupations, local conditions, and the value of independent checks.

A familiar doubt in the field

Every surveyor has had a GNSS observation that just did not seem to look right. The receiver reports a fixed solution, and the horizontal position looks convincing, yet the height likes to jump back and forth and up and down while you scratch your hard hat. Beneath overhead power lines, the cables make an obvious suspect. For me, the question began after I recorded a height error of approximately 50mm while working carefully and alone in an open field beneath an overhead medium-voltage cable. It bothered me for years, particularly because I remembered something similar happening earlier in my surveying career. It is easy to assume the lines must be interfering with the satellite signals.

That suspicion prompted my final year dissertation in Geospatial Surveying at Technological University Dublin. I wanted to test a practical question: does proximity to medium-voltage overhead power lines measurably affect GNSS vertical accuracy when using the Network Real-Time Kinematic (NRTK) workflow surveyors use every day?

Height deserves particular attention because GNSS satellites are above the receiver rather than evenly distributed around it. The geometry for determining elevation is therefore weaker than for horizontal position. NRTK combines satellite observations with corrections from a network of permanent reference stations, allowing a rover to produce centimetre-level co-ordinates in real time.

The speed is transformative, but the co-ordinate remains an estimate shaped by satellite geometry, signal quality, correction delivery and observation technique.[1]

Power lines also sit among better-known sources of difficulty, including atmospheric delay, obstruction, multipath from nearby objects, and short-term instability after a receiver fixes. The challenge was to distinguish any cable effect from normal field measurement noise.

Designing a test that resembled real work

The test site was an open field crossed at right angles by two overhead routes, one carrying 10kV and the other 38kV. Survey points were established directly beneath the lines and at increasing radial distances. If the cables degraded the solution, the largest vertical errors should occur near them and reduce further away.

Two GNSS receivers were used with SmartNet NRTK corrections. At each position, two rounds of GNSS observations were carried out approximately one hour apart. Each round consisted of a 180-epoch time-averaged observation, lasting three minutes at one observation per second, followed by a rapid

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The test site was an open field crossed at right angles by two overhead routes.

NRTK observation of 30 measurements. The rapid method represented the shorter occupations commonly used by surveyors and engineers for routine topographical surveys or as-built work.

The results from the GNSS receivers were very statistically confident, but this internal confidence still needed checking. An independent control network was therefore established using a total station, with reference heights transferred to each test point. The GNSS-derived heights were then statically and rigorously compared with their corresponding terrestrial values. Root mean square error (RMSE) was used to describe the typical magnitude of the vertical error, standard deviation assessed the consistency of the observations, and paired t-tests were used to compare the longer and rapid observation methods at corresponding points.

The fieldwork supplied one unplanned variable: rain. It rained for practically the entire exercise. The equipment and observations remained usable. It turns out the weather did not noticeably affect the GNSS; it mainly affected the surveyor.

The expected pattern never appeared

Across the test conditions, vertical RMSE values were approximately 2-13mm. Crucially, the largest errors did not consistently occur beneath the power lines. Accuracy did not steadily improve with distance, and there was no clear separation between results near the 10kV and 38kV routes.

A genuine distance-related effect should leave a recognisable footprint: points closest to the cables should repeatedly perform worse. Instead, some higher RMSE values occurred at intermediate distances, including around 40m. That pattern is more consistent with local signal conditions or short-term variability than with interference radiating from the lines. Localised multipath from poles or other nearby objects is one possible explanation. Multipath occurs when a satellite signal reflects before reaching the antenna, so the receiver processes direct and reflected signals. The study did not isolate that mechanism, so it remains an interpretation rather than a finding. It nevertheless shows that the most obvious site feature is not necessarily the one influencing the observation. The finding broadly aligns with earlier studies that reported little or no significant effect from nearby power lines on GNSS positioning or operational performance.[2] It should not be stretched into a claim that power infrastructure can never affect GNSS. This experiment involved two medium-voltage lines, two receivers and one open-field site. Under those tested conditions, cable proximity was not a controlling factor in vertical performance.

Time mattered more than distance

The comparison between observation methods was more revealing. The 180-epoch observations were generally steadier and more consistent than the rapid observations. A longer occupation allows the solution to stabilise and short-term noise to average out; a rapid measurement captures a smaller slice of receiver behaviour.

The statistical outcomes differed across the site. One point group showed a significant difference between the longer and rapid methods, while the other did not. This suggests that additional time can stabilise a result, but its benefit depends on the local signal environment. Three minutes (180 epochs) is not a magic number that improves every point equally.

A fixed solution is essential, but 'fixed' is not a guarantee that every co-ordinate is equally dependable. It means the carrier-phase ambiguities have been resolved; it does not remove multipath, weak geometry, temporary disturbance, a poor set-up or human mistakes.[1] Rapid observations may suit routine detail, but critical finished-floor levels, important drainage connections, deformation points or control stations deserve an occupation strategy matched to their importance. This makes professional judgement especially important: efficient

collection is valuable, but the purpose, tolerance and consequence of each point should determine how much verification it receives independently.

What the numbers mean in practice

The measured errors were within broad ranges expected for high-quality engineering and topographical surveying. SCSI guidance indicates typical survey accuracy of about ±10mm to ±20mm, depending on the project and specification.[3] Results of approximately 2-13mm therefore show that GNSS performed well at this site, including beneath the lines.

That is not permission to accept every displayed co-ordinate. Accuracy must be supported by control, method, and verification. A receiver's estimated precision is useful diagnostic information, but it is not an independent check. Stronger evidence comes from redundancy: repeat the observation, change the time, or satellite geometry, close onto known control, or verify an important height by total station or level where the tolerance justifies it.

The total-station control had an estimated precision of about ±5mm. It was adequate for identifying practical trends, although differences approaching that magnitude must be treated cautiously. No field experiment is free from uncertainty, including the reference used to judge another instrument.

For surveyors working near overhead infrastructure, the practical message is reassuring. Medium-voltage lines do not automatically make GNSS unusable. Best practice would be to establish and verify control, observe a known point before starting, and check it again during or after the work. Routine detail could use rapid fixed observations, while critical levels would receive longer or repeated occupations. Unexpected results should be assessed against the whole site environment rather than blamed automatically on the cables.

The value of testing our assumptions

The project began with a suspicion about power lines and ended with a broader lesson about surveying judgement. Technology makes co-ordinate collection remarkably fast, but speed does not remove the need to understand how a result was produced. The instrument supplies a position; the surveyor decides whether it is sufficiently supported for its intended use.

There is value in testing explanations that circulate within a profession. When a measurement behaves badly, we naturally connect it to the most visible feature. A structured experiment forces that explanation to compete with evidence. Here, distance from the lines did not explain the results; occupation duration, repeatability and local conditions offered a more convincing account.

Further research across multiple sites, higher-voltage lines, urban environments and additional receivers would show how widely these findings apply. Horizontal performance and longer occupations could also be compared, while the intermediate distance points merit more detailed investigation for multipath.

For now, the conclusion is practical rather than dramatic. GNSS delivered reliable vertical positions near the tested lines, and the cables were not the villain they first appeared to be. The greater risk was assuming that a quick fixed solution required no further thought.



GNSS delivered reliable vertical positions near the tested lines.

When height matters, match the observation time to its importance and provide an independent route back to control. That remains good surveying practice – under power lines, in open fields and, unfortunately, in the rain.

References

1. Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. Use of GNSS in Land Surveying and Mapping (3rd ed.). 2023.
2. Noack P, Eder D, Bleisteiner N. Influence of electric power lines on the reception of GNSS signals in automatic steering systems. *Landtechnik* 2018;73(3):52-58.
3. Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland. Measured Surveys of Land: Guidance Note (1st ed.). 2022.



GLÓR GLAS GAELACH

An English translation of this article is available on page 37.

IS BAINISTEOIR INBHUANAITHEACHTA AGUS CLÁIR STRAITÉISEACHA LE HÚDARÁS NA GAELTACHTA Í MARION NÍ CHADHAIN. TUGANN SÍ LÉARGAS AR AN OBAIR ATÁ Á DÉANAMH AG AN ÚDARÁS CHUN POBAIL GHAELTACHTA A CHAOMHNÚ AGUS A NEARTÚ.

Is as Cois Fharraige, Connemara í Marion Ní Chadhain, agus bhí a fhios aici ó aois óg nach raibh sí ag iarraidh a bheith sáinnithe taobh thiar de dheasc gach lá. Tar éis Dioplóma i mBainistiú Maoine a fháil, d'imigh Marion léi chun céim i mBainistíocht Eastát a bhaint amach in Ollscoil Oxford Brookes. Thaitin an staidéar thar cionn le Marion: "Bhí an t-ádh orm. Bhíomar taobh amuigh, ag breathnú ar fhoirgnimh agus a leithéid. Fuaireamar léargas ar thaobh tráchtála na maoine". Fad is a bhí Marion ag staidéar, fuair sí taithí oibre in Údarás na Gaeltachta i rith na saoire samhraidh: "Bhí deis agam an staidéar a chur i gcomparáid leis an obair go luath i mo shaol gairme – bhí sé an-réadúil. Tá maoin an Údaráis scaipthe ar fud na seacht gcontae Gaeltachta. Bíonn muid ag déileáil le comhlachtaí beaga agus móra mar thionóntaí. Tá sé ríthábhachtach go bhfuil muid ag cur seirbhísí ar ard chaighdeán ar fáil dóibh – thuig mé an píosa sin an-luath".

Tar éis na hOllscoile, chuaigh Marion ar ais ag obair leis an Údarás ar scéim oiliúna do chéimithe. Toisc nach raibh aon suirbhéirí ag obair ann ag an am, shocraigh an tÚdarás meantóir a bheith aici ó Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta an Atlantaigh (OTA) chun an APC a chur i gcrích: "Rinne an tÚdarás infheistíocht mhór i mo chuid oiliúna agus rinne siad cinnte go raibh mé ag fáil oiliúna den scoth. Tá mé an-bhuíoch".

Ina dhiaidh sin, chaith Marion níos mó ná 10 mbliana ag obair i Londain le roinnt comhlachtaí maoine, ag sainfheidhmiú i miondíol 'big box' – earnáil a bhí nua ag an am: "Boom times a bhí ann, agus bhí go leor oibre maithe thall ansin. Bhíomar ar fad ag brú chun cinn lena chéile. Fuair mé taithí iontach, caidreamh an-mhaith, agus go leor cairde". D'fhill Marion ar Éirinn agus thug sí faoi mháistreacht i Straitéis, Nuálaíocht agus Bainistiú Daoine. Tar éis tréimhse i rannóg maoine IDA Ireland, tháinig post suirbhéireachta suas san Údarás i gCois Fharraige i 2020, agus díreach mar sin bhí Marion ar ais san áit ar thosaigh sí amach. Nuair a bunaíodh Rannóg Inbhuanaitheachta san eagraíocht i 2025, ceapadh Marion ina ról reatha. Clúdaíonn a cuid oibre réimse leathan tionscnamh, ó obair i dtreo spriocanna 2030 go dtí an tionscnamh straitéiseach An Ghaeltacht Ghlas, chomh maith le deontais agus treoir a thabhairt do chomhlachtaí: "Tá muid ag déanamh chuile iarracht tacú le comhlachtaí agus an pobail agus iad ag déanamh a ndícheall ar son an chomhshaoil. Déanaimid maoiniú ar eagrachtaí forbartha pobail, agus ar 33 comharchumann thart timpeall na Gaeltachta. Tá obair fíorthábhachtach á bhaint amach acu siúd, chomh maith leis na comhlachtaí eile atá ag tabhairt fúthu sa Ghaeltacht".

Cúrsaí tithíochta

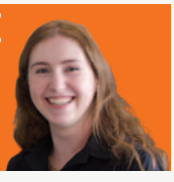
Mórphíosa d'obair Marion ná Plean Tithíochta an Údaráis a chur chun cinn. De réir Dhaonáireamh 2022, tá thart ar 6,160 teach folamh sna ceantair Ghaeltachta – sin 11% den stoc tithíochta iomlán. Ceann de na príomhaidhmeanna sa Phlean ná an líon sin a laghdú: "Ba bhreá linn go mbeadh laghdú 10% ar a laghad ar an uimhir sin laistigh de thrí go cúig bliana. Táimid ag obair go dian chun infheistíocht a dhéanamh san infreastruchtúr agus tithíocht inacmhainne a chur ar fáil ar bhealach amháin nó ar bhealach eile, trí chomhpháirtíocht, comhoibriú, agus ag tarraingt airde ar na deiseanna atá anseo. Tá an tÚdarás ag obair leis na Comhairlí Contae agus le haon Chomhlacht Ceadaithe Tithíochta a bhfuil spéis aige sa Ghaeltacht. Caithfimid a chinntiú go bhfuil glór lárnach ag an nGaeltacht sna pleananna contae agus sna polaisaithe náisiúnta, agus go bhfaighidh an Ghaeltacht a cion féin d'aon infheistíocht".

Luann Marion deacrachtaí ar leith a bhaineann le teach a athchóiriú sna ceantair seo: "Tá ceisteanna ann maidir le probháid. Tá dúshláin le fóntais phoiblí ar nós córais uisce, pleanáil agus zónáil. Ach táimid anseo leis an fuinneamh a thabhairt, an próiseas a éascú – chun a chinntiú nach mbeidh na fadhbanna céanna ag an gcéad ghlúin eile". Tá an fhoireann an-tiomanta, a deir Marion: "Má tá duine ag féachaint ar mhaoin chun gnó a bhunú sa Ghaeltacht, is féidir leis a bheith cinnte go bhfuil muid ag obair ar son na cúise. Táimid dóchasach go bhfuil daoine ag iarraidh a ndícheall a dhéanamh, an teanga a labhairt, agus fanacht sa Ghaeltacht. Tá muinín againn go n-éireoidh linn". Beidh sí ag tabhairt cabhair don SCSI a smaointe a scaipeadh i nGaeilge: "Tá mé ag súil go mór leis – rud maith é don Ghaeilge, don larthar, go bhfuil glór glas Gaelach le chloisteáil".



Creideann Marion go láidir i bhfoghlaim fadsaoil, agus tá an-suim aici sa chóitseáil. Is moltóir í ar na Irish Construction Excellence Awards, agus ina cuid ama saor bíonn sí ag tacú leis na healaíona trí Ghaeilge. Tá iníon aon bhliain déag d'aois aici: "Faoi láthair mothaím beagáinín cosúil le seirbhís tacsaí, ag dul chuig cluichí camógaíochta, peil agus a leithéid! An geimhreadh seo tá mé chun tabhairt faoi chúpla rud mé féin, agus tá sé i gceist agam cur isteach ar mo Chomhaltacht (FSCSI) go gairid – ar aghaidh linn!"

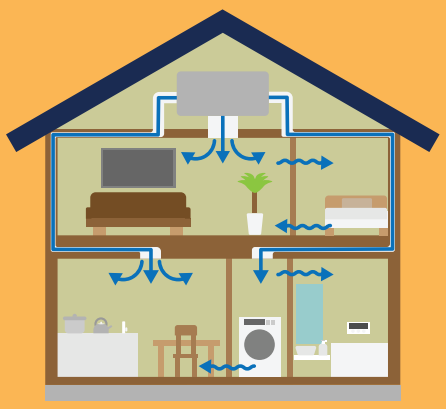
SURVEYOR PROFILE



Caoimhe Coolican
Copy editor and journalist,
Think Media Ltd

DWELLING ON RETROFITS

GROWING EVIDENCE INDICATES THAT VENTILATION INSTALLED IS NOT NECESSARILY VENTILATION ACHIEVED.



Indoor air quality sits at the intersection of health, comfort and energy policy, yet we continue to treat ventilation as a specification rather than a performance outcome. Regulatory compliance is typically demonstrated through the installation and commissioning of systems designed to deliver prescribed airflow rates. Once installed, the system is largely assumed to be delivering the intended level of performance. However, growing evidence from indoor air quality and retrofit research suggests that this assumption is not always justified. Ventilation installed is not necessarily ventilation achieved.

This distinction matters because indoor air quality is ultimately a pollutant exposure management challenge. Dwellings are exposed to both indoor and outdoor pollution sources. Occupants generate contaminants through breathing, cooking, showering, and other everyday activities, while construction materials and furnishings can emit a range of pollutants over extended periods. Outdoor air can also introduce particulate matter, traffic-related emissions, and other contaminants into the indoor environment. The purpose of ventilation is therefore not simply to move air, but to manage pollutant concentrations through the dilution and removal of contaminants while minimising exposure to pollutants from outside.

Following the evidence

The evidence is remarkably consistent. An energy retrofit is not inherently detrimental to indoor air quality, but increasing airtightness without effective ventilation frequently results in elevated concentrations of pollutants and moisture. Studies have reported increases in carbon dioxide, formaldehyde, radon, and other contaminants where air exchange rates decline following a retrofit. Conversely, projects that combine improved airtightness with effective mechanical ventilation generally achieve better indoor environmental outcomes. The critical question is how the effectiveness of that ventilation is established. Post-occupancy studies have identified cases where ventilation systems fail to achieve their intended airflow rates in practice, despite being installed and commissioned in accordance with design requirements. Such findings highlight the gaps that can exist between ventilation specified, ventilation installed, and ventilation ultimately delivered.

This exposes a fundamental weakness in how ventilation is currently assessed. Compliance is typically demonstrated at handover, yet pollutant generation and exposure are continuous and highly variable throughout the life of a building. Occupancy patterns change, families grow, working from home habits emerge, maintenance is neglected, filters become blocked, and controls are overridden. A system that satisfies its design intent on day one may not be delivering adequate indoor air quality years later.

More fundamentally, ventilation demand is inherently variable because pollutant generation is inherently variable. The critical issue is not whether ventilation rates change, but whether they change in response to pollutant loads. Airflow in naturally ventilated dwellings is largely governed by external conditions, while mechanical systems commonly operate at predetermined rates or schedules. In neither case is there an inherent assurance that ventilation provision aligns with pollutant generation or occupant exposure.

Ventilation that responds

Therefore, the objective is not ventilation that changes, but ventilation that responds. In dwellings where pollutant loads vary continuously, ventilation performance depends on the ability of the system to align ventilation provision with ventilation need. Without appropriate sensing, control and verification, there is no assurance that the ventilation delivered is the ventilation required. A responsive strategy is only as effective as the information used to determine ventilation demand.

The future of ventilation must therefore be performance based rather than prescription based. Success should be judged not by installed airflow capacity but by delivered indoor air quality. Continuous monitoring, verification and intelligent modulation should become routine. Ventilation performance first should become a universal principle. Ventilation systems should also be treated as critical dwelling services that require periodic inspection, maintenance, and performance verification throughout their operational lives, to ensure that designed airflow rates and indoor air quality outcomes continue to be achieved in practice.

The question is no longer whether a system has been installed, commissioned and signed off, but whether it consistently delivers acceptable indoor air quality in use. If adequacy cannot be demonstrated against real pollutant loads, it remains an assumption rather than a fact. Ultimately, unless performance is measured and verified, indoor air quality will remain a compliance exercise rather than a demonstrable outcome.

THE LAST WORD

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A GREEN IRISH VOICE

MARION NÍ CHADHAIN IS SUSTAINABILITY AND STRATEGIC PROGRAMMES MANAGER AT ÚDARÁS NA GAELTACHTA. SHE PROVIDES A SNAPSHOT OF THE WORK THEY DO TO PRESERVE AND STRENGTHEN GAELTACHT COMMUNITIES.

Marion Ní Chadhain is from Cois Fharraige in Connemara, and she knew from a young age that she didn't want to be stuck behind a desk every day. After completing a Diploma in Property Management at Atlantic Technological University (ATU; then Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology), she set off to undertake a degree in Estate Management at Oxford Brookes University. Marion enjoyed her studies enormously: "I was very lucky. We were out and about, looking at different buildings and so on. We gained insight into the commerciality of property". While she was studying, Marion was able to get work experience in Údarás na Gaeltachta during the summer holidays: "I had the chance to compare what I was studying with work early in my professional life – it was very practical. The Údarás's property is spread out across the seven Gaeltacht counties. We deal with big and small businesses as tenants. It's essential that we're making services and support of a high standard available to them – I understood that part very early on".

After university, Marion went back to work with the Údarás through a graduate training scheme. Because there were no surveyors working there at the time, the organisation arranged for Marion to have a mentor from ATU in order to complete the APC: "The Údarás made a big investment in my development, and they made certain that I was getting excellent training. I'm very grateful".

After obtaining her APC, Marion spent over a decade in London, working for a variety of property firms and specialising in 'big box' retailing – a sector that was new at the time: "It was boom times, and there was a lot of great work over there. We were all pushing forward together. I got amazing experience, made great connections and lots of friends". Upon returning to Ireland, she completed a master's in Strategy, Innovation and People Management.

After a spell as a property consultant with IDA Ireland, a surveying job opened up in the Údarás in Cois Fharraige in 2020, and just like that Marion was right back where she started out. When a sustainability department was established in 2025, Marion was appointed to her current role. Her work covers an expansive array of projects, from working towards the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals to the strategic initiative An Gaeltacht Ghlas, as well as providing grants and guidance to businesses: "We are making every effort to support businesses and communities as they do their best to protect the environment. We provide funding for community development organisations, and for 33 co-ops all over the Gaeltacht regions. They are doing really important work, as are all of the businesses that are setting up in the Gaeltacht".

Housing matters

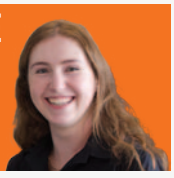
A large part of Marion's job is to advance Údarás na Gaeltachta's housing plan. According to the 2022 census, there are roughly 6,160 vacant houses in the Gaeltacht regions – equating to 11% of their total housing stock. One of the primary aims of the housing plan is to reduce that figure: "We would love to have at least a 10% reduction of that number within three to five years. We're working hard on investing in infrastructure and making affordable housing available in the Gaeltacht in one way or another, through partnerships, co-operation, and drawing attention to the opportunities that exist here. The Údarás is working with the County Councils and with any Approved Housing Body (AHB) that has an interest in the Gaeltacht. We have to ensure that the Gaeltacht has a central voice in county development plans and national policies, and that the Gaeltacht gets its fair share of any investment".

Marion outlines some of the particular difficulties that come with refurbishing houses in these areas: "There are questions around probate. There are challenges with public utilities like water systems, and with zoning and planning. But we are here to provide the energy, to simplify the process – to make sure that the next generation doesn't have the same problems". They're a very driven team, she says: "If someone is looking at a property to set up a business in the Gaeltacht, they can be sure that we're working for the cause. We're optimistic that people want to do their best, to speak the language, and stay in the Gaeltacht. We're confident that we'll succeed". Marion will be helping the SCSI to spread its message through Irish: "I'm really looking forward to it – it's a good thing for the Irish language, for the west, that there's a green Irish voice to be heard".



Marion is a big believer in lifelong learning, and she has a special interest in coaching. She is a judge for the Irish Construction Excellence Awards, and in her spare time she likes to support the arts in Irish. She has an 11-year-old daughter: "At the moment, I feel a bit like a taxi service, going to camogie matches, football, and the rest! This winter I'm going to take up a few things myself, and I plan to apply for my Fellowship soon – here we go!

SURVEYOR PROFILE



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