

The 9th National Business Post Property Summit 2022



From left: Fiona Cormican, chief commercial officer, Clúid; Bob Jordan, chief executive, the Housing Agency; Ivan Yates, entrepreneur, broadcaster and Summit host; Clare Connolly, managing director, Clare Connolly Estate Agent Ltd; Conor O'Connell, director, housing and planning, Construction Industry Federation and Carol Tallon, chief executive, Property District



From left: Eoin Leonard, chief executive and founder, i3PT Certification; Conall MacCoille, chief economist, Davy; Pat Farrell, chief executive, Irish Institutional Property; Enda McGuane, vice-president, SCSi and Asset Management Lead, Land Development Agency and Dr John McCartney, director of research, BNP Paribas Real Estate Ireland



From left: Vince Harney, commercial finance director, Quantum Group - an Irish Property Developer; Suzie Nolan, head of property fund management, Aviva Life and Pensions Ireland DAC; Carol Tallon, chief executive, Property District; Ivan Yates, entrepreneur, broadcaster and Summit host and Neil Bannon, chairman and head of Consultancy, Bannon



From left: Conall Boland, senior consultant, Sustainability Team, RPS; Mary MacMahon, president, Irish Planning Institute; Eoin Leonard, chief executive and founder, i3PT Certification and Rachael McGinley, head of sustainability, CBRE Ireland

Developing with emphasis on long-term sustainability

Social and sustainable issues are now driving property development and retrofitting, and all stakeholders need to think about the bigger picture, the 9th National Property Summit heard, writes **Quinton O'Reilly**

With 2022 coming to a close, there was much to take in at the ninth National Property Summit. Taking place in Croke Park on December 1, more than 250 people attended to see industry leaders, key stakeholders and more discuss the burning topics in the industry.

The summit chair Ivan Yates, entrepreneur and broadcaster, set the scene for the day stating the sheer number of factors that have impacted all markets and the factors that made 2022 so turbulent.

Kicking things off was Conall MacCoille, chief economist at Davy, who gave an overview of both the Irish and global economic outlook. While many challenges were happening or still to be overcome in local and international terms, he capped off the talk with a positive message and was reasonably optimistic the country could hit 27,000 new units built next year, and that come January, there'll be a "slightly brighter outlook going forward into next year."

Following that was a panel discussion on the trends affecting investment featuring a collection of industry leaders. They were Eoin Leonard, chief executive and founder of i3PT Certification, Enda McGuane, vice-president of SCSi and asset management lead at Land Development Agency, Pat Farrell, chief executive of the Irish Institutional Property (IIP), and Dr John McCartney, director of

research at BNP Paribas Real Estate Ireland.

On the optimistic side, Farrell said that the fundamentals in the construction sector are strong compared to other markets while McCartney mentioned the importance of keeping civil servants within their departments, as when they move from one to another, institutional knowledge is lost.

Following that was the summit's international case study from New Zealand presented by Leonie Freeman, chief executive of the Property Council New Zealand. In the presentation, Freeman touched upon how it's working on overhauling its regulations, ensuring that good design must come with great density, and the lessons it's learnt from it.

Speaking about its bipartisan housing reforms, she mentioned in her key reflections that while it's created positive momentum in legislative and implementation terms, it's important to think through how all parties are affected and their roles before implementing change.

"The changes are creating a lot of unintended consequences," she said. "It's not thinking through the ramifications such as eventual changes, so while they protect the tenants more and quality



David Browne, director, RKD Architects



David Conway, chief executive officer, Limerick Twenty Thirty DAC; inset: Leonie Freeman, chief executive, Property Council New Zealand



of houses are improving, in other parts, it's seen as too hard and too risky, so they're bailing out." Before the first coffee break, the panel discussion took place on making sense of the housing market. This involved Clare Connolly, managing director at Clare Connolly Estate Agent Ltd, Conor O'Connell, director of housing & planning at Construction Industry Federation (CIF), Fiona Cormican, chief commercial officer of Clúid, and Bob Jordan, chief executive of the Housing Agency.

Touching upon a wide variety of areas, including tackling vacant and derelict buildings, landlords leaving the market and supply chains, the issue of planning came up. Speaking about why some plans get rejected, Cormican mentioned that you must be able to meet those on the ground instead of planning abstractly. All parties affected must be involved and starting a dialogue and keeping the channels open is key to ensuring plans become a reality. "The planning system is not in a great place, but we've made hundreds of planning applications over the years and I don't think we have had one rejected," she said. "It's not because of who we are, it's because we go out and talk to the people on the sites we're building, where we're delivering projects, bring our housing management team out and show them what we do."

When asked what the most pressing problems are, O'Connell said: "We're in exceptional times and that requires exceptional responses. In fairness, a lot of the measures put in place are very good, but they're also in their infancy, we haven't had a run at them. We just need stability and to de-risk the system, and re-examine all delivery costs."

After the break, the next fireside chat was on the future of renting, featuring Rory Hearne, assistant professor in social policy, Maynooth University and Rachel Slaymaker, research officer of the economic analysis division at ESRI. Slaymaker mentioned that one of the ticking time bombs is those who will be pensioners in the future, estimating that when those aged between 35 to 44 reach retirement age, only two-thirds will achieve home ownership.

Hearne added that there are over 450,000 adults living at home with their parents, while 40 per cent of private renters are families with children. There is hope that Ireland can learn from other countries like Finland where its municipal local authority has its own construction company, which helps maintain buildings and rebuild a certain number.

The panel discussion before the lunch break was on the big shifts that are changing the face of commercial property. The group chatting were Vince Harney, commercial finance director for Quantum Group - an Irish Property Developer, Neil Bannon, chairman & head of consultancy at Bannon, Suzie Nolan, head of Property Fund Management, Aviva Life and Pensions Ireland DAC and Carol Tallon, chief executive of Property District.

Nolan said that ESG and income resilience were two things on their radar while Tallon added that wellness will become a major topic for commercial property.

"We need to think about how we're using the space," said Tallon. "The reality is as humans, we spend a lot of our time indoors, we spend a chunk of that working. We're going to be working in a workplace that has yet to be defined."

Creating the cities of the future

After the lunch break, Leonard returned for a fireside chat about sustainability's role in firms making new investments. He touched upon how important life cycle assessments are when it comes to scope 3 and how the ratio of working on new builds to retrofitting existing assets is now two-thirds new construction and one-third retrofitting.

"The core reason is the market is shifting in terms of investment," he said. "We're seeing a big demand on specialist funds specifically designed to go after retrofitting."

Following that was the last panel discussion on understanding the impact of climate change involving Conall Boland, senior consultant for the sustainability team in RPS,

Rachael McGinley, head of sustainability at CBRE Ireland, Mary MacMahon, president of the Irish Planning Institute.

With the topic of ESG coming up, McGinley mentioned that more and more funds are linking back to these targets. "Definitely, with the European funds in Dublin, it's linking back to their own ESG targets," she said. "They committed to net-zero carbon actions...that's the big push they're seeking."

"Big corporations have their own net-zero plans and are looking for sustainable workplaces but the big pension funds have their own ESG criteria and are taking it very seriously."

Boland added: "Where we are at the moment is like the start of the Dublin City Marathon, the gun went off 15 minutes ago. There were some who sprinted off with net zero targets; they're beginning to do the sums of that and realising they're not going to make it so big companies are recalibrating and saying 'let's take our time'."

The final two presentations focused on the cities of the

future. The first focused on the Limerick Twenty Thirty project designed to make the city more sustainable.

David Conway, chief executive of Limerick Twenty Thirty DAC, outlined the many projects happening in the city and mentioned repurposing old buildings like the former Dell building which became a movie studio which saw films and TV shows for Netflix and Apple TV produced.

The final presentation focused on Galway, specifically the challenges over the next five decades.

With both Jim Coady, architect and director of Coady Partnership Architects and David Browne, director at RKD Architects presenting different parts of it, with Browne mentioning the work that the Irish Cities Group does and summing up the view all parties must take on property.

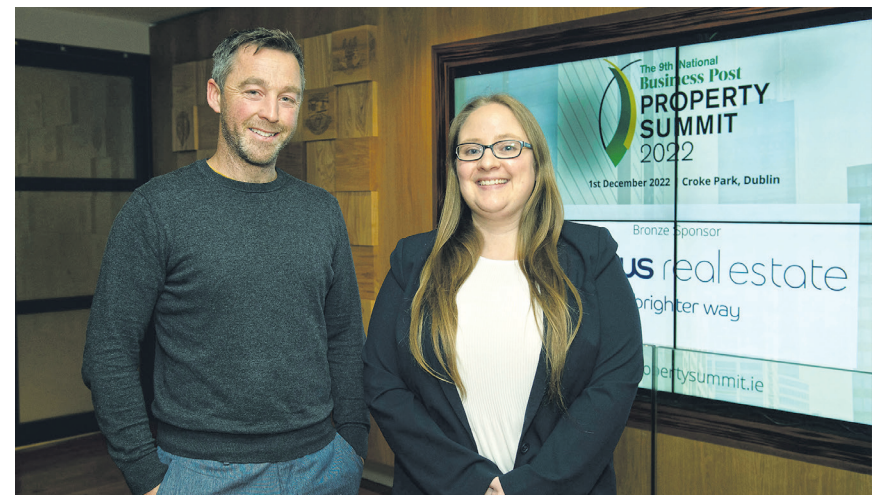
"We're looking at the future of Irish cities, and we believe that you have to look at a 50-year timeline to notice real change," he said. "If we think about Dublin from 1970 to now, you can see the change."



Jim Coady, architect and director, Coady Partnership Architects



Imogen Howell, Octopus real estate graduate, Octopus Investments; James Nunn, commercial fund manager, Octopus Real Estate and Lisa Connolly, portfolio manager, Octopus Investments



Rory Hearne, Assistant Professor in Social Policy, 'Author of Gaffs: Why no one can get a house & what we can do about?', and Rachel Slaymaker, research officer, Economic Analysis Division, ESRI