SURVEYORS JOURNAL

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2022

SCSI HELPING HOMEOWNERS

SCSI Chartered property, land and construction surveyors

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

GOVERNMENT HOUSING SCHEMES

ADJUDICATION FOR UNPAID FEES

SUPPLY CHAIN COST ANALYSIS

RICS

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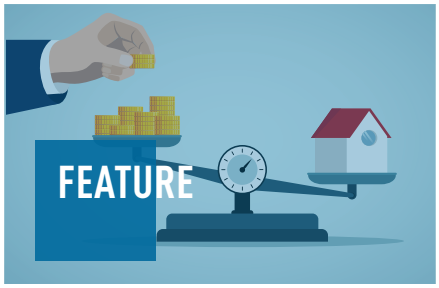

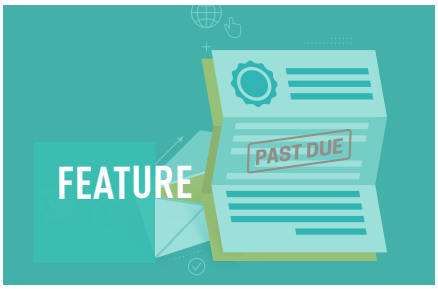

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WE NEED TO BE AMBITIOUS

THE ROLE OF THE SCSI, AND THOSE WHO VOLUNTEER ON BEHALF OF THE SOCIETY, IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER.

Since becoming SCSI President, the word 'crisis' has crept into a lot of member narratives on the current construction market: the war in Ukraine, inflation, the cost of living, energy, housing, and now a threat of a global recession looming.

Despite these many challenges, we need to remain ambitious and draw on the resourcefulness of the SCSI over the coming months. I am passionate about the changes that need to be made to address climate action, reforms to policy, procurement, planning, investment, technology and innovation, and I look towards the SCSI to assist me in realising those changes.

Over the years, I have gained insights on similar pressing matters from past authors and contributors to the *Surveyors Journal*, and therefore I would thoroughly encourage members to do the same. It's more than just the knowledge that you gain from an informal CPD, but also new ways of working and developing in order to meet the challenges we encounter as a profession. Don't wait until you become an 'expert' in these areas before you start to bring these back to the way you work.

Grateful

Given the season, it is timely to be grateful for what we have. As President, I'm extremely grateful for the incredible team of volunteers who play a vital role in sharing their knowledge and expertise with the SCSI. For example, publications like the 'Guide to Engaging a Building Contractor' (featured on page 24 of this edition) provide vital professional insights for consumers, which is a valuable contribution in the public interest. I have been involved in the SCSI for many years in various roles – as an APC assessor, and on various working groups and committees – so I have a great appreciation for the time and effort volunteers have given. My sincerest thank you to those members.

Our collective voice offers a diverse perspective at each stage of the built environment, mixing public and private sector thinking, and regional experiences. Over the past several months, it has been my honour and privilege to share the insights of SCSI members in the Oireachtas with Deputies and Senators grappling with these same challenges (see page 11).

The regard with which our contribution to the public debate as independent experts is held, means that we as members are needed by the SCSI more than ever. In the Last Word (page 34), our CEO Shirley Coulter sets out a new initiative, My SCSI, which is a call for your support and the benefits it can bring. The continued success of the SCSI is in your hands, so can I encourage you to ask what more you can do with your SCSI membership in 2023.

I wish you and yours a safe, happy Christmas and New Year.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Kevin James
SCSI President

NEW ERA

THE *SURVEYORS JOURNAL* IS INCREASING ITS FREQUENCY AND REACH.

The housing crisis continues and, not surprisingly, it has been a continuing feature in many recent editions of the *Surveyors Journal*. To be sure, it is a very complex problem, with solutions put forward from many quarters, often offered by those with an underlying wider political agenda. Some of these could not be implemented without a wider reformation of society or Government finances, which would probably attract a majority of voters.

The Government's response, Housing for All, is multifaceted and properly focused on increasing supply, which all surveyors know only too well is fundamentally constrained by the capacity of the construction industry, an underlying reality that would constrain any government proposing to deal with housing.

Housing for All puts forward a range of supports, six of which are helpfully set out by Marguerite Boyle in this edition (page 16). Having these set out concisely and in one place will be of assistance to surveyors and their clients responding to queries about what is available by way of support to those seeking housing.

Also of interest, I am sure, will be Kevin Hollingsworth's piece on the SCSI's guide to engaging a contractor (page 24). This guide will be of great use to those undertaking work on their property, which can be a fraught exercise ameliorated by getting the contract right from the start. This is a good example of *pro bono* work undertaken by members of the Society.

In recent years the SCSI has provided valued research reports and helpful guidance to both the Government and the public. This has elevated the reputation of the Society, from which all members benefit. The increased workload involved in providing these drives the need to expand the pool of members volunteering their expertise and experience, which can be difficult at a time when the construction and property industries are very busy. To help this, in the Last Word (page 34), SCSI CEO Shirley Coulter points to the My SCSI campaign, and asks members to consider getting involved. Anyone who has done so will testify as to how rewarding this can be.

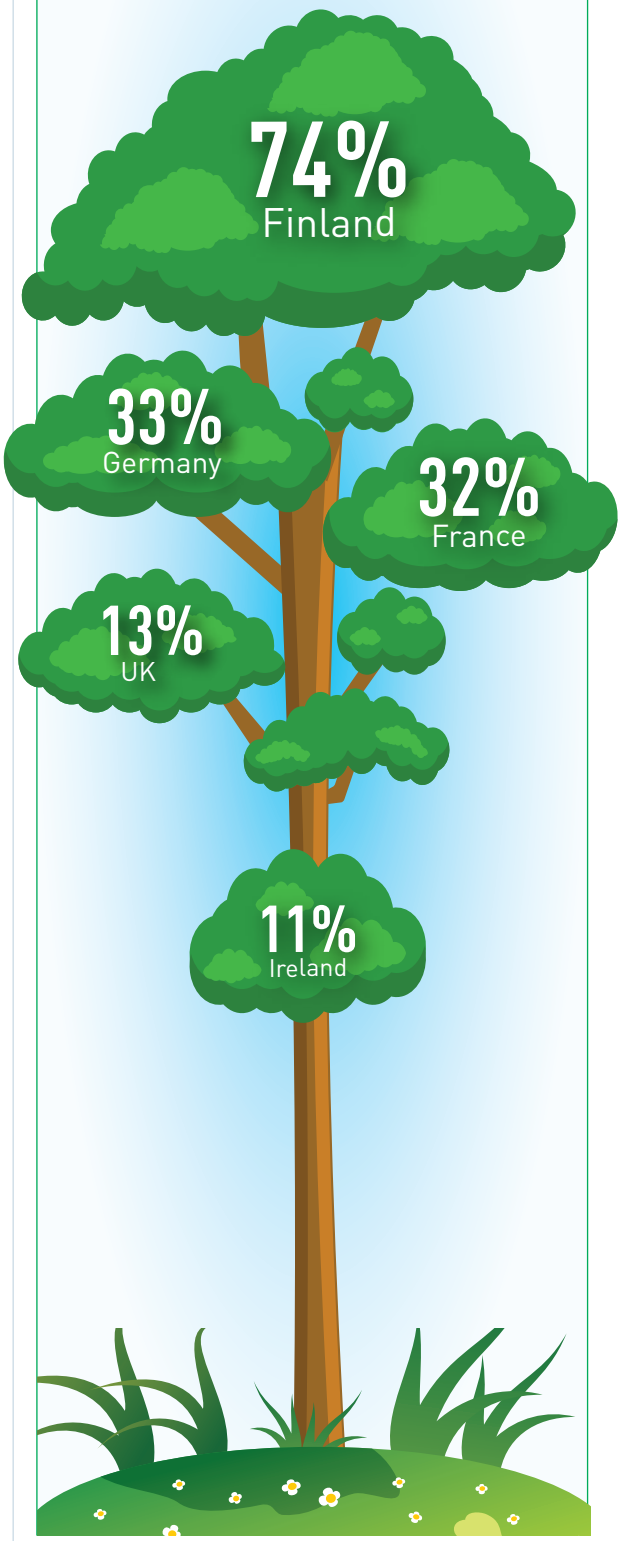
As part of this continuing effort to bring the work of surveyors and the SCSI to a wider audience, and to increase the relevance and impact of the *Surveyors Journal*, from next year we will be increasing the number of editions of the *Surveyors Journal* published annually from four to six. Two of these editions will be special editions that showcase particular areas of expertise and particular work from the SCSI. We look forward to sharing these with you, and welcome your comments/suggestions.

EDITORIAL

Tom Dunne
Editor

TOTAL FORESTED LAND AREA – 2020

Forest cover in selected European countries.



Source: https://cdn.forestresearch.gov.uk/2022/09/FRFS022.pdf

NEW FACES AND PLACES AT HOLLIS

Callum Macrae.

Mark Kelly.

The new Hollis office at South Point Building in Dublin 2.

International, independent real estate consultancy Hollis has welcomed Mark Kelly and Callum Macrae to its graduate programme in Dublin. The company has also relocated to a new office in the South Point Building in Dublin 2.

Mark achieved a BSc (Hons) in Geographic Science/Geomatics from Technological University Dublin. He joins the Dublin office as a surveyor specialising in measured surveys. Callum achieved a BSc (Hons) in Building Surveying from Glasgow Caledonian University and joins the Dublin team as a building surveyor.

Callum and Mark are part of Hollis' 2022 graduate cohort – its largest to date – with 30 graduates, one apprentice and five placement students recruited across 11 locations in the UK and Ireland.

Director and Head of Hollis in Dublin, Tony Grant, said: "Hollis has a long history of investing in and training the next generation of real estate professionals and our early careers programme is a great source of pride for the business".

Moving on up

The company says that its move to the modern South Point Building in Grand Canal Dock aligns with Hollis' adoption of hybrid working and prioritising the evolving needs of employees in the post-pandemic world. According to Tony Grant: "At Hollis, we are committed to providing a positive work environment that nurtures our people's growth and development. I am proud of how we have all adapted to new ways of working and to embed this further, we have taken this strategic decision to relocate to a new agile office space".

KRA WELCOMES NEW APPOINTMENTS

KRA Visionary Project Partners and KRA Renewables have announced four new appointments. Entering the new year, the companies state that they are looking forward to working alongside these new appointees on future projects and supporting them further in their careers:

- Jamie Franklin – Surveyor;
- Aisling Dunne – Surveyors Administration Assistant;
- Conor McLoughlin – Solar Energy Engineer; and,
- Wangechi Cynthia Wanjau – Sustainability Consultant.

New KRA team members (from left): Jamie Franklin; Conor McLoughlin; and, Wangechi Cynthia Wanjau.

Collaboration is vital

The publishing of Ireland's road map to decarbonise its built environment has led to an increased focus on the necessity for collaboration between the different subsets of building experts. Traditionally siloed firmly within their own disciplines, KRA states it is now clear that there is a distinct need for surveyors and engineers to collaborate across all stages of property development.

A holistic approach to construction, refurbishment and retrofit projects, and working together to create mutually beneficial partnerships between surveyors and engineers, can improve the design team's ability to meet the client's requirements, comply with relevant standards and achieve design coherence, according to KRA. The company believes this will result in excellent building performance and buildings that will adequately meet the needs of their occupants for many years to come.

As a result of this integrated approach, stakeholders can reap the benefits of cost-effective and realistic projects, solid foundational designs, increased certainty in terms of building performance, and improved design and construction systems, particularly when dealing with traditional buildings. A holistic approach challenges all professionals to understand and embrace different perspectives and push the boundaries of their fields.

NEXUS BALL RAISES OVER €3,000 FOR FOCUS IRELAND

Some 150 young professionals attended our 2022 Annual Nexus Ball, which took place on October 15 in the fabulous Morrison Hotel in Dublin. After two years, it was fantastic to see a sold-out return of this annual event for Nexus, which is the SCSI's network for young professionals.

A primary aim of the Nexus Committee is to give back to the community and make a difference. The proceeds from the Nexus Ball ticket sales and raffle were therefore donated to our charity partner, Focus Ireland.

We are delighted to share that this year's event raised over €3,000, bringing the total SCSI Shine a Light fundraising to €3,675. Thank you to all who donated to help support families experiencing homelessness in Ireland.

Our thanks also to the Nexus Committee for their hard work in organising this memorable event, and special thanks to our sponsors, Hollis and Cushman & Wakefield, for supporting this year's charity ball.

Wondering about Nexus? Nexus is the SCSI's network of young professionals. If you would like to build your network, give back to your community, and make a difference, please get in touch to find out how you can get involved in the Nexus Committee by contacting Ruth Comerford-Morris at ruth@scsi.ie.

Teams from BidX1 and Knight Frank were among 150 young professionals at this year's Nexus Ball. Standing (from left): Ian McCarthy, Jamie Fallon and Isabelle Crean of BidX1; and, Eoghan Flanagan, Daniel Phelan and Sean Cadogan of Knight Frank. Seated (from left): Kevin Keogh and Ben McArdle of BidX1; and, Hayley Campbell, Molly McGuinness, Ailbhe O'Sullivan, and Cianne Cunningham of Knight Frank.

INTO THE FRAY

Andrew Farrell of Block Angel.

Block Angel states that 80% of owners' management companies in Ireland are underfunded. The Irish start-up is a software that aims to solve the financial crisis in service charges by addressing non-payment issues associated. The company says that Block Angel is taking a modern, cloud-based approach to the communication issues between agents, property owners, residents, and community associations. Andrew Farrell of Block Angel says: "Less than half of people pay their charges on time and 20% don't pay at all. Many are reluctant to pay because they don't understand what they are paying for. Also, collection methods are no longer relevant or appropriate. Block Angel transforms the member experience by presenting information in a more relevant way to demonstrate value, offering a payment gateway that encourages payment with minimum friction, and reduces service charge arrears and admin".

PMFM 2022

At PMFM 2022 (from left): Enda McGuane, LDA; Kate English, Cushman & Wakefield; Shirley Coulter, CEO, SCSI; Rachel McGinley, CBRE; and, Kevin James, President, SCSI.

Over 120 property and facilities management professionals attended this year's PMFM Conference, 'Leading and Adapting to Changing Needs', which featured speakers from across the sectors and presentations on topics ranging from apartment defects to environmental, social and governance (ESG) requirements, retrofitting, and more.

Special thanks to our exhibitors APCOA PARKING Holdings GmbH, OOHPod, GlenEV Technologies, and FFM Services Ltd, and to our sponsor, the *Irish Independent*, for supporting this year's conference.

TONY SMYTH RIP

On September 20, former SCS CEO Tony Smith passed away peacefully in his sleep. The SCSI expressed condolences to his friends and family, particularly his wife Maureen. Having joined the SCS in 1983 as CEO, Tony enjoyed a long and distinguished career spanning 25 years. Under Tony's guidance, the SCS grew from strength to strength, increasing its membership from fewer than 500 in 1993 to over 2,000 members in 2008. Tony's guidance and many years of service to the profession and the Society made a lasting impact for which we are all grateful. In 2008, he became the first Registrar for Quantity Surveyors and Building Surveyors under the Building Control Act 2007. His invaluable contribution to the profession was recognised at the 2008 AGM when the President awarded him Honorary Membership of the Society. Rest in peace.

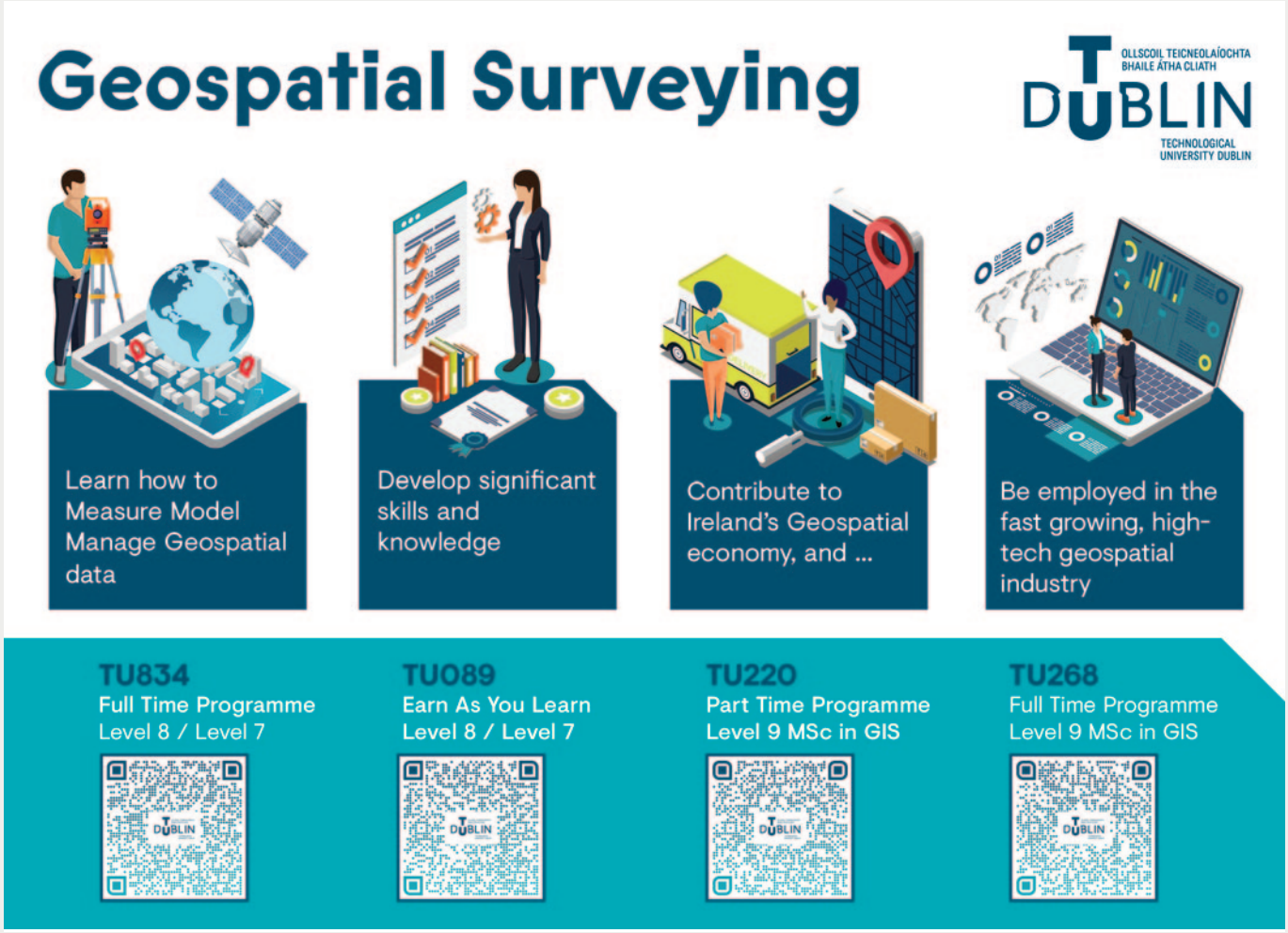
CHECK YOUR HOME INSURANCE

We're delighted to have published the 2022 House Rebuilding Guide. The report identified that national rebuild costs have increased by an average of 21% over the past 12 months. Our new guide and updated online calculator provide valuable guidance for consumers across Ireland looking to check that their homes are adequately insured. The guide covers estate-type homes only, and it's important that users of the rebuild report and calculator are aware of this and use the rebuilding information appropriately.

Kevin Brady, Chair of the Quantity Surveying Professional Group Committee, underlined the need for homeowners to review their house insurance: "Homeowners need to ensure that their house is adequately insured so that in the event of a total or partial loss situation, i.e., a room fire, they are covered under their insurance policy when reinstating or rebuilding. Rebuild costs for a three-bed semi-detached, the most common house type in the country, have increased by between €42,000 and €56,000 depending on where you live".

We encourage members to check their own home insurance coverage, but also to share the latest figures with clients. For those doing residential valuations, this is a valuable tool for reinstatement values, and the print function requires that you be signed in to your member account to use it. A key purpose of the SCSI is to harness the collective knowledge of our membership to provide essential advice in the public interest. Thank you to all the quantity surveying members who submitted data for this year's survey. Without your contribution, this report would not be possible.

Find out more or check your coverage at scsi.ie/calculator.



NEW CONSUMER GUIDE

We're delighted to have launched our latest consumer guide 'Engaging the Services of a Building Contractor | A Checklist for Homeowners', which members can share to support clients and homeowners considering renovation projects.

It was fantastic to have Claire Irwin, Chartered Quantity Surveyor and resident QS on RTÉ'S *Room to Improve*, and Kevin Hollingsworth, Chartered Building Surveyor and SCSI Second Vice President, launch this latest guide and represent the profession across news and media channels.

This guide is aimed at homeowners carrying out building works or renovations to their property, which could include adding an extension, fitting a new kitchen or bathroom, converting a garage or attic, making energy updates, rewiring the house, re-slating a roof, or fitting solar panels.

This consumer guide is designed to assist homeowners by providing an overview of some steps and considerations to bear in mind, with a helpful checklist of questions the homeowner should ask prospective building contractors.

At the launch of the SCSI's consumer guide 'Engaging the Services of a Building Contractor | A Checklist for Homeowners', were (from left): Claire Irwin, Chartered Quantity Surveyor and resident QS on RTÉ'S *Room to Improve*; Kevin Hollingsworth, Chartered Building Surveyor and SCSI Second Vice President; and, Shirley Coulter, SCSI CEO.

TAKE YOUR CAREER TO THE NEXT LEVEL

Over the last few months, we have been upgrading our member onboarding application experience. Now, all of our membership applications, from student to associate to our various Chartered Membership applications, can be completed online. Candidates can now easily work on their online applications and submit when complete.
Start your journey to becoming a Chartered Member of the SCSI and RICS and gain:

1. **Global accreditation:** Achieve professional recognition.
2. **Career development:** Expand your career and earning potential.
3. **Competitive advantage:** Set yourself apart.
4. **Valuable connections:** Build your professional network.
5. **Thought leadership:** Develop your skillset and expertise.

To find out more and start your online application, visit scsi.ie/charteredmember.

Help your team get Chartered

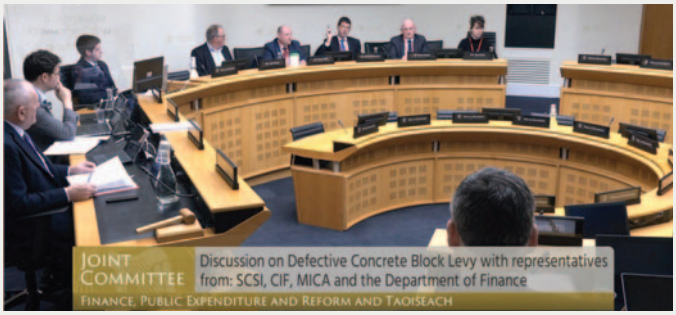
The SCSI education team has met with staff at 28 member firms to support them in starting their APC journeys. Whether you are part of a large firm or a small business, our team is here to support you and your

staff in becoming Chartered and growing your professional skillset. The SCSI partners with companies to provide free, informative workshops designed to educate and inform staff about becoming Chartered and the benefits of becoming active members of the SCSI, whether they are new graduates or hold greater professional experience.

Visit scsi.ie/apcworkshop to book an APC workshop session for your team or get in touch to find out how the SCSI can support you.

GOVERNMENT MUST DRIVE HOUSING COSTS DOWN

In October, SCSI President Kevin James and Past President Micheál Mahon met with the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform, and with the Taoiseach, Micheál Martin TD, to discuss the proposed defective concrete block levy.
Since the levy was proposed in Budget 2023, the SCSI has urged the Government to avoid increasing construction costs at a time of great inflationary pressure and uncertainty. While the move to reduce the levy to 5% and delay its commencement is a step in the right direction, the SCSI emphasised that in order to meet housing demand as outlined in Housing for All, the Government should be focusing on doing everything possible to drive down costs, particularly soft costs.
The SCSI's presentation to the Committee emphasised not only the approximately €700-€1,200 cost increase a levy would add to a three-bed semi-detached home, but also the increase to regeneration projects, office developments, and the €400-€700 per unit increase the levy would add to apartment buildings, which are key to quickly increasing Ireland's housing supply.
We will continue to engage with stakeholders and call on the Government to tackle long-term challenges to housing delivery such as planning, but also address the immediate challenges of inflationary costs in order to ensure a growing, sustainable pipeline of viable and affordable housing development.



SCSI President Kevin James and Past President Micheál Mahon recently addressed the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform.

SCSI President Kevin James presented to the recent Oireachtas Joint Committee meeting.

FINDING YOUR SUSTAINABILITY

TU DUBLIN'S FIRST VICE PRESIDENT OF SUSTAINABILITY, JENNIFER BOYER, SPEAKS ABOUT BEING THE FIRST PERSON TO TAKE ON THIS EXCITING NEW ROLE, AND THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND EDUCATING THE STUDENTS WHO WILL BE SHAPING IT.

When TU Dublin's Vice President of Sustainability, Jennifer Boyer, is asked what surveyors can do to make their practice more sustainable, she recommends finding out what sustainability means for your area of practice: "If you can find a way in that's relevant, whether it's in your daily life at home, or through your work, then you begin to think a little bit more deeply about the areas that you have control of to be able to have impact".

Sustainability cries out for leadership she says, but this leadership doesn't have to be top down: "Look at Greta Thunberg, or look at a whole rake of interesting leaders out there. Leith Sharp is an interesting woman from Harvard, who has had that experience on campus of trying to work with estates teams and academic teams to build in sustainability, but it was through a middle management place. It wasn't from the top. Thinking about the youth voice and youth councils and their proactivity in increasing their power, there's a bottom-up, there's a top-down and there's a middle leadership piece as well. Leadership in sustainability can come from anywhere, and I think that's really empowering".

INTERVIEW

Colm Quinn
Journalist and Sub-Editor,
Think Media

Ripping up the return ticket

Jennifer's background is in architecture and she came to Ireland from the United States in 2001 with a plan to stay for a year and then head back across the Atlantic to work for an architecture firm in New York City. That year became two, and then three, and so on, and she now finds herself as the first person to take on the exciting new role of Vice President of Sustainability at TU Dublin.

The role has given Jennifer insight into how change happens: "We do things differently by doing them together, and having open

WE DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY BY DOING THEM TOGETHER AND HAVING OPEN CONVERSATIONS, WHICH FORM THESE KINDS OF PUBLIC CONTRACTS WHERE WE COMMIT TO MAKING CHANGES.

conversations, which form these kinds of public contracts where we commit to making changes".

Jennifer sees this as a new model of change through engagement, dialogue, debate, and exchange that takes in the viewpoints of everyone: "So it's the students, it's the lecturers, it's the professional bodies, it's industry, it's academic managers, and the resource and budget holders all actually having a say in that conversation and seeing what comes out of it. There's a risk in it, but the reward because of the ownership and being part of that process outweighs it by far".

Taking on a new role, no matter how well defined, is a challenge, but also allows you to be creative: "It became clear that it was a huge opportunity to decide what it could be, how it might work. I looked at the opportunity. I said this is very exciting. It's very daunting, because it's very holistic in what it's trying to do. But a colleague of mine said, 'Sure, why wouldn't you go for it?' As soon as there was a bit of a nudge from a colleague, I just put myself fully into the process".

The role is starting to transform how built environment education operates within the University. Following a workshop with students, TU Dublin revised its Bachelor of Architecture curriculum to embrace sustainability. The main modules, which account for 50% of the programme, all now have UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) learning outcomes, explains Jennifer: "We revised the curriculum to embed sustainability in it, and on the basis of that initial work, we extended the model out to all the schools of architecture nationally. Through this collaboration we saw the potential to use this project to respond to the fact that we've got to fill in the gaps with education. In terms of embedding sustainability into education, industry needs it, society needs it, and our students want it".

Following collaboration with the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI), TU Dublin moved forward into a new phase: "We put forward a proposal through the Higher Education Authority HCI pillar three funding call, which is about enterprise engagement and skills development, and it focused on architecture for climate change. So now we're all engaged in a three-year project, which is funded for €5m, and we're sharing in that funding to mobilise and make needed changes. Our key partner in that is the Royal Institute of Architects. This professional body, and we in response, are working closely together to try and actually update our education plan and policy within the RIAI to reflect how we're doing things on the ground and vice versa".

It is obviously a good thing that universities and their students are thinking deeply about the future and the sustainability of industries and the world, but is this what their future employers really want to see? Jennifer says increasingly this is something that industry is realising is vital: "We get a lot of requests through our partnerships function for education programmes to help companies bring employees through this capacity-building process, and I think it's something that companies have identified that they need, and they don't know how to do it, so university environments and specific expertise can come and help them. I think equally, there's a huge number of companies out there that might only now be realising that there's a wave of change coming. Notwithstanding reporting and other responsibilities that will become legislated, companies are becoming increasingly aware that they need to mobilise their teams to deliver on sustainability commitments. I think we're going to see a huge volume of increased education and capacity building in this space".

The future of the built environment

Jennifer is positive that the future is interdisciplinary: "But having said that, in order to play and contribute in that interdisciplinary conversation, a deep disciplinary basis and foundation is needed. I think you need to have a solid grounding in what your role coming to the table is, whether you're an engineer, surveyor or an architect. You also need that space and that place to collaborate. Because inevitably, the designs are more robust, they're more resilient. They're considered through more lenses".

To facilitate this, Jennifer would like to see students leaving TU Dublin with interpersonal and collaboration skills, along with listening skills, empathy, analysis and critical inquiry: "I think recognising each of the discipline superpowers that are brought to that table for collaborating, and knowing about those, is something that has to come into how we describe and teach people. Just because you're teaching architecture students and you're an architect, it doesn't mean everything has to be seen through that lens".

Asked if this future of collaboration will mean more interdisciplinary firms employing surveyors, architects, and engineers, Jennifer says: "I believe that's a necessary next step and I also think that there are different business models in practice in the industry that also look at research as an integral part of actual capacity within a practice. Interestingly, one of the last cohorts that I taught before taking on this new role was in the Master of Architecture, and it was the role of the professional in practice. The last exercise was to design your firm for the future. What does it look like? Inevitably, the students had a range of disciplines within there".

Adapting the built environment to climate change

Like every part of society, the built environment needs to adapt to minimise its impact on the environment. The first thing that needs to be done is an assessment of the assets that we have, says Jennifer: "The most sustainable building is the one we have now. That's the starting point and then it goes: okay, we recognise the world is changing, a growing population and different needs will still require some level of new development, but that has to be seen in the context of what we already have and being really creative about its optimal use into the future. I think sustainable built environments are ones that people love, so they'll take care of them, so there is this element of affinity to a particular building or an infrastructure at an individual or a community level. Yes, it has to function. Yes, it has to be efficient. It has to be comfortable, but there has to be joy in it as well".

TU Dublin and sustainability

With the job of preparing students for the challenges of the future, comes the responsibility to lead by example in terms of sustainability, and TU Dublin is working hard in this area, explains Jennifer: "Over the next number of years, our education model will come to life through sustainability. We'll be looking at modules that are elective across the University that focus on sustainability. We will be looking at project-based learning or challenge-based learning and large-format modules where disciplines coincide from a range of different faculties, not just within a faculty of, say, engineering and built environment, but you might have somebody from health sciences coming in with social sciences. These will all come into a central module that looks at a challenge from multiple dimensions and actually asks for you to go out into industry and talk to various organisations about how they might do things differently".

This doesn't mean abandoning traditional programmes: "Students have given us feedback that yes, they like structured learning, they like to know what they're signing up for, and they want choice. Students want to know that at the end of their experience they have a degree that is valued in industry and the marketplace, i.e., they'll have a job where they can make a difference. And even within more traditional professions the value of interdisciplinary learning, transversal, and soft skills is essential. Universities have to challenge this space, to ensure that students are prepared for a future world where professional and industry boundaries are blurred".

Working together on sustainability

Collaboration between universities and professional bodies such as the SCSI is vital, and organisations need to invite each other in and have hard conversations about the future, says Jennifer: "Because it's not going to be the same as business as usual. For many of the professional bodies, there's a strong legacy of tradition and I would say conservatism, and so within that we are in a new era. We have volatility all around us and so in order to make really informed decisions about how we practice into the future, there has to be a safe space to have challenging conversations. I think it's in partnership, and I think the more that we can do research projects together, or that we can identify, more importantly, the challenges that we share and then bring all of the different stakeholders, all different generations and viewpoints together on those points, we'll find solutions that work for everybody, that people feel ownership of in having come to those conclusions, and then actually to work together in action".

SUSTAINING HEALTH

Jennifer is passionate about sport, with a particular love for tennis, which she credits for helping her through her studies: "I think as an architect studying in a five-year really intensive course back in the States, I was a little bit unusual in that I didn't sleep overnight and stay up all night in the studio and instead actually dedicated a good portion of my week to the Varsity Women's Tennis Team. I think, really early on, I understood that balance between my performance in academic terms in the studio, and physical health and well-being, and how I couldn't do one well without the other".

Another area Jennifer and her family are interested in is the need for more communication and education around neurodiversity: "I think building a conversation that can be inclusive, non-judgmental, and recognising that not everybody gets to the same point at the same time is of personal interest and huge discussion for me and my family, and I think is increasingly relevant to more and more people".

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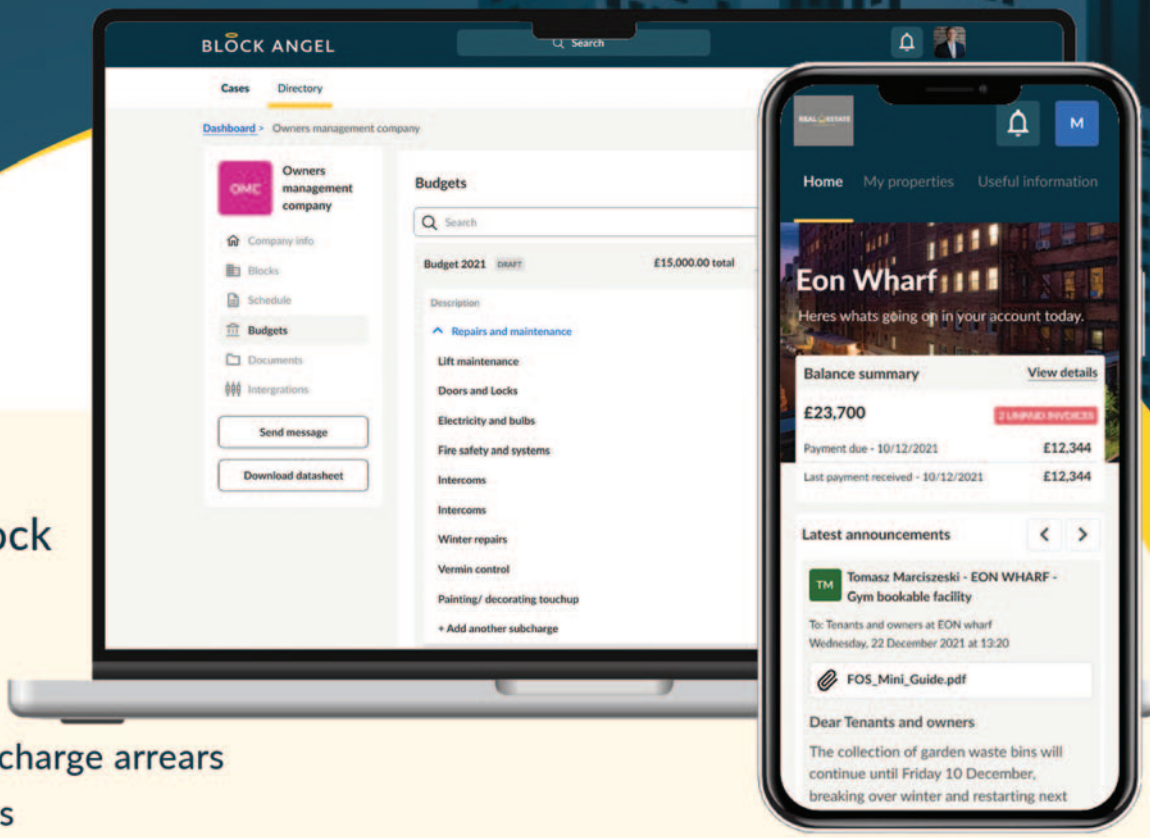

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DOING THE MATHS ON HOUSING SCHEMES

THERE ARE NOW SEVERAL GOVERNMENT-BACKED HOUSING SCHEMES TO ASSIST HOMEOWNERS AND DEVELOPERS.

We are all aware that getting a foot on the property ladder and even renting a home these days is difficult. But there are now several Government-backed supports, which are assisting first-time purchasers, renters and the suppliers of new homes in Ireland. These supports are not just good for purchasers, but for overall supply of desperately needed homes. In addition to homes for private purchase, we also need many more homes for rental. The viability gap for private rental apartments is widening, due to the pace of change within the capital markets and hyperinflation within the construction sector. The funding and liquidity in the market needs to come from sustainable sources, not just the State. Long-term capital from institutional funds should be attracted, and not alienated, as it has been in recent months.

In this article I'm going to outline some views and details on a number of Government house-building supports:

1. Help to Buy.
2. The First Home Scheme.
3. Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund Scheme.
4. Croí Cónaithe (Cities) Scheme.
5. Project Tosaigh.

Help to Buy

Firstly, in terms of purchaser supports, I would like to commend the Government's action with the Help to Buy scheme and welcome its extension. Purchasers and housebuilders need certainty in planning. It's been well documented that this scheme has been a huge success for aspiring homeowners, and indeed from our most recent statistics, it was used by approximately 80% of purchasers through Sherry FitzGerald New Homes in the last five years.

FEATURE

Marguerite Boyle
Director, Sherry FitzGerald

The First Home Scheme

In recent times, the Help to Buy scheme has not been enough to bridge the gap for many first-time purchasers to afford a new-build home. The barrier is not just the deposit, but the maximum mortgage one can avail of. The mortgage lending rules limit the borrowing power of purchasers, which often falls below the price of a new home. We therefore very much welcome the First Home Shared Equity Scheme, which came into effect over the summer. We are already seeing strong uptake in the Scheme, in developments where properties fall below the Scheme's price caps. In the autumn buying season, approximately 20% of purchasers we dealt with used the First Home Scheme, but we do need more stock priced under the caps to meet demand.

The concept is quite simple: the Scheme will finance up to 30% of a new property. The purchaser will either pay back the equity interest in partial redemptions each year, or when they come to sell. As the equity share will be tied to the property (as a percentage), the actual amount will fluctuate, so if the property grows in value, the amount owed will also grow.

Unlike a mortgage, there is no charge for the equity share for the first five years of this Scheme. From the beginning of year six, if the equity share is still in place, a service charge will apply. This is a charge to be paid by the homeowner to the Government for the maintenance and servicing of the Scheme. This service charge will be applied to the equity share from the start of year six onwards at the following rates per annum:

- 1.75% for years 6-15;
- 2.15% for years 16-29; and,
- 2.85% for year 30+.

This means that the homes being purchased are very affordable on a monthly basis. To illustrate the Scheme, we might use the example of a hypothetical purchaser, Anna, as a buyer persona.

Anna is a single professional, earning €80,000 per year, and would like to buy a new one-bedroom apartment in south Co. Dublin, close to where she works. Under the current mortgage lending rules, the maximum amount Anna can borrow is €280,000, falling well short of the values in the area. With the additional equity available through the scheme, as well as the Help to Buy scheme, Anna's purchasing power is now €400,000, which would be in line with viability. Anna is currently paying €1,950 per month in rent for her one-bedroom apartment, which is 44% of her disposable income. If she purchased a similar apartment using the Government schemes, her repayments would be €1,114 per month, or 25% of her disposable income.

WE ARE ALREADY SEEING STRONG UPTAKE IN THE FIRST HOME SCHEME IN DEVELOPMENTS WHERE PROPERTIES FALL BELOW THE SCHEME'S PRICE CAPS.

The main concern with the Scheme is that the caps in some areas of the country are too low **(Table 1)**. For example, in Co. Meath the cap is €350,000, whereas across the border in Kildare the cap is €400,000, which is much more reasonable when you take account of the fact that the average cost of building a three-bed semi in the Greater Dublin Area now stands at €371,000 (SCSI, 2022). In Co. Louth, the cap is just €300,000. This will negatively impact supply, as houses cannot be delivered at these levels. Affordable new homes are very much needed in large urban centres such as Dundalk and Drogheda.

Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Scheme

For purchasers looking for a home outside the major cities, the Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund Scheme is a fantastic support, which encourages the refurbishment of vacant properties for use as a principal private residence. Where the refurbishment costs are expected to exceed the standard grant of up to €30,000, a maximum top-up grant amount of up to €20,000 will be available where the property is confirmed by the applicant to be derelict (i.e., structurally unsound and dangerous), bringing the total grant available for a derelict property up to a maximum of €50,000. The property has to be vacant for at least two years in order to qualify. The Scheme is open to both first-time and subsequent purchasers.

Table 1: Price limit cap for each local authority in the First Home Scheme.

Local authority area	Price limits
Cork City, Dublin City, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal, South Dublin	€450,000 for houses and €500,000 for apartments
Galway City	€400,000 for houses and €450,000 for apartments
Limerick City and County, Waterford City and County	€350,000 for houses and €450,000 for apartments
Wicklow	€450,000 for all properties
Kildare	€400,000 for all properties
Cork, Galway, Kilkenny, Meath, Westmeath	€350,000 for all properties
Clare, Kerry, Laois, Louth, Mayo, Monaghan, Offaly, Roscommon, Wexford	€300,000 for all properties
Carlow, Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim Longford, Sligo, Tipperary	€250,000 for all properties

Croí Cónaithe (Cities) Scheme

In terms of supports aimed at mobilising development of apartments for owner occupiers in urban centres, the Croí Cónaithe (Cities) Scheme is there to enable this market, in which we haven't seen any significant scale in many years. The Scheme aims to bridge the viability gap by part funding developers and reducing the costs of delivering apartments by 20%. The fundamentals of our national housing plan dictate high-density living in cities; therefore, apartment living needs to be encouraged sustainably, which simply will not happen without this support, given current values and costs. This scheme for developers, coupled with the First Home and Help to Buy schemes for purchasers, will result in genuinely affordable apartments for owner occupiers, within our cities, offering a truly sustainable solution.

As can be seen in **Table 2**, a monthly repayment of approximately €1,000 is a sustainable amount and offers security of tenure and an opportunity to get on the property ladder. This Scheme will stimulate the commencement of dozens of sites in the city, which would either not be developed at all, or at best be destined for the private rental sector (PRS) market.

However, limiting the Croí Cónaithe Scheme to owner occupiers will hamper the delivery of PRS supply. The Scheme should be expanded to support this sector, as commencement data shows that apartment supply is declining, likely due to repricing following interest rate increases. A mixed-tenure approach to Croí Cónaithe with a mix of social, affordable purchase and rental would have a greater chance for success. A forward purchase of the Part V units (20%) could ease banking requirements. Perhaps for developments of 150 or more, a mix under Croí Cónaithe could comprise 20% Part V, 40% owner occupier, and 40% rental. The rental portion should be made available to individual and bulk investors, and could include a covenant to discount against market rent.

Project Tosaigh

Finally, Project Tosaigh aims to provide affordable homes for purchase or rent. The scheme is managed by the Land Development Agency (LDA) and local authorities in partnership with private developers, who are in charge of delivering the developments. We have recently been engaged in one of the first affordable purchase schemes, Clonmore in Mallow, Co. Cork, which was constructed by O'Flynn Group and is a scheme of just over 100 homes.

Affordable purchase and rental could be part of the solution and we hope to see an increase in this tenure type going forward.

The measures outlined above are sensible when it comes to increasing the supply of homes for all tenures in Ireland, but they could go further to ensure that it is maximised. In addition to tweaking the supports as outlined above, I am watching with interest the proposed amendments to the housing standards and note that draft Section 28 Guidelines on Sustainable and Compact Settlement Guidance are due in Q4 2022.

For the viability gap to be fully tackled we need to not only look at how homes can be financed, but also the type of homes we want to live in, and at providing those homes in a sustainable and cost-effective way.

Table 2: Case example under the Croí Cónaithe (Cities) Scheme.

Assumed construction cost of two-bed apartment*	Less 20%/price for purchaser	FTB deposit required with full HTB rebate	Amount to be mortgaged with 20% shared equity	Monthly Repayments year 1**	Household salary required
€450,000	€360,000	€6,000	€252,000	€1,002	€63,000

*assumes €400k all-in cost for construction/prof. fees/contributions/finance/VAT/contingency and €50k site cost. **30-year term at 2.55% interest rate.

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THE ADJUDICATION OPTION

SECURING PAYMENT OF UNPAID FEES MAY BE EASIER THAN YOU THINK VIA THE PROVISIONS OF THE CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTS ACT 2013.

You have completed the work as agreed and submitted your fee invoice. Later you notice that the payment period has passed and your invoice remains outstanding, but you give the benefit of the doubt. An exchange of emails confirms that something is wrong. It becomes apparent that your client has no intention of paying your invoice. While this may be a rare occurrence, that does not make it any easier to know that you now have a problem to deal with. You use diplomacy to try and find out why your client has not paid your outstanding fee invoice. During the following brief, and possibly tense, discussions, you seek to negotiate or even propose a reduction to go some way to acknowledging your client's concerns, justified or otherwise, but to no avail. As may be provided for in your agreement, you suggest the use of mediation or conciliation as a first step to resolve the matter, but you are rebutted. It is now clear that there is a dispute.

FEATURE
Peter O'Malley RIAI MRIBA FCIArb. Vice-chair, Chartered Institute of Arbitrators – Ireland Branch

Choosing adjudication

Prior to July 25, 2016, you would have had no choice but to seek redress for breach of contract through the courts, which is a long, expensive and uncertain process. However, since this date you now have an alternative option to resolve the dispute through adjudication under the Construction Contracts Act 2013 (the Act), which is fast, economic and confidential.

The Act is best described by its long title as "An Act to regulate payments under construction contracts and to provide for related matters".[1] The Act is still unknown to some consultants in the building industry, including surveyors. This lack of familiarity is despite the express provision that the Act covers services ancillary to a construction contract, such as surveying work.[2] The adjudication provisions[3] within the Act give you the right to refer a dispute to adjudication[4] at any time, and the process commences by serving your client with a notice of intention to refer the payment dispute for adjudication.[5]

You will always be understandably reluctant to initiate adjudication for fear of it being perceived as adversarial. Clients are hard won, and there will always be a desire to avoid any adverse impact on a business relationship. Conversely, however, where you have an

entrenched position with a recalcitrant client, you can either accept your loss as a lesson learned, or assess the risks in seeking to recover your loss.

Adjudication offers the opportunity to pursue recovery of fees owed for what can be a modest outlay, where the process is undertaken quickly and in private.

One of the advantages of adjudication is that you are only liable for the cost of the advice that you obtain, which you can seek to manage from the outset, and you have no liability for the cost of advice for your client.[6] This is unlike litigation through the courts, where costs will generally follow the event, with the loser usually being liable for all the costs incurred by both parties.

How it works

The first action in the adjudication process is to review your records and ensure that they are complete. The records will comprise:

- the agreement, even if this is not in writing, between you and your client for the work undertaken;
- the details of your outstanding fee account;
- any exchanges of correspondence on the matter; and,
- any other relevant details.

Using this information, you can then prepare the notice of intention to refer the dispute to adjudication and a short accompanying statement to support your claim for outstanding fees, usually just a couple of pages. It is not unusual for an account to be settled shortly after the notice and accompanying statement have been served on the client. If by clear articulation in the statement it is evident that the fees are due, a recalcitrant client, on consideration of correct advice, will often see sense in bringing the matter to a close quickly. This will result in the payment of the outstanding fee account, in full or in part, and avoidance of the adjudication. Thus, the dispute may be resolved at this point.

Should the matter continue, you can approach the Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland (SCSI), which has a panel of experienced adjudicators, and ask to have an adjudicator appointed to decide upon the dispute, by agreement with the client.[7] Failing agreement, you can have an adjudicator appointed by application to the Construction Contracts Adjudication Service.[8]

From the day that the adjudicator is appointed, you will only have seven days in which to provide your 'Referral' (the particular details of your claim).[9] A timetable will then be agreed where your client will have approximately 10 days to provide a 'Response', and you will have approximately five more days in which to provide a 'Reply'.

The adjudicator will then reach a decision within 28 days from the date of having received your Referral, unless an extension of the timetable is agreed.[10] It is therefore usual for the dispute to be fully addressed in a period of only five to six weeks – a fraction of the time that it would take if seeking redress through the courts.

The adjudicator's decision, which will be in writing and supported by reasons, will be to all intents binding and is only rarely open to challenge.[11]

THE FIRST ACTION IN THE ADJUDICATION PROCESS IS TO REVIEW YOUR RECORDS AND ENSURE THAT THEY ARE COMPLETE. USING THIS INFORMATION, YOU CAN THEN PREPARE THE NOTICE OF INTENTION TO REFER THE DISPUTE TO ADJUDICATION.

Robust mechanism

Adjudication under Section 6 of the Act can be presented as being the 'last alternative', which of course it should be, in the event of your client taking offence. But the threat and use of the Act if necessary does allow you to bring matters to a head quickly in securing payment of outstanding fees, either through service of the notice, or the later issuance of an adjudication decision.

There will always be a natural aversion to being involved in a dispute. However, it is beneficial to know that when you have a difficult client from whom you seek unpaid fees that you believe are due, there is a robust mechanism available to help secure recompense should you need it.

References

1. As set out in the Construction Contracts Act 2013 (CCA 2013).
2. *Ibid.* at Section 1.-(2)(a).
3. *Ibid.* at Section 6.-(1) to (18).
4. *Ibid.* at Section 6.-(1).
5. *Ibid.* at Section 6.-(2), where the notice should be in the prescribed form.
6. *Ibid.* at Section 6.-(15).
7. *Ibid.* at Section 6.-(3).
8. *Ibid.* at Section 6.-(4) and Section 8.-(1) to (6).
9. *Ibid.* at Section 6.-(5)(a).
10. *Ibid.*. at Section 6.-(6) and (7).
11. The vast majority of adjudication decisions are adhered to; it is considered that only circa 3% of adjudication decisions are subject to a following challenge by either arbitration or through the courts.

PATHWAY TO ZERO EMISSIONS BUILDINGS

THE RECAST ENERGY PERFORMANCE OF BUILDINGS DIRECTIVE HAS IMPLICATIONS FOR ALL PROPERTY PROFESSIONALS.

In December 2021, the European Commission published its proposal for revising the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD). The thrust behind this recast (or major revision) of the Directive is that the European Union (EU) is driving towards zero energy buildings as part of its 'Fit for 55' package (this is the Climate Action Goal of a minimum of 55% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, based on 1990 levels). Previous versions and revisions from 2010 and 2018 introduced a range of requirements, including: the production of energy performance certificates (EPCs) as a condition of sale; the nearly zero energy building (nZEB) standard (which also had to be met by renovated buildings); promoting the use of renewable energy; and, long-term renovation strategies.

The following extract from the European Parliamentary Research Service succinctly details the objectives of the recast EPBD:

"The main objectives of the recast EPBD are to substantially reduce GHG emissions and final energy consumption in the building sector by 2030, and to set a long-term vision for an EU buildings sector that is climate neutral by 2050. In this respect, the recast EPBD aims to: increase the rate and depth of renovations of energy-efficient buildings; improve information on energy performance and sustainability of buildings; guarantee that all new buildings in the EU meet ambitious 'zero emission building' standards; and, ensure that all buildings in future (whether new or renovated) are in line with the 2050 climate neutrality requirements".

FEATURE

Vince Harney MRICS MSCSI FCA CTA BA (Hons)

There are interactions with other EU climate and energy legislation, namely the Energy Efficiency Directive (EED) and the Renovation Wave for Europe strategy (which significantly drove the need for a major revision of the EPBD).

Core elements

What are the core elements of this new major revision?

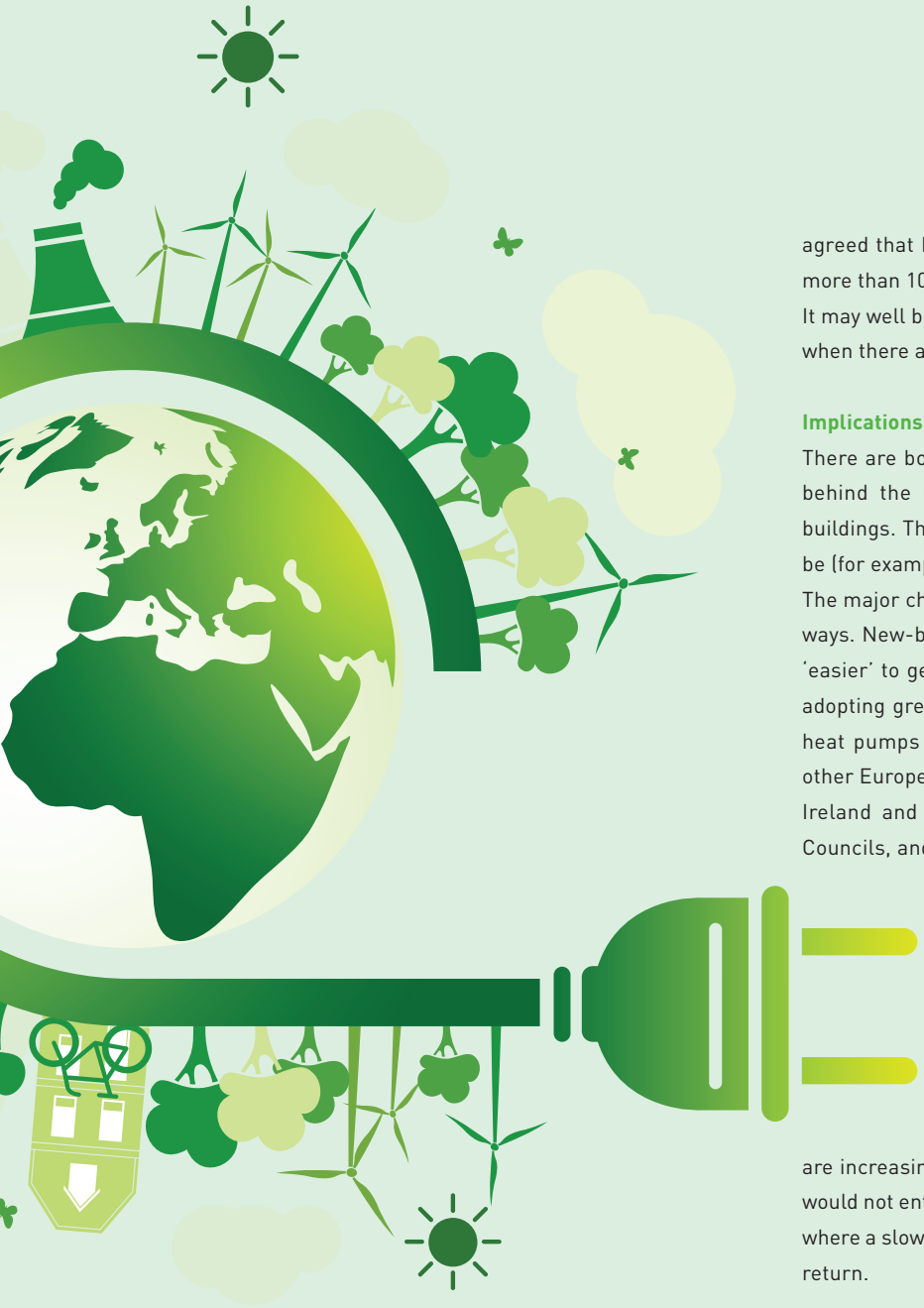
1. A new definition of "zero emissions building" to replace nZEB as standard for all new builds from 2027, and for renovated buildings from 2030. The definition of a zero emissions building is based on very high energy performance based on the energy efficiency principle, where the low energy requirement is from locally produced renewables or the building's own energy.

2. National building renovation plans delivering set targets for renovation by 2030, 2040 and 2050.

3. Minimum energy performance standards (MEPS) to be standard for all buildings, although member states may wish to set tougher standards.

4. Lowering the threshold of building automation and control systems from 290kW to 70kW by 2030.

5. Calculation of life cycle global warming potential (GWP) for all new builds from 2030, and of all large buildings (greater than 2,000sqm) from 2027.



Drafting process

The draft Directive has been circulated to stakeholder groups for comments and suggested changes as necessary. The SCSI, as a member of CEPI (the European Association of Real Estate Professions) lodged comments primarily in relation to Article 9 on MEPS, with concerns from members on affordability and viability, on not renovating despite suggested support schemes, and differences in member states and the specific characteristics of multi-apartment buildings.

The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) suggested an amendment that International Property Measurement Standards (IPMS) be used as a standard in the calculation of energy performance to promote comparability of data. This amendment was accepted.

The European Parliament's Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) will vote on the recast Directive on November 29, 2022, with a likely vote in the Plenary on January 23, and approval from the EU expected to follow shortly thereafter. In the meantime, it is clear that the Czech EU Presidency is pushing the legislation to be as ambitious as possible to achieve climate change targets. There are still compromises to be reached on MEPS (Article 9), although it has been agreed that MEPS would not apply for multi-apartment buildings of more than 10 units.

It may well be that there are additional compromises – not surprising when there are 27 member states, each with their own issues.

Implications for the property profession in Ireland?

There are bound to be significant changes due to the accelerations behind the legislation, particularly in getting to zero emissions buildings. There is no certainty as yet as to what the base MEPS will be (for example, will they be identical to existing EPCs?).

The major challenges are accelerated and have not changed in many ways. New-build properties, whether residential or commercial, are 'easier' to get right. Ireland is ahead of the curve in its approach to adopting green measures and sustainability features. For example, heat pumps are now standard on residential new builds, whereas other European countries are only just recognising their importance. Ireland and the UK are also supported by active Green Building Councils, and the Irish Council is particularly assertive in promoting the push to net zero.

Interestingly, however, the Urban Land Institute, which publishes an annual 'Emerging Trends in Real Estate' report, has pinpointed that energy efficiency is the most important international environmental issue facing the sector, so the adoption of the recast EPBD should be embraced and adhered to.

Returning to new builds, it is also clear that investors are increasingly attracted to green buildings, such that their criteria would not entertain inferior investment (not new build, partially green) where a slower move to net zero significantly impacts on the investor's return.

The big issues

Probably the biggest issues are:

- retrofitting/renovation of existing residential or commercial stock to reach targets;
- costs of retrofitting; and,
- potential repurposing of commercial assets as residential.

The first two points are intertwined. Retrofitting can be an incredibly expensive course of action, estimated to cost between €50,000 and €100,000 for an older three-bedroom house. However, if done properly, all the lights turn green.

The major issue is of course financing. The EPBD makes suggestions concerning EU financial support, such as grant aid. The Irish Government may underwrite retrofits and the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) may give grants. This uncertainty leads to my final point that many commercial assets simply cost too much from a commercial retrofit perspective; however, repurposed as residential stock – given the Government's push to increase the volume of housing stock – they could thrive and attract grants and financial support.

HELPING HOMEOWNERS

THE SCSI'S GUIDE TO ENGAGING A CONTRACTOR PROVIDES INVALUABLE ADVICE FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WHO ARE THINKING OF UNDERTAKING WORK IN THEIR HOME.

Through my day job as a Chartered Building Surveyor, I get to see a considerable amount and variety of construction defects. Some are the result of defective workmanship, others of defective materials, and some are a combination of both. They occur across a wide variety of construction sectors.

Approximately one year ago, I collaborated with the team at RTÉ's *Prime Time* to review some defective construction in a number of properties by a single builder. The pain, anguish and financial hardship created by this builder for the homeowners involved was considerable. Some of the work completed was so bad that it had to be demolished.

Due to the public interest agenda of the Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland (SCSI), which is enshrined in our memorandum of articles, the SCSI's Building Surveying Committee took on the task of creating a guide to assist homeowners when engaging a builder. The aim of this guide was to enable homeowners to protect themselves from the rogue traders that blight the construction industry, but are common to all areas of industry.

The Committee, along with the expert assistance of the SCSI Executive, has produced a clear, concise and helpful guide that has been well received by the public.

The value of engaging a professional

In this guide, the SCSI outlines some of the statutory consents and hurdles homeowners are required to overcome should their extension or work overstep the boundaries of the provisions of exempt development. Many homeowners will not have the necessary expertise to navigate the planning or building control process, and it is largely accepted by the public that they will need to engage a professional to guide them through these processes.

It is less accepted that the engagement of a professional through the entire construction process of design, procurement, onsite supervision and certification brings value and a higher chance of certainty of quality.

The SCSI guide outlines how Chartered Building, Quantity and Project Management Surveyors can assist homeowners in realising the dream of their specific project.

Hints and tips for homeowners

It is accepted by the authors of the guide that not everyone will be able to afford a professional to represent their best interests through any construction project. The guide outlines 17 questions/tips to help the homeowner to identify the bona fides of the contractor they are engaging with, and to establish if that contractor can complete the project. The purpose of the guide is to better equip members of the public to identify the rogue traders who, although their price may look enticing in comparison to that of genuine contractors, may leave the homeowner with dangerously substandard or even incomplete construction.

Some of the suggestions, which may seem common sense to people in the industry but are necessary for an inexperienced homeowner to consider when probing a contractor and their prices, include:

- does the cost provided include all elements to complete the build or is the homeowner to purchase elements such as the tiling, sanitary fittings or kitchen units?;
- does the quote include supply and fit of all items, including VAT?;
- does the builder have adequate insurance?;
- establish an agreement in writing on a timeframe for start and finish – the best advice is always that a contract outlining key elements such as the nature of work, total cost, payment provision, and start and finish date is put in place;
- never pay in cash to ensure that there is a payment paper trail;
- how long has the builder been in business, and are they a registered company? Check their accounts history; and,

FEATURE
Kevin Hollingsworth
BSc (Hons) FSCSI FRICS Cert CII
Managing Director, Omega Surveying Services

WHERE FINANCE IS A FACTOR, THE LENDING INSTITUTIONS NORMALLY HAVE A REQUIREMENT FOR A BUILDING SURVEYOR, ARCHITECT OR ENGINEER TO INSPECT AND CERTIFY THAT THE WORK IS COMPLIANT AT MILESTONES FOR DRAWDOWN OF FINANCE.

- check references of local work completed, and ask to see and meet the homeowners who provide those references.

Oversight and protection

In most instances, a homeowner's decision to embark on a construction project is a culmination of a considerable amount of thought, savings and energy.

With the significant financial risk, sometimes involving finance and long repayment terms, a decent level of oversight and protection of that investment is essential in my opinion. Cutting costs inevitably leads to a reduction in quality, resulting in substandard and sometimes uninhabitable construction. Will a builder who is substantially cheaper than all others really deliver the refurbished home, extension or attic conversion of your dreams?

Where finance is a factor, the lending institutions normally have a requirement for a building surveyor, architect or engineer to inspect and certify that the work is compliant at milestones for drawdown of finance. In my view, this is the minimum level of service any homeowner embarking on work (with or without finance) should be implementing through the construction process. At the very minimum, it sharpens the attitude of the builder, making sure that they know this work will be overseen/reviewed by a professional in the know.

If that is simply not feasible, it is hoped that the SCSI's guide will assist and enable homeowners to protect themselves from unscrupulous rogue traders out there, who will leave them with cold, damp or structurally unsound homes.

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HARVESTING THE FUTURE

ALL OVER THE COUNTRY, SCSI MEMBERS ARE ENGAGING IN PROJECTS TO IMPROVE THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITIES. HERE IS ONE SUCH PROJECT.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Service (IPBES) published its global assessment on the state of the world's biodiversity and ecosystem services in 2019, and it showed that nature is declining globally at rates unprecedented in human history – and that the rate of species extinctions is accelerating, with grave impact on people around the world now likely.

Practical conservation gives every person an opportunity to do their bit. In times where immense changes have continued to be made by humans (which sometimes impose devastating or irreversible effects on the environment), it is all the more important that doing your bit includes working in harmony with nature and leveraging what you can to create balance and sustainable solutions to everyday problems. Ireland's biodiversity needs to be conserved to retain (and enlarge) its variety of plant and animal life, and we all can have a part in this.

Today's landscapes, be they built or natural, are the result of thousands of years of interaction by people in the natural process of evolution, and succession. Therefore, we should be mindful that subtle acts today may be remembered long into the future. It is also worth remembering the importance of embracing, retaining, and maintaining our heritage for future generations where we can.

Treasuring our heritage

The history and development of formal gardening in Ireland in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries can be seen in many places, and nowhere are you more likely to find it than in the remnants of a demesne village.

The unassuming sophistication and beauty of the surviving historic

FEATURE
Sarah Sherlock
MRICS MSCSI AM

traces should be treasured and enhanced. Those are the reasons why one small community project set out to gather historic bluebell[1] seeds from its neighbouring demesne landscape (Bluebell Wood, as noted on the first edition historic OSI mapping), intending to grow the seed in conjunction with the children in the local primary school, and produce a small crop of bluebells for use within the community. The project aspires to do a little over the next few years, to introduce the historic bluebell into the village itself, as opposed to the usual 'all at once' approach, where bulbs may come from afar, and potentially weaken a native population.

The bluebell[2] is a wild member of the hyacinth family, and while it is common and widespread in Ireland, it is a globally threatened species.[3] This means the Irish population is particularly significant internationally, and highly valued in landscape and culture. Habitat destruction such as the loss of hedgerows, scrub and woodland can have a significant impact on a local bluebell population; therefore, we should be aware of their importance, and the fact that bluebells have also been listed as a species that could be particularly susceptible to the effects of global warming and climate change. Bluebells from seed tend to germinate quickly; however, they can take years to flower.

Seeds gathered from sustainably harvested pure crops should not compromise the existing naturalised population, yet they provide a subtle way of capturing the heritage that exists within the historic demesne and introducing it into the village in a truly sustainable way. Hopefully, in time when the local bluebell wood comes alive with vivid violet-blue floral displays, the same may be experienced within the village wherever they are planted, and the most important part of the project is that the primary school children will have participated in the project and created a sense of placemaking within the community.

> **IN THE END WE WILL CONSERVE ONLY WHAT WE LOVE; WE WILL LOVE ONLY WHAT WE UNDERSTAND; AND WE WILL UNDERSTAND ONLY WHAT WE ARE TAUGHT.**
>
> **(BABA DIOUM, 1968)**

Doing more with less is a critical skill that we all must learn ... go on, try it, and do let us know how you get on.

An interesting note

In folklore, the bells in the flower were believed to call the fairies when 'rung'.

References

1. *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*.
2. The Irish bluebell, which is actually known as the 'English' bluebell (although it is native throughout western Europe) is a delicate rich violet-blue flower, with strongly sweetly scented flowers that dangle from one side of an arching stem.
3. It is estimated that 25-50% of the world's population of *H. non-scripta* is found in Britain and Ireland (Ingrouille, 1995). The Spanish bluebell is invasive, and alien bluebells are thought to be potentially invasive, posing both genetic and competitive displacement threats to the pure uncontaminated native bluebell stands in Britain and Ireland.

LEVELLING UP ON LIFE CYCLE COSTING

THE EU LEVEL(S) FRAMEWORK RECOMMENDS LIFE CYCLE COSTING AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF ACHIEVING LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT.

Level(s) is a European Union (EU) initiative that joins up thinking on sustainable building across the EU by offering guidance on the key areas of sustainability in the built environment and how to measure them, both during design and after completion. The key idea behind Level(s) is for member states to use the same indicators and methods for measuring sustainability in buildings. Level(s) gets its name from the three levels of detail that can be used to measure environmental performance when designing, constructing and using a building: 1. conceptual design; 2. detailed design; and, 3. post completion in use.

The Level(s) framework is based on six overarching macro-objectives. In turn, these objectives are supported by several measurable indicators. The sixth objective looks at life cycle costing (LCC) and value. Indicator 6.1 of the EU framework provides guidance on when and how LCC should be carried out on sustainable buildings (**Figure 1**).

Life cycle costing

LCC is an economic evaluation in which all costs arising from owning, operating, and maintaining a building over a certain study period are considered together. It enables fuller comparative assessments of different designs, taking into account initial capital costs, future operational costs and asset replacement costs.

Taking an LCC perspective encourages clients and designers to consider the relationship between upfront capital costs and the costs of running the building once constructed. At the concept stage it can help with thinking about viability. At more advanced design stages, it helps to think about energy costs and calculating the payback periods of installing renewables and upgraded insulation.

Indicator 6.1 in the Level(s) framework utilises a methodology and work breakdown that aligns with ISO 15686, Part 5 (the international standard in LCC). The main advantage of Indicator 6.1 is that it allows for a simplified application of LCC, looking at operational expenditure over a 50-year study period, and using discounted cashflows at a discount rate of 4%. In layman's terms, this means translating future cashflows into a fixed lump sum in today's money, which can be used to compare different design options based on their future outlays.

In LCC, adding discounted cashflows together will calculate the net present value (NPV) of the whole design scenario, which can then be

FEATURE

Dr Dermot Kehily
Lecturer, TU Dublin

FIGURE 1: Level(s) indicator 6.

compared to alternative designs. NPV considers the time value of money, translating future cashflows into today's money. In essence, NPV gives you the opportunity to compare a series of payments with different intervals, on several different design options, over an extended period of time, in a lump sum value (**Figure 2**).

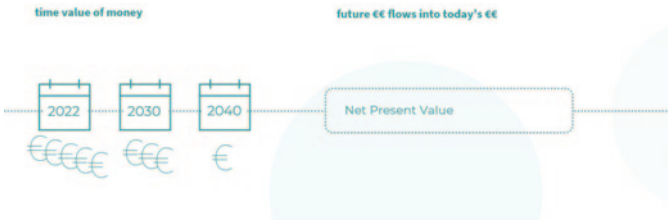


FIGURE 2: Net present value.

Measuring sustainability

It is becoming increasingly important that clients use an investment appraisal technique that takes a whole-life view, to examine how better environmentally performing buildings can be built for a cost that can be justified in commercial terms. LCC is not an environmental indicator, but it shares many of its parameters with life cycle assessment (LCA), which is an evaluation of embodied carbon. LCC contributes to the case for sustainability by illuminating reduction opportunities, saving costs as well as emissions by asking the question 'where can we reduce demand in both materials and energy?'. In recognition of the need to consider the whole life of a building, the International Construction Management Standard (ICMS) will soon be adopted as our calculation methodology for construction costs, LCC and carbon emissions (LCA). It is recognised by the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, and the EU.

Guide to life cycle costing

Another publication that is worth reading is the 'Guide to Life Cycle Costing', a joint publication between the SCSI and TU Dublin. Originally published in 2011, it was updated in April 2022. This information paper discusses the meaning and applicability of LCC, focusing on how the calculations are carried out and how quantity surveyors can apply them to a construction project. Both the benefits and challenges of LCC are addressed, particularly in the context of sustainability and green procurement.

Green public procurement

Green public procurement (GPP) is the process where public authorities seek to procure goods, services and works with a reduced environmental impact. In Ireland, State spending accounts for around a quarter of the nation's GDP. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has produced guidance for Ireland on GPP, which recommends that LCC and LCA are included in the skillset of a design team.

In public works, a whole-life consideration is even more important, as the State is the owner, occupier and, indirectly, the constructor of the school, courthouse, office or any other public building. In the green procurement process, LCC should demonstrate that consideration has been given to seeking the most economically advantageous tender over the longer term for the public purse, and not just the cheapest option.

According to the Capital Works Management Framework (CWMF), projects can be evaluated on the lowest cost tender or on the most economically advantageous tender (MEAT) model. MEAT requires tenders to be evaluated in the context of the current economic needs of the Government and, just as importantly, its economic needs for the future. MEAT goes beyond just price and considers criteria such as the contractor's safety record and the skills of the people who will be involved in the project, to build up a more holistic view of the work ahead. The GPP guidance recommends that MEAT should be expanded to include LCC and sustainability in the evaluation of tenders. LCC encourages the development of a tender that will reduce operational expenditure in the future.

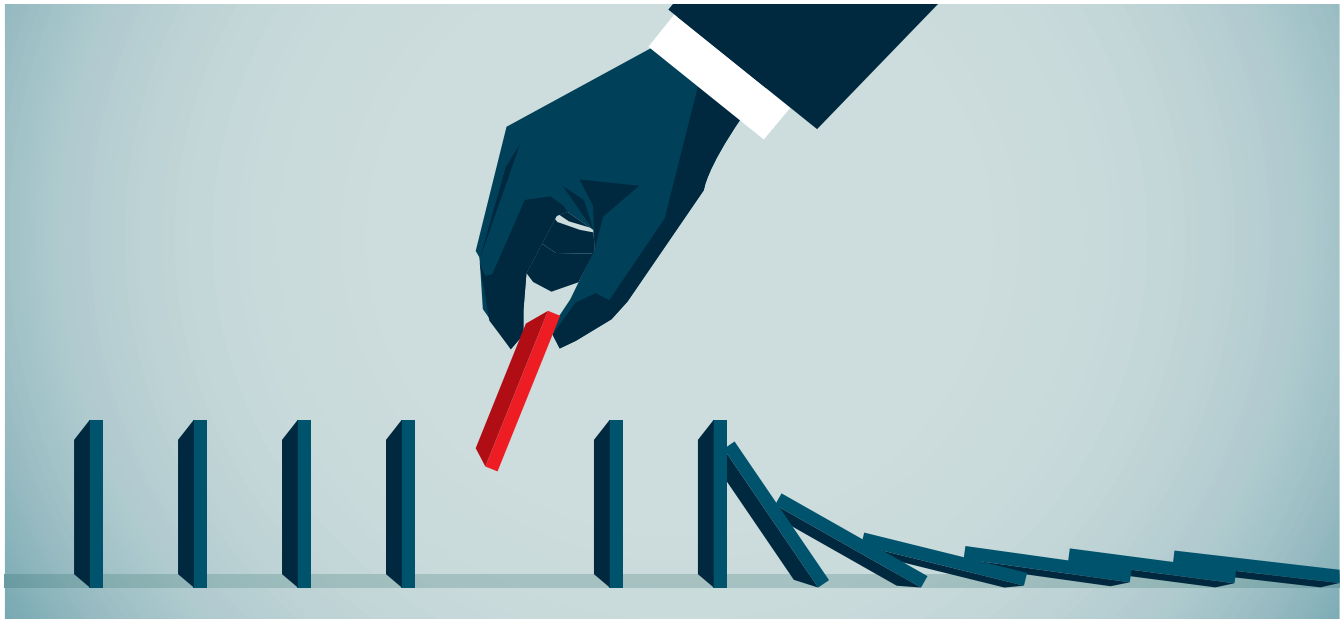
Training

Promoting the benefits of LCC, and educating and training construction professionals, is paramount to LCC's successful application. In light of this, The Irish Green Building Council (IGBC) and the SCSI have produced a number of introductory videos on the application of LCC in the EU Level(s) framework. This training consists of two pre-recorded introductory videos, as well as more detailed training discussions from the SCSI 'Guide to Life Cycle Costing' and a live online session. If you are interested in this training, register on the 'Events' section of the IGBC website – www.igbc.ie.

The SCSI/TU Dublin 'Guide to Life Cycle Costing' is available from https://scsi.ie/guide-to-life-cycle-costings/.

CHAIN REACTIONS

THE SUPPLY CHAIN RESEARCH FUNCTION ESTABLISHED BY JOHN SISK & SON IS HELPING ITS PROCUREMENT TEAMS TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE CURRENT VOLATILITY AND COMPLEXITY OF CONSTRUCTION SUPPLY CHAINS.



In August 2021, John Sisk & Son established a dedicated supply chain research function, situated within the Procurement Department at our Head Office in Dublin. The objective of the research function has been to develop a better understanding of the complex global supply chains that we rely upon for the provision of our construction materials. Harnessing data analytics capabilities is central to this goal, with the resulting insights designed to assist our commercial teams in their strategic procurement decisions.

Origin

The decision to develop a full-time research resource, supported by input from our Irish and UK procurement departments, was prompted by the unprecedented global supply chain disruption arising from the Covid-19 pandemic. The first post-lockdown period saw extreme price volatility across most of our material categories, as well as severe availability issues.

These developments posed big questions to us as procurement professionals, specifically:

- how well do we understand the external factors that affect the price and availability of our materials?; and,
- to what extent can we formally analyse these supply chain dynamics to ensure that we can mitigate risk and maximise opportunity as promptly as possible in the future?

Since inception, we have placed a strong focus on developing our data analytics capabilities to help us answer these questions. We are at an early stage in this process, and there are many interesting challenges that arise from combining the available procurement data with the analytical tools now available, particularly around quantifying the impact of the vast range of cost drivers that influence the price of our materials.

Research methodology

From the beginning our focus has been on developing a formalised approach to analysis. Our methodology consists of continuous cross-

FEATURE
David Frazer
Group Senior Supply Chain Analyst, John Sisk & Son

PROCUREMENT MATERIAL PRICE MOVEMENTS MARCH 2022									
MATERIAL	CHANGE	CURRENT MOVEMENT	NOV 19' - MAR 22' CHANGE	FORTHCOMING	MATERIAL	CHANGE	CURRENT MOVEMENT	NOV 19' - MAR 22' CHANGE	FORTHCOMING
SOFTWOOD TIMBER		0.0%	97%		CONCRETE		0.0%	19%	↑ 10%
PLYWOOD		0.0%	89%		BRICKS		0.0%	33%	↑ 10%
INSULATION		0.0%	150%	↑ 22.0%	BLOCKS		0.0%	21%	↑ 12%
BUILDERS MERCHANTS		0.0%	43%		AGGREGRATES		0.0%	23%	↑ 10%
CONCRETE ACCESSORIES		0.0%	30%	↑ 30.0%	IRONMONGERY		0.0%	33%	
REBAR		37.0%	125%		SANITARY		0.0%	36%	
MESH		4.3%	137.9%		STR. STEEL		15.9%	119%	
SHIPPING		-4.00%	610.0%		METAL STUD		0.0%	90%	
PLASTERBOARD		0.0%	38%	↑ 26%	PAINT		0.0%	26%	
COPPER		-2.3%	74.9%		MAINS AND DRAINS		10.0%	83%	↑ 8%
ROLLED GAV STEEL COIL		20.3%	115%		ALUMINIUM		-3.3%	104.0%	
DIESEL		16.9%	55.2%		MEP - HVAC	Click on the icon to the left-hand side to view the latest commentary on HVAC materials price and availability			
CABLE & ASSOCIATED ITEMS	Click on the icon to the left-hand side to view the latest commentary on cable & associated materials price and availability								

FIGURE 1: Price movements dashboard main page.

referencing of information obtained from a range of sources. These sources fall under three separate categories:

1. Supply chain feedback – conventional interaction with our supply chain partners, with the assistance of our central procurement and category management teams in Ireland and the UK. The expertise of our procurement teams is vital here in interpreting and contextualising the quality of the information we receive.
2. Quantitative analytics – we act in collaboration with a third-party data analytics provider, who provides advanced technical analysis of commodities pricing and market dynamics, including supply risk and price forecasting. This is where we have entered new territory and we see this as a major component of our ability to create useful insights.
3. Industry media – daily monitoring of industry and general media commentary on relevant supply chain dynamics.

Output

The end product of our research is a continuing series of reports, issued internally to our commercial teams. These reports generally fall into three categories:

Status updates

At a basic level, we issue monthly 'price movement reports' (**Figures 1** and **2**). These reports cover approximately 20 materials categories, including details on confirmed current or forthcoming price increase notifications and availability risks. They will also contain comparative historic price data, tracking overall percentage change over time.

Supply chain risk assessments

Periodic supply chain risk assessments (**Figure 3**) are created in response to relevant external events. Recent examples of this would be reports covering the impact of the war in Ukraine and the current energy crisis. These reports provide price and availability data for all materials that are likely to be affected by the event in question. These analyses will typically include a short- to mid-term price/availability forecast for each material category.

Category-specific analysis

Category analysis publications focus on specific materials categories, analysing the full supply chain from source to end user. The objective is to provide a better understanding of the various cost drivers and supply chain dynamics, and their relative impact on the material in question. This will typically include a six- to 12-month price forecast and commentary on any potential supply issues. Obviously, as price forecasts are liable to change at short notice, we will frequently amend and re-issue these projections as events change.

Quality communication

We place great emphasis on the quality of the content that we produce in terms of clarity and accuracy. Our focus is on creating precise and timely commentary, targeted at only the most relevant topics. While

Business Function
Procurement

Document Owner
Relevant Construction Board Director

Document Type
REFERENCE DOCUMENT

DASHBOARD

CONCRETE

April 1st, 2022

The graph illustration below represents an aggregated indicator value for ready-mix concrete products.

Specific price increases for concrete and associated products are listed on the right-hand side.

Suppliers are citing energy and fuel prices as the main factors driving increased input costs (i.e. cement).

Price increase notifications - concrete and associated materials

Items below are taken from a recent increase notification from one of our main suppliers - effective 01 May 2022. Please speak to the category management team for specific enquiries.

Ready-mix concrete products - €9.00 per m3
Concrete block products - 12%
Silomix mortars - €6.00 per tonne
Silomix coloured mortars - €12 per tonne
KPRO facades & mortars - 7% per unit
Paving products - 7% per unit
Stone & Aggregates - €1.75% per tonne
Bituminous products - €10.75 per tonne **(effective 01 April 2022)**

FIGURE 2: Dashboard category page.

practices such as forecasting are far from an exact science, and circumstances can change rapidly, we try to be as unambiguous as possible in our assessments. Similarly, we aim to keep the publications clear and concise, avoiding unnecessary jargon or long-winded breakdowns.

We are happy to have been able to provide useful assistance over the past 15 months. Global developments such as the war in Ukraine and the ongoing energy crisis have underscored the need for this type of analysis, and we have been able to assist our commercial colleagues during these periods. This has proved useful both for their own procurement considerations, and as a means to assist and inform our clients.

Future development

We feel that we are still at a very early stage in terms of understanding the full scope of global supply chain dynamics. There are still many more questions than answers! The quantitative analysis methods that are now available are still limited in their scope, and more focused on commodities in other industries.

The precise analytical mechanisms, such as the cost models referred to above, will take some time and effort to develop. Similar methodologies may be applied to develop more advanced product lead time tracking tools, such as centralised live databases, saving valuable time spent manually carrying out these assessments. Overall, we see the relevance of data analytics capabilities growing significantly over time in these areas.

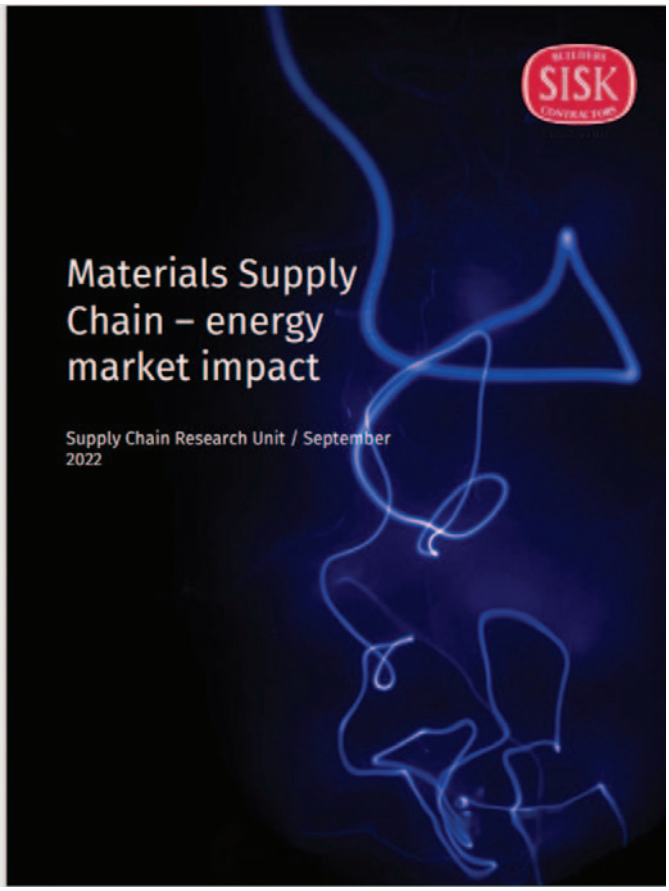


FIGURE 3: Sisk's risk assessment publication.

PEOPLE PERSON

ISOBEL O'REGAN SPEAKS ABOUT HER CAREER, AND HER ROLES AS LEADERSHIP CHAIR AT SAVILLS IRELAND AND INTERIM CHAIR OF THE RICS MANAGEMENT BOARD.

Isobel O'Regan says that there was no 'lightbulb moment' that led to her current career, but rather a steady progression of roles in Ireland and the UK, culminating in her current senior executive position at Savills Ireland.

Originally from Dromagh in north Cork, Isobel studied quantity surveying before switching to what was then called 'general practice'. The early 1980s were a tough time for the sector, but Isobel was fortunate to start work with Kevin Silke, a sole practitioner in Cork: "I stayed with Kevin for about four years. I did my exams when I was with Kevin and he was very good to me. At that time I also met my lifelong mentor in Roger Flack, who has given me advice and a guiding hand during my entire career. I was lucky to meet him when I started out and it taught me the value of having a mentor. Then I went to London to work with a company called Chesterton. In the late 1980s, an opportunity arose to come back to Ireland to work with Hamilton Osborne King (as they were before they became part of Savills) in Dublin".

Leadership

Isobel spent 11 years in Dublin before returning to Cork in 2000, where she specialises in general commercial agency and professional services. This year, she was also appointed to the key role of leadership chair: "It's a governance role, very much around working with my colleagues and the leadership team, supporting the managing director, Mark Reynolds, and chairing our meetings, but also developing that sense of collegiality across the group. Helping to engage and connect people is probably the key part of it".

Isobel's day-to-day work, however, is still very much as a practising surveyor: "I'm a registered valuer and that would still be a part of my day, inspecting property and providing valuation advice. I'm also involved in the investment side of the business".

She says her favourite element of her job is the personal interaction, whether with clients or colleagues: "You can be online or look at Google Maps as much as you want, but really nothing beats walking through a building, meeting other people who might have a different perspective to you, and broadening your horizons".

Professional representation

Isobel has also recently served as interim chair of the RICS Management Board, where she has been involved in steering that body through a period of change and development: "RICS went through an extensive review process, and now we are in the process of recruiting for the role of chair of the Board. It has been a challenging time for the institution, but I am confident now, with the implementation of the Bichard Review underway, it will regain its prominence in the natural and built environment".

As a long-time member of the SCSI's Southern Region, and former chair of its committee, professional membership organisations are something that Isobel is very passionate about: "It's something that I would encourage people to embrace. Professional organisations are very much a guardrail, and can help advocate, for you, for the profession, and for the wider benefit. Our professions are about lifelong learning and SCSI or RICS are there to support us with that. So much of what will happen in the future will start at Government or international level, and how they're contemplating their decisions should be influenced by people at the coalface, and that's where membership bodies become important".

Friends and family are extremely important to Isobel, and she is a big sports fan. As a rugby fan (particularly Munster, of course), she's been particularly enjoying the recent successes. She's also a Spurs supporter and a "constantly learning" golfer.

SURVEYOR PROFILE

Ann-Marie Hardiman
Managing Editor,
Think Media Ltd

MY SCSI – TIME TO GET INVOLVED

A NEW SCSI CAMPAIGN AIMS TO HARNESS THE TALENTS OF MEMBERS, AND HIGHLIGHT THE GREAT BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING WITH YOUR PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATION.

As this *Surveyor's Journal* lands in your mail, alongside season's greetings, some of us may already be thinking about our goals and aspirations for the New Year and what 2023 may bring. While there is uncertainty about the economic and geopolitical climate facing us, the SCSI has been busy planning to ensure that we will continue to provide the highest levels of support and service to our members, come what may.

Strength to strength

Thanks to the huge amount of time devoted by our member volunteers, working together with our dedicated staff, the SCSI has again gone from strength to strength over the last year, and the organisation's position is increasingly elevated and recognised as a valued independent, expert and trusted voice for the property, land and construction sector. We are proud to talk about the delivery model in the SCSI as in the public interest and "for the members, by the members", but the increasing demands on the Society to contribute to topical debate means that we urgently need to expand our pool of member volunteers who are willing to give some time to share their valuable expertise and experience.

Our reports and submissions garner significant attention at the highest levels within Government and are reported widely across the media. We are regularly called upon to provide a wide range of expertise to assist policymakers in decision-making relating to the built environment. The array of opportunities to work both with the SCSI directly and/or as a representative on external groups and projects is vast.

Get involved!

So as our thoughts turn to New Year resolutions, I would ask that you please consider getting involved with your professional body. There is so much to be gained by participating, in addition to helping the Society:

- positively impacting on important issues such as the housing crisis;
- expanding your network;
- elevating your professional profile;
- enhancing your career prospects; and,
- giving back to your community.

We provide opportunities for all of this and more. Even if you have just a few hours to commit, every contribution counts!

Over the next weeks and months we will be highlighting these opportunities via a dedicated My SCSI campaign. I hope you will join us on the journey to continued increased understanding and awareness of the expertise of the surveying profession. After all, don't they say that what the New Year brings to you will depend on what you bring to the New Year? I really hope you bring your expertise to the SCSI; it's one resolution you will want to keep!

THE LAST WORD

Shirley Coulter
CEO, SCSI

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