

CONSTRUCTION

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY FEDERATION

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2019



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EDITORIAL



Cover Image:
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Welcome to the latest issue of *Construction* magazine.

The recent 'CSO Production in Building and Construction Index' (Q2, 2019) indicates that overall construction activity has increased by 2.8% in Q2, 2019, with civil engineering having the largest increase with a rise of 21%. Residential building activity is up on the previous quarter with an increase of 8.3% in volume, while non-residential is down 3.1% in the seasonally adjusted index. Residential output has doubled since 2015.

The 'CSO Labour Force Survey', (Q2, 2019), shows that 146,300 people were employed in construction in the second quarter of this year, an increase of 1,700 (1%) on the previous quarter. The number of women working in the sector is also increasing. In Q2, 2019, there were 11,200 women employed, accounting for 7.6% of the construction workforce. The corresponding figure for 2018 was 8,400 women, or 5.8%, of the construction workforce.

In this issue of *Construction*, we look at how the narrative of these statistics is playing out across the country, with features on regional development activity

and regional branch views, and a report on initiatives to improve gender balance in the industry.

In *CIF News*, the newly launched *CIF Diversity* charter asks members to pledge to achieve six goals that will make their companies more diverse, equal and inclusive.


Our Cover Story looks at construction activity in the regions and how barriers to progress might be addressed. Category Focus looks at a project that is being led by a team of female construction professionals and tradespeople.

In *Industry Analysis*, Jeanette Mair outlines the key points of the *CIF's* pre-Budget 2020 submission.

In *Safety Focus*, we have an extensive preview of

Construction Safety Week 2019, with tips on how to get your company involved in this year's campaign.

In *Events*, we report from the inaugural *CIF Southern Construction Summit*; travel to Kazan, Russia, with Team Ireland for the WorldSkills Games, where Ireland finished 10th in the world; and we preview the *CIF Health and Safety Summit 2019*.

Elsewhere in this issue, we bring you all the latest *CIF* and *Industry News*. 



Robbie Cousins, Editor

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CIF NEWS

DRIVING FORWARD WITH A DIVERSE AND SUCCESSFUL CONSTRUCTION SECTOR

A message from CIF Director General Tom Parlon

With Budget 2020, the CIF Annual Conference and Construction Safety Week 2019 due to take place in the coming weeks, it is a busy time for CIF, as the summer months have also been.

One of the targets set out in 'Project Ireland 2040' is for Cork, Galway and Limerick to grow at double the rate of Dublin, to ensure that 75% of the expected population growth of 1 million live and work outside the capital by 2040. However, the Government is not doing enough to support this. If this is not addressed, people will continue to move to Dublin.

Our recently launched report on procurement has shown that SMEs account for 99% of businesses in Ireland, but smaller companies deliver less than 33% of public sector projects. It is time to do away with these ridiculous barriers and for Government to work with us to find solutions.

As part of our pre-budget submission, the CIF has called for an extension to the 'Help to Buy' scheme and relaxation of mortgage lending rules to address the dramatic shortage in private housing.

The combination of house prices in the capital, strict rules on mortgages and loan-to-income ratios, mean new homes remain unaffordable for many people. A considerable number of housebuilders have reported that between 40% and 80% of homes sold to first-time buyers are currently enabled by the 'Help to Buy' scheme. We will continue to fight for its extension.

The 2019 Building Equality campaign seeks to create more diverse, equal and inclusive workspaces and promote equality of opportunity for all.

In collaboration with the Irish Centre for Diversity, we have launched the CIF Diversity charter to help members make their workplaces more diverse, equal and inclusive.



Tom Parlon,
Director General, CIF.

“ ATTENDING MANY BRANCH MEETINGS, I SEE FIRST-HAND THE IMMENSE CONTRIBUTION THAT BRANCH MEMBERS MAKE TO THE CIF’S WORK. ”

I call on all members to sign the charter and make the diversity pledge. By doing this, you will not only encourage more women to enter the industry, but encourage any worker, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, age, ethnicity or disability, to seek employment.

Finally, in this issue of *Construction*, I am delighted to see a section dedicated

to the CIF branch network. Attending many branch meetings, I see first-hand the immense contribution that branch members make to the CIF's work.

I look forward to continuing this work with you and addressing the challenges that lie ahead for the industry. **C**

Tom Parlon

CIF CALLS ON ALL MEMBERS TO SIGN UP TO DIVERSITY CHARTER

The CIF, in association with the Irish Centre for Diversity, has launched the CIF Diversity charter, an initiative designed to support members in making their companies diverse and inclusive places for all people to work.

The CIF's #BuildingEquality campaign has created greater awareness about the necessity to make construction workplaces more diverse and inclusive.

However, the CIF recognises that diversity and inclusion are multifaceted issues that need to be tackled holistically to better engage and support all under-represented groups within each business.

To address this, the CIF, in collaboration with The Irish Centre for Diversity, has launched the 'CIF Diversity charter'.

The charter is designed to facilitate construction companies in turning their commitment to diversity into positive, practical action, and is being spearheaded by CIF's President Pat Lucey.

It confirms the commitment an organisation has to build a diverse and inclusive culture and helps quantify the company's strategic objectives. The key benefits of this are clarity of mission and a clear statement of intent.

It will help inform organisational processes around diversity and inclusion in that it sets out what the organisation aims to achieve, with the opportunity to then describe how it will accomplish this within its procedures.

WHAT IS THE CIF DIVERSITY CHARTER

The CIF is asking all member companies to sign up to the charter and pledge to take the necessary steps to make their workplaces more diverse and inclusive. This pledge outlines the company management's commitment to advancing diversity and inclusion in their organisation. By signing up, they take the diversity pledge to eliminate discrimination and promote fair and inclusive workplaces. Companies that take the pledge commit to achieving their diversity and inclusion goals by taking steps to:

- Set goals to make their workplace more inclusive;
- Identify areas of unequal representation;



Caroline Tyler, Director,
The Irish Centre for Diversity.

- Address issues found to effect change;
- Encourage a more diverse pool of applicants in the recruitment process;
- Assign responsibility for meeting their charter commitments to a named, senior-level individual;
- Work together to develop and adopt future protocols that support the practical implementation of the aims of the charter.

Companies that sign up will report on an annual basis on the diversity and inclusion activities and initiatives they have undertaken and their progress as a company.

Tom Parlon, Director General, CIF, welcomes the initiative between the CIF and the Irish Centre for Diversity to develop the charter.

"The CIF Diversity charter will aid already conscious companies in diversifying their workforces to build a modern construction industry that is inclusive to all, regardless of gender,

gender identity and gender expression, sexual orientation, age, ethnicity or disability. We look forward to working with members to realise that modern, diverse and inclusive industry."

THE DIVERSITY CHALLENGE

The CIF recognises that organisations differ, and thus, each organisation will set its own targets, strategy and implementation plan based on its capabilities. The CIF and the Irish Centre for Diversity will be on hand to provide the necessary training and support to introduce the change to member organisations.

BENEFITS

Companies that sign up have a number of promotional benefits.

These include:

- A CIF Diversity Logo for their company to show they have made this pledge

- Social media exposure
- Access to information, tools, training and examples of good practice through Irish Centre for Diversity and CIF Training.

INVESTORS IN DIVERSITY

Companies who sign up to the CIF Diversity charter also agree to achieve at least the Irish Centre for Diversity 'Investors in Diversity' Bronze level within 12 months. This achievement will require putting company leaders through specific diversity training and having up-to-date diversity policies that are effectively communicated to staff. The Investors in Diversity Mark is an Irish Centre for Diversity run programme that operates across three levels; Bronze, Silver and Gold. To facilitate the smooth transition to a diverse and inclusive industry sector, CIF members who achieve the charter goals can apply to join the Investors in Diversity bronze programme and avail of specialist training and range of cutting-edge tools and services to help them continue their diversity and inclusion journey. CIF will be offering this training free to one senior staff member in CIF member companies.

THE IRISH CENTRE FOR DIVERSITY

Caroline Tyler, Director, The Irish Centre for Diversity, says that by signing up to the charter, companies are demonstrating a real commitment to improving their diversity profile. "Signing up to the CIF Diversity charter and taking necessary steps to achieve Investor in Diversity Bronze level are designed to help organisations take a systematic and holistic approach on their unique journey to becoming a diverse and inclusive organisation. The CIF and Irish Centre for Diversity will work together to provide the necessary training and resources to support organisations on this journey."

HOW TO SIGN UP TO THE CHARTER

The charter is available to sign up to online at www.cif.ie/diversity

Once a company has signed up, CIF will send an information pack, which will contain details of the next steps to be taken, and a copy of the CIF Diversity logo for use in their marketing materials. **C**

For more information, please see www.cif.ie/diversity



CIF BUILDING DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

INVESTORS IN DIVERSITY

The Irish Centre for Diversity, supported by Ibec and the DCU Centre of Excellence for Diversity and Inclusion, operates an all-encompassing Diversity and Inclusion Mark programme for Irish businesses.

Recognising and effectively managing people's different skills, abilities, experiences, perspectives, backgrounds, needs, issues, barriers, family and personal circumstances is critical in getting the best out of people.

Investors in Diversity offers a clear and structured framework to transform diversity practices and culture. Using cutting-edge tools and services that measure and inform organisations on workplace Fairness, Respect, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Engagement (FREDIE).

There are three Investors in Diversity levels available for companies to choose from: Bronze, Silver and Gold. Every company that signs up commits to achieve Investors in Diversity Bronze level within 12 months.

The CIF recognises that some companies will already have the necessary requirements in place to enter the Investors in Diversity programme at either Bronze, Silver or Gold levels and encourages members that have relevant measures in place and may wish to achieve Investor in Diversity accreditation, which is valid at each level for two years.

BRONZE – COMMITTING

Investors in Diversity Bronze is all about helping you build a strong

foundation that you can use as a platform, to embed equality, diversity and inclusion into wider organisational systems.

Investors in Diversity Bronze is designed to help get your organisation ready for your unique journey to becoming a diverse and inclusive organisation.

SILVER – EMBEDDING

Building on the requirements of Bronze, Investors in Diversity Silver will measure the sense of fairness and belonging from your employees' perspective.

Investors in Diversity Silver is designed to liberate the voice of your people and allow you to benchmark against other organisations while providing an overview of your key strengths and areas for development.

GOLD – LEADING

Investors in Diversity Gold is all about demonstrating the "lived experience" of embedding equality, diversity and inclusion across your organisation.

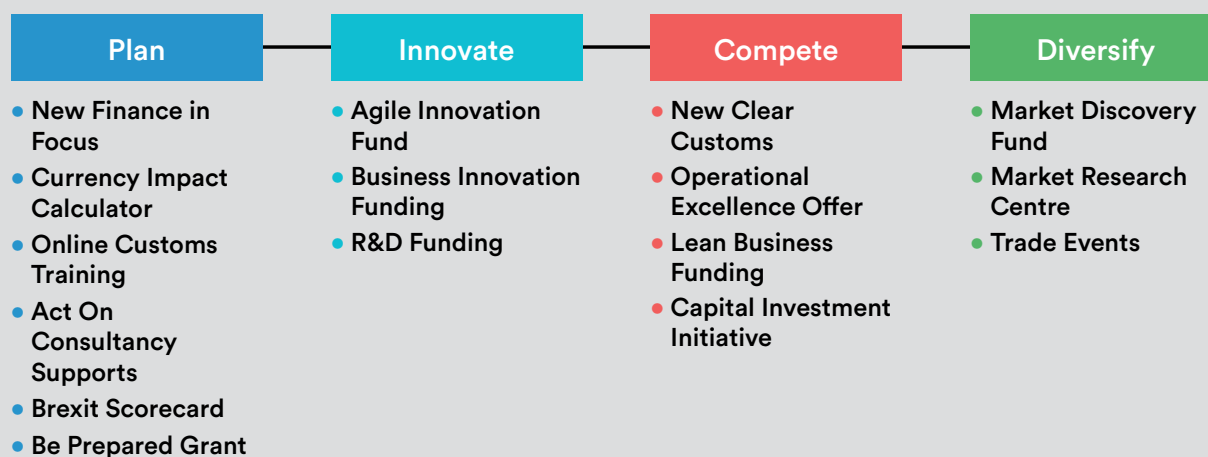
To achieve Investors in Diversity Gold, your organisation will be required to undertake an in-depth self-assessment of your practices across the Investors in Diversity five principal pillars:

1. Diverse and Inclusive Leadership
2. Policies, Procedures and Processes
3. Recruitment, Retention and Progression
4. Recording and Monitoring
5. Impact on External Diversity.



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FALLS FROM HEIGHT NUMBER ONE CAUSE OF FATAL CONSTRUCTION ACCIDENTS

New figures released by the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) reveal that overall vehicles are the leading cause of death in Irish workplaces. However, falls from height remains the biggest killer in construction.

The HSA's 2018 annual report shows that there were 39 work-related fatalities reported to the Authority in 2018, compared to 48 in 2017, a decline of 19%. But the single biggest danger last year came from vehicles in the workplace, with 17 lives lost across all industries last year.

The farming sector suffered 15 work-related deaths in 2018, compared to 25 in 2017, a decline of 40%; while construction had five work-related deaths.

Minister of State for Trade, Employment, Business, EU Digital Single Market and Data Protection, Pat Breen TD, said workplace deaths cause great trauma and personal suffering for families every year. While welcoming the decline in workplace fatalities, he said, "We should remember that any improvement in numbers provides little comfort to the family, friends and colleagues of the dozens of Irish people whose lives were cut short this year while doing their job."

Dr Sharon McGuinness, Chief Executive Officer, HSA, said that the fatality statistics show how vehicles are now the biggest threat to life in the Irish workplace.

"Whether it's a farmer driving a tractor in a yard, or a truck driver delivering a load, across all sectors, incidents involving vehicles accounted for almost half – or 44% – of all deaths last year. The worrying trend is continuing with six deaths provisionally recorded so far this year in the transportation sector."

Tractors were involved in the majority of workplace vehicle incidents last year and claimed six lives, but cars, refuse trucks and forklifts were also involved in fatalities.

Meanwhile, the annual report shows that the Authority concluded 15 prosecutions in 2018, resulting in total fines of €705,972. Overall, inspectors issued 452 improvement notices, 523 prohibition notices and 35 on-the-spot fines.

According to Dermot Carey, Director, Safety and Training, CIF, while the HSA annual report indicates that the highest number of fatal accidents in the general workforce involved vehicles, falls from height remain the principal causes of fatal and serious injuries in the construction sector.

"An in-depth HSA report into fatal accidents, published in 2018, entitled 'A Review of Construction Related Fatal Accidents 1989-2016', indicated that 40% of all fatal accidents in the construction sector involved falls during this period," Dermot Carey says.

"In 2018, of the five fatal accidents in the construction sector, four involved falls. The above report indicates that 14% of fatal accidents in the construction sector involved vehicles. As a sector, we need to take this information on board and continue efforts to reduce these accidents to zero. As a consequence of the figures above, this year's Construction Safety Week will once more focus on these high incident areas. We encourage all companies in the sector to sign up as partners to this event." - **C**

Construction Safety Week 2019 takes place from 21st to 25th October. To sign your company up and access CIF Construction Safety Week resources, visit www.cif.ie/safety-week

CIF CONFERENCE TO SET OUT FUTURE VISION FOR THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

The CIF Annual Conference 2019 takes place on Wednesday, 2nd October at Croke Park, with the theme 'Building a profitable and sustainable industry, fit for the future'.



Pat Lucey, President, CIF, during a panel discussion at last year's CIF Annual Conference.

The Irish economy depends on a thriving, dynamic and innovative construction industry. Most Government strategies, such as 'Project Ireland 2040', are contingent on the construction industry's capacity, adaptability and innovativeness.

But barriers are impacting the industry's ability to deliver on these ambitious strategies. With an acute housing shortage and significant infrastructure deficits, policies and practices have to change within the construction ecosystem to release the industry's enormous potential to shape Ireland's economic future.

Recovering from a dramatic decline and now back on a strong growth trajectory, the construction sector will be a crucial job



An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar TD will address the CIF Annual Conference 2019.

creator over the next decade and beyond. The industry and Government must ensure that the hard-won recovery is sustainable to avoid the boom/bust cycles that have bedevilled construction in the past.

But some clouds are gathering. Brexit looms large and the continuing skills shortage in the industry, as well as the issues of diversity, equality and inclusion in the workforce, all which need to be addressed urgently. In addition, the planning system needs to be recalibrated to be more efficient, and investment priorities need to be adjusted to achieve balanced regional development. The public sector procurement system also needs to

be improved, and there must be adequate funding in the industry.

These are some of the issues that will be explored at the CIF Annual Conference 2019, the flagship industry event that attracts more than 500 delegates.

Join contractors, home builders, planners, engineers, investors and suppliers at this annual conference as we explore the fundamental issues we need to address to grow our industry profitably and sustainably.

SPEAKERS

An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar will open the conference during the morning session.

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Kjetil Tønning, President, European Construction Industry Federation.

CIF President Pat Lucey will then address the conference, before international keynote speaker Kjetil Tønning, President, European Construction Industry Federation (ECIF), makes his presentation.

In his presentation, Kjetil Tønning will discuss the ECIF vision for Europe in 2050 and what needs to be done to achieve this, including the main challenges that lie ahead for construction ecosystem in delivering a productive, competitive, balanced and sustainable European model.

Speaking to *Construction* magazine, Kjetil Tønning said, "The construction sector is the essential partner to deal with today's challenges of building sustainable and climate-resilient infrastructure and creating "zero energy" buildings and smart/digital cities. We are equipping existing workers with new skills while attracting young people into a modern, innovative industry, that will give them exciting long-term career prospects.

"The construction industry will provide the appropriate solutions for better living and working environments, mobility and economic growth in Europe."

Economist, author and broadcaster David McWilliams will speak about the need to invest in infrastructure and for the Government to support innovative developments that will reshape Dublin and the rest of Ireland. He will also discuss the need for the construction sector to be inventive and creative in how it delivers projects.



David McWilliams, economist, author and broadcaster.

“ THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY WILL PROVIDE THE APPROPRIATE SOLUTIONS FOR BETTER LIVING AND WORKING ENVIRONMENTS, MOBILITY AND ECONOMIC GROWTH IN EUROPE. ”

KJETIL TONNING, PRESIDENT, ECIF.

Other morning speakers will include Matt Gough, Director of Innovation, Mace, UK, who will discuss how the industry is entering the age of mass-manufactured buildings and how this is going to change the industry and define new categories



Alison Watson MBE, founder and Chief Executive, Class Of Your Own, UK.

of building. Dermot Flanagan, Senior Counsel, will address the implications of delays in the Irish planning system for development projects.

The afternoon session will include an address by Eoghan Murphy TD, Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government.

Ann Bentley, Global Board Director, Rider Levett Bucknall, and Construction Leadership Council board member, will discuss smart procurement and how to modernise and transform procurement practices, with a panel discussion on the same topic to follow. Alison Watson MBE, founder and Chief Executive, Class Of Your Own, UK, will address the subject of how to get young people excited about careers in construction.

The conference will include additional presentations and numerous industry expert panel discussions on issues of concern.

Newstalk presenter Ivan Yates will chair the conference.

SPONSORS

The CIF is grateful to Gold Sponsors DRS Bond Management Limited; Topcon; Philip Lee, Mace; EY Ireland and Enterprise Ireland for their support. It would also like to thank Silver Sponsors Client Solutions; CRH and Downey Planning and Architecture. **C**

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**Business Post
Events**

CIF WELCOMES DECISION TO HONOUR RETROFIT APPLICATIONS

The CIF has welcomed the announcement by Government that it is to cover any appropriate applications made before the ending of the SEAI deep retrofit scheme

Sean Downey, Director, Specialist Contracting, CIF, said that it is a really important decision that will give comfort to dozens of people who had applied for deep retrofit grants towards the end of the scheme.

“The Government’s agreement to continue to fund any appropriate application made before the official ending of the scheme provides confidence to those contractors involved.

“A number of projects were underway and in planning that were entirely dependent on the grant and were at risk as the scheme officially ended. Not doing so had the potential to undermine the public’s



Sean Downey, Director,
Specialist Contracting, CIF.

belief in the retrofit programme.

“At a time when both the industry and the public require certainty to make the sorts of investment required to make the deep retrofit programme a success, it’s very positive that this issue was resolved quickly.”

He said that the CIF has engaged extensively with the SEAI and Government in highlighting its importance to the industry and the overall credibility of the scheme for the future.

“The Deep Retrofit Scheme has the potential to underpin the growth in the construction industry for the next two decades. It is also a critical step towards Ireland achieving its climate change goals. We hope now that the positive interest in this grant will be reflected in a significant support package for people interested in deep retrofitting in 2020.” **C**

30% OF NEW APARTMENT COST GOES TO GOVERNMENT

A new CIF and Cork Chamber of Commerce commissioned report of new apartment sales in Cork has found that the cost on new apartments is now beyond the reach of most low to middle income Irish workers, with 30% of the final sale price going directly to the State in taxes and fees.

The study, conducted by EY-DKM Economic Advisory on behalf of CIF and Cork Chamber of Commerce found the cost of an apartment is just 48% to 56% of the overall total cost.

The report warned that this means that rents have to be set at a level which is unsustainable for most workers. The report also warned that the increasing inability of workers to access affordable apartments to either buy or rent is threatening Ireland’s future economic growth.

The report highlights issues over the cost and affordability of apartments, including that 97% of all apartments built in Cork were developed before 2010.

The study was conducted across four new apartment schemes in Cork. It found that the total delivery cost of a new apartment drives a sales price far above what a first-time buyer working couple can afford.

Conor Healy, Chief Executive Officer, Cork Chamber of Commerce, says, “As Ireland’s fastest-growing city, Cork needs 27,300 new housing units by 2031 to meet growth targets. However, new homes have to be affordable.”

Conor O’Connell, Regional Director, Southern Region, CIF, said that one-third of the total price of a new apartment goes to the



Conor O’Connell, Regional
Director, Southern Region, CIF.

State and is entirely outside the control of developers.

“The current cost of delivery means that it is not possible to construct affordable new city centre apartments for the average renter or buyer. Unless the total cost of apartment delivery comes down, new apartments will remain unviable.” **C**



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As part of its commitment to members, CIF developed the CIF Affinity Scheme to bring genuine savings that help keep members' costs down. CIF Affinity is a unique package of exclusive top brand discounts and special offers available only to CIF members. If you are a supplier to the construction industry with an irresistible offer, CIF Affinity offers you an opportunity to engage directly with your core market by offering Ireland's leading construction firms exclusive deals. The CIF's Affinity Team is on hand to assist qualifying brands in tailoring their offering for member companies. CIF is interested in speaking with companies offering quality services and products that will benefit its members. **C**

To learn more about CIF Affinity, contact Bernardine Walsh today on 01 406 6067 or email: bwalsh@cif.ie



Bernardine Walsh, Membership Development Executive, CIF.

Affinity offers that CIF members can avail of include:

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- Neville Hotels: A 15% discount on best available room rates and 10% discount for meeting and event room hire. Hotels include The Royal Marine, Dun Laoghaire; Druid's Glen, Wicklow; The Tower, Waterford; and The River Court, Kilkenny.
- Dalata Group: A 10% discount in any Dalata Group Hotel across Ireland and the UK.
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DALATA HOTEL GROUP SHOWS ITS AFFINITY WITH CIF MEMBERS

Pat McCann, founder and CEO, Dalata Group, speaks with **SEAN MURPHY** about the important relationship between his company and the Irish construction industry.

Since its establishment in 2007, the Dalata Group has grown to become Ireland's largest hotel group, operating 43 hotels throughout Ireland and the UK at the current time. The company was founded by CEO Pat McCann when he acquired a group of hotels from Choice Hotels Ireland, which were rebranded in 2008 as Maldron Hotels. Dalata now operates the Maldron Hotel and Clayton Hotel brands, as well as managing a portfolio of partner hotels.

Through the CIF Affinity Scheme, Dalata offers CIF members a 10% discount at all of its hotels, including the Clayton Hotel Charlemont, opposite CIF Headquarters in Dublin.

Pat McCann says since its beginning the Dalata Group and the Irish construction industry have enjoyed a strong synergistic relationship, and its CIF Affinity Scheme discount offer is an extension of this relationship.

"I am delighted that we can offer substantial, exclusive discounts to CIF members through the CIF Affinity Scheme and show our appreciation of its importance to our development."

Speaking about the hotel market in Ireland, Pat McCann says that 2019 has been a year that has presented several specific challenges for the Irish hospitality industry.

"For the first time in four years, the hotel sector will not have experienced growth in numbers. We were also hit with the VAT increase in January, and there has been a general slowdown in terms of the transient business coming out of the UK. All of this has meant that the market is much softer this year than people would have anticipated. However, Dalata is lucky in that we are not reliant on one sector or market, and our latest strong half-year results reflect this."

The Dalata Group has 33 hotels in Ireland and 10 in the UK. It currently has eight hotels under construction, two of which are in Dublin: one on the old Tara Towers Hotel site on Merrion Road, which is at present being demolished to make way for the new development; and the



L to r: Tom Parlon, Director General, CIF; Pat McCann, CEO, Dalata Group; Bernardine Walsh, Membership Development Executive, CIF; and Pat Lucey, President, CIF.

“WE ARE AN IRISH COMPANY THAT HAS GROWN QUICKLY DESPITE MANY CHALLENGES.”

other is on the Salesforce campus on North Wall Quay.

"We also have two hotels under construction in Glasgow, two in Manchester, one in Birmingham, and one in Bristol, with more to come." Pat McCann explains, "This will bring the total number of hotels in the group to over 50 by the end of 2021."

Pat McCann describes Dalata as an urban area hotel group. "We primarily operate in urban areas. We're very strong in Dublin, with 20% of all hotel rooms. We have 22% of rooms in Cork, 15% in Limerick and Galway, and 12% in Belfast."

He remains ambitious and optimistic about his company's future.

"We are an Irish company that has grown quickly despite many challenges. Our ambition is to develop into a pan-European hotel group in the coming years."

"We currently employ over 5,000 people across Ireland and the UK. We're one of the best trainers and developers of people in the hotel industry in Europe. At present, we have 260 people on our senior development programmes, and a further 2,500 people will complete junior training programmes in 2019," he says. "We grow our own people. All our new hotels are managed by internal people, that have grown up within Dalata."

Pat McCann closes by saying that he is fully aware of the number of construction jobs Dalata helps to generate.

"We spent €300m last year on hotel construction. This year it will be over €400m. That is a lot of construction employment in Ireland and the UK, and shows the great synergy between our sectors." **C**

To avail of the exclusive Dalata Group CIF Affinity Scheme 10% discount on the best available bed & breakfast rate across its range of hotels in UK and Ireland, lo-call: 1850 885 885 or 057 869 5946 and quote 'CIF' to a member of the reservations team.

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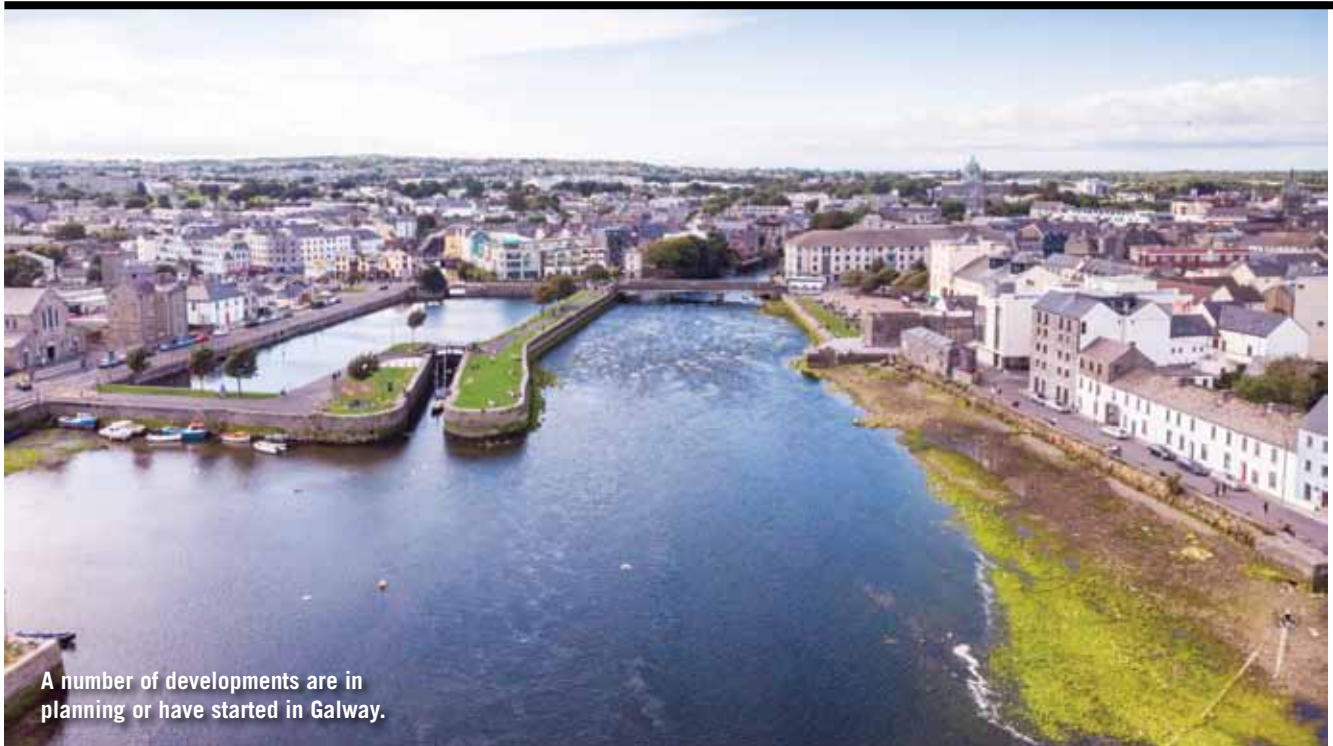
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A number of developments are in planning or have started in Galway.

NO BETTER TIME THAN NOW FOR REGIONAL INVESTMENT

Construction activity is uneven across the regions, with a common cause for concern being delays in planning and public procurement processes. **BARRY MCCALL** reports.

Amid reports of increases in activity around the regions, there are serious concerns about delivery of the National Development Plan (NDP). Positivity mixed with caution continues to be the overriding sentiment in the eastern region, according to James Benson, Director, Housing, Planning and Development Services, CIF, who says while the outlook for 2019 is extremely positive, some ongoing challenges have yet to be overcome to deliver to its full potential for the remainder of 2019 and beyond."

EASTERN REGION

"The region is influenced by its proximity to Dublin and construction activity and output in the greater Dublin area (GDA), and a large percentage of the members in the eastern region benefit directly from construction activity and output in the GDA."

However, housing is a particular issue of concern in the east.

"While progress is being made, significant challenges remain, and this

is evident in the latest completion and commencement figures", explains James Benson. "Uncertainty in the economy with Brexit and other matters directly related to housing, such as the 'Help to Buy' scheme, have created a softer market. We have expressed our belief to Government that without certainty and without confirmation of the extension of the Help to Buy scheme, the slowdown in commencements and completions figures from May will continue through 2019."

He believes this will also continue through 2020 if the current situation is not addressed. The latest CSO statistics released indicate that while figures for the 12 months to May 2019 show an increase of 23% in commencements, these numbers are bolstered by the GDA with large percentage increases in regional pockets such as Laois, Kilkenny and Monaghan coming from a very low base.

"In the first five months of 2019, commencement figures were up just 2.5% from the same period in 2018," James Benson notes. "Completions for the year to June are more positive with an increase of

1,300 representing almost 17% compared to this time last year."

Infrastructural deficits are also affecting activity in the region. "As detailed in our pre-budget submission, the lack of infrastructure is limiting the development of much residentially zoned land," James Benson says. "Uncertainty surrounding the Help to Buy scheme and Irish Water continue to be the biggest areas of challenge to members with increasing construction costs also affecting viability."

WESTERN AND MIDLAND REGION

Justin Molloy, Regional Director, Western and Midland Region, CIF, reports an upturn in activity mainly in the Galway region.

"Activity has improved," he says, "particularly in Galway city. A number of projects have commenced on site while more are in the planning stages. The €105m Bonham Quay development in Galway harbour is one example, where the Sisk Group have recently commenced work on site. JJ Rhatigan has restarted work on



**James Benson, Director,
Housing, Planning and
Development Services, CIF.**

the Crown Square project in Mervue. This is a €200m mixed residential, commercial, retail and hotel development. It's good to see these projects moving from the drawing board to site.

He also points to the planned €450m "Ceannt Quarter" development on the CIE-owned 8.2-acre site around Ceannt Station, which is expected to go to planning shortly. This project would be one of the largest urban regeneration schemes in the history of the State, which will include retail units, apartments, bars, restaurants and a 200-bedroom hotel.

"Another very exciting project is the proposed redevelopment of Galway Port, which is currently with An Bord Pleanála for consideration. If this project proceeds, it has the potential to significantly boost economic activity in the entire western region.

"BAM is currently constructing the new 400-bedroom student accommodation on the old Westwood Hotel site in Dangan, while Flynn is building a 147-bedroom student accommodation development at the Fairgreen. Meanwhile, NUI Galway has recently secured planning to build an additional 674-bedroom student accommodation on the university's campus."

He adds that Burns Building & Civil Engineering is currently completing the €5m GMIT iHUB building on the college's campus, while Elliott is working on the €20m Radiation Oncology Centre at University College Hospital, Galway.

Planning permission has also been granted for the €30m redevelopment of the Connacht Sports Ground, which will see a full reconstruction of the stadium into a 12,000-capacity facility. This will also have an indoor high-performance training centre.



**Justin Molloy, Regional Director,
Western and Midland Region, CIF.**

"Galway is starting to see a lot of activity," Justin Molloy continues. "All going well, it will be bustling for some time to come. The Outer Ring Road development is also currently with An Bord Pleanála for approval. This will have a major impact on Galway traffic. As time goes on, it has become much more difficult to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) to the city and county due to the serious traffic congestion."

He says that residential development is taking place in the west of the city, with Burkeway Homes and K King Construction currently building residential units, while O'Malley Construction have applied for permission to develop a 14.5-acre site under Strategic Housing Development legislation. On the east of the city, Highgate Properties and Duane Construction are currently building residential units, while other developments are in the planning process."

SOUTHERN REGION

The picture in the south is not quite so bright.

"Business is okay," says Conor O'Connell, Regional Director, Southern Region, CIF. "There has been no great increase in activity in 2019, and there are concerns about residential output. Reports from members in many parts of the region reflect their unhappiness."

He points to the impact of stringent planning rules and building regulations on house building costs as one issue.

"Rising labour and materials costs coupled with 'near zero building energy' (NZEB) requirements and new building and fire regulations make it very difficult to make a profit on housing," he explains. "The mortgage lending rules add to this. All of these factors are coming together to



**Conor O'Connell, Regional Director,
Southern Region, CIF.**

depress activity."

He adds that there is limited scope to increase prices in the current climate.

Conor O'Connell also has concerns about infrastructure funding.

"The NDP is not having the balancing impact across the country that was hoped for at this stage. That it is having any impact at all in some areas has to be questioned," he says. "There seems to be a slowdown in publicly-funded infrastructure. We are getting reports of projects of all sizes being stalled or delayed. The most high profile of which is the Dunkettle Interchange delay. The M28 is also caught up in the courts system, where a small number of people have delayed it through a judicial review.

"The M20 is stuck at route selection stage," he adds. "There is no functioning transport link between Cork and Limerick. You have to contrast that with the connectivity between the other cities in the country. The M22 is at tender stage, and we are hoping for a preferred contractor announcement. This will be the first major piece of infrastructure in 20 years. This is quite extraordinary in a regional capital of half a million people."

He also refers to ongoing delays with the new Cork Event Centre, and the planned flood prevention works for Cork city centre. "There was a sod-turning for the Cork Event Centre before the last general election, and the flood prevention works went to design in 2009," he notes ruefully.

PLANNING SYSTEM DELAYS

Delays are also causing problems in the western and midland region.

"When you look at the planning system you see 200 units for Bearna falling at judicial review," Justin Molloy says. "The planning and legislative system are having

M7 widening scheme.



an impact on the ability to deliver badly needed infrastructure and development throughout the region. This has to be addressed as soon as possible.”

Justin Molloy questions the basis for many of the planning delays and appeals.

“You have development plans that go through extensive public consultation before being agreed and put in place. If a developer goes through the planning process in line with the local development plan, they should have a reasonable expectation of getting planning permission. But that’s not the case. It’s a very lengthy process with the prospect of a judicial review at the end of it. There is a need to review who can object to a project and who is entitled to seek a judicial review. We also need time frames to be put in place for speedy decisions in the process.”

Overall, more certainty is required.

“The Apple project at Athenry was an example of where the planning process scuppered a major project, which was supported by a significant amount of people in the region. The system tries to deliver but cannot.

“The planning system can become so complex and litigious,” Justin Molloy adds. “The cost of making a planning application with all the regulations, environmental impact assessments, and so on is prohibitive. The Government has to look at what can be done about this.”

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The NDP is another issue.

“We have to look at the time it takes for major infrastructure projects to get through the system,” Justin Molloy contends. “We should be looking at this today, not in 10 years’ time. It takes years and years to get from planning to design,

to procurement, to contract stage. If we want to develop the projects, we need a procurement system that is fit for purpose and delivers for the people.”

This all feeds into overall activity.

“By and large, it’s still quite slow outside the major urban centres,” Justin Molloy continues. “It is down to balanced regional development, and it is incumbent on the Government to ensure the NDP delivers on that. The National Planning Framework (NPF) also needs to deliver. The first step is the planning system. After that, we have to look at the procurement system. Aspirations are all good and well, but the planning and procurement systems must be addressed. We are never going to progress the rural economy until the infrastructure is in place to support it.”

CONSTRUCTION PRODUCTIVITY

James Benson agrees.

“The NDP is a very good thing, but we have to see if all the projects move ahead on time. Much has been said about construction industry productivity, but I would argue that this is inaccurate and, in fact, contrary to the reality. Ireland’s productivity is among the highest in Europe. Where the lag is being experienced is at the procurement and planning stages. What we have is an ineffective procurement and planning process, and it is having a detrimental impact on the delivery of critical infrastructure within all regions of Ireland – some with more devastating effects than others. The time taken from going into the procurement phase to delivery is much too long. Builders, developers and contractors are very efficient and productive, but the problem lies with the time spent on planning and procurement. That’s the major issue I see with the NDP.”

Conor O’Connell echoes this point.

“The lack of productivity in the public procurement and planning system in Ireland has to be addressed,” he says.

“There has been a lot of talk about productivity in construction, but this ignores low productivity in the procurement system. There will be some light at the end of the tunnel when we see greater efficiencies in the public system. There also needs to be an urgent review of all regulatory costs associated with residential delivery. VAT will have to be part of the mix as well.”

TIME FOR REGIONAL INVESTMENT

Conor O’Connell calls for a frontloading of NDP expenditure. “We need to get the money out there,” he says. “There couldn’t be a better time for counter-cyclical measures and to invest in construction activity with Brexit coming up.”

James Benson believes there is an opportunity to learn from the mistakes of the past.

“The history of national spatial plans in Ireland could be considered as missed opportunities in many cases,” he says. “Without the introduction of the NPF, future development scenarios show cities such as Cork, Limerick, Waterford and Galway growing, but not at the pace or scale required to function as realistic alternatives to Dublin. The potential of the NPF could see investment in the regions scarcely imagined in the past. The Capital Tracker will be a key indicator of the economic progress being made in all regions and will provide a dashboard of delivery for all the key projects throughout the country.”

James Benson agrees with Conor O’Connell in terms of the timing of spending under the NDP.

“Now is the time for investment,” James Benson says. “To see real movement on the ground, we need to see commitment today. For real impact and progress to be made on the ground, we need to see investment in ‘Project Ireland 2040’ today. We also need to see meaningful procurement commence today, so that projects will get to tender stage in two to three years’ time. It will take a further 12 to 24 months after that for activity to occur.

“When we look closely at the tracker, which is a very useful guide, but only a guide, we note that a significant percentage of projects are still at procurement, design and planning stage. Without investment and real intent, the pipeline beyond 2022 will be extremely challenging for the industry,” James Benson concludes. **C**



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SUSTAINING IRELAND'S ECONOMIC SUCCESS

FERGA KANE, Partner, Government and Infrastructure Advisory, EY Ireland, outlines why the Government and industry should hold their nerve, and stick to the script on 'Project Ireland 2040'.

Over the past five years, Ireland has created over 351,000 new jobs and topped the EU GDP growth league table for four of these years. While Dublin is often the subject of the conversation in relation to Ireland's job growth, it should be noted that 65% of these jobs were created outside of Dublin. Residential property prices outside Dublin have seen significant growth, rising 81% since their 2013 trough, but they have yet to rebound to their 2007 peak. Of the 18,000 new dwelling completions in 2018, over 11,000 were outside Dublin.

PROJECT IRELAND 2040 – A VISION TO STAY AHEAD

'Project Ireland 2040', the Government's overarching strategy for Ireland's social, economic and cultural development for the next 20 years, is now in place. The National Planning Framework (NPF) forms part of Project Ireland 2040 and outlines both national and regional goals for people and jobs. It forecasts that there will be one million extra people and 660,000 additional jobs by 2040. The Government recognises that for this to be sustainable, the regions need to be developed to facilitate future growth. The National Development Plan (NDP) and the NPF acknowledge that adequate infrastructure must be in place to deal with the pressures of a significantly larger population and ultimately deliver this economic and spatial vision.

Drafting a plan is important, but delivering it within the bounds of competing pressures is the key challenge for both the public and private sector.

CONNECTIVITY MATTERS

Job growth has been encouraging across the regions and shows that these job markets have something to offer. Areas outside Dublin and the east are becoming more attractive to live and work in, and it is important that these regions develop sustainably to create successful regional hubs, which will underwrite the future success of Ireland's economy.

The NPF acknowledges the need for more balanced growth between the regions, and aims to see 75% of growth outside of Dublin and its suburbs. Access to jobs, housing, and physical and communications infrastructure is critical to attract and retain both investment and people. Initial



Ferga Kane, Partner, Government and Infrastructure Advisory, EY Ireland.

“OF THE
18,000 NEW
DWELLING
COMPLETIONS
IN 2018, OVER
11,000 WERE
OUTSIDE
DUBLIN.”

investments will generate jobs across the regions, but improved infrastructure will encourage new foreign direct investment (FDI) and allow current FDI to expand to new locations.

The National Broadband Plan will be a key element of sustained regional growth. Access to high speed broadband in rural areas will foster development of

businesses and employment in rural towns and villages, with the knock-on benefit of attracting people to these areas to settle and raise their families. Coupled with most companies embracing flexible working arrangements, this will enable employees to work remotely.

Cork and Limerick are examples of the potential of successful regional hubs. Both have ports, airports and universities, and the construction of the M20 from Cork to Limerick will better connect the two regions. This in turn will create a new commuter belt and promote new areas of housing development. Having a skilled talent pool, adequate infrastructure and relatively lower living costs will attract FDI and skilled labour to these counties and the surrounding areas, which will be crucial to sustaining growth and retaining talent.

Each region has its own plans for the future, which focus on success and sustainability, growing populations, and improving quality of life for all citizens. Achieving these aims will unlock further potential for the Irish economy and will promote indigenous growth along the way.

TWISTS AND TURNS ALONG THE WAY

There will be numerous economic cycles on the journey to 2040, and an almost certain break from current sustained economic growth. Peaks and troughs are anticipated, with external factors such as Brexit, global trade, and taxation changes generating short-term, unpredictable unknowns for the Irish economy. Ireland relies heavily on FDI for employment (circa 28%) and tax receipts (circa 77% of total corporation tax revenues).

When economic fortunes are less favourable, decisions surrounding public spending come under increased scrutiny, and often plans get abandoned in favour of tightening budgets to try to swim against the tide. A negative relationship traditionally exists between policy uncertainty and capital spending. Business decisions will be based on labour markets and connectivity, and ensuring sufficient business investment and available skilled labour in less favourable economic times remains a key challenge for policymakers.

Holding our nerve, and sticking to the script on Ireland 2040's ambitions, will be crucial to achieving these aims, although undoubtedly, significant challenges will arise along the way. **C**

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Exterior works to Johnstown Castle involved repointing walls; the restoration and replacement of its cast iron rainwater system; replacement of the roof; installation of a drainage system; and the improvement of pedestrian access and lighting around the castle.

REFURBISHMENT OF WEXFORD CASTLE AN INSTANT TOURIST HIT FOR SOUTH-EAST

Tom O'Brien Construction's comprehensive refurbishment of Johnstown Castle in County Wexford combines careful restoration with some modern interventions, to great effect.

SEAN MURPHY reports.

Tom O'Brien Construction recently completed work on the refurbishment of Johnstown Castle, County Wexford, which is a protected structure dating back to the early 1800s.

The works involved the substantial refurbishment of the historic building, which was formerly the home of the Fitzgerald family and latterly the regional offices of Teagasc in the south-east.

Works included the remodelling of the castle under the auspices of a conservation architect to return the castle from office space developed by the OPW during the 1970s and 1980s, into a semblance of its previous self.

PROJECT WORKS

Tom O'Brien, Managing Director, Tom O'Brien Construction, describes some of the work involved, "The installation of a new lift in the basement serving all four floors and the upgrading of the mechanical and electrical services throughout the building was paramount in making the building safe for visitors. Particular emphasis was placed on fireproofing the structure to comply with current regulations, and we were responsible for the oversight of the overall building's fire integrity.

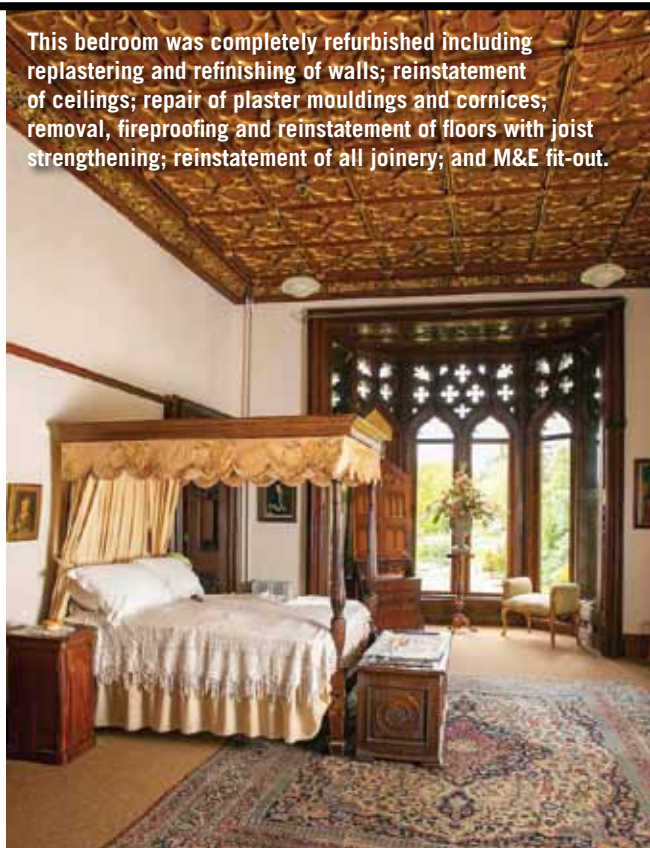
"We also ensured the building met all current access and egress regulations. This was required, bearing in mind that the building is now open to the general public."

The refurbishment of the castle's drawing room included the replastering of walls; reinstatement of ceiling finishes; repair of plaster mouldings and cornices; removal, fireproofing, and reinstatement of floors with joist strengthening; and M&E fit-out.



Other structural works included substantial re-roofing, existing timber floor upgrades, restoration of internal and external joinery, repainting and replastering of various internal walls, making good the original cornices, and reinstatement of chandeliers.

"We also restored the original wallpaper and decorative timber



This bedroom was completely refurbished including replastering and refinishing of walls; reinstatement of ceilings; repair of plaster mouldings and cornices; removal, fireproofing and reinstatement of floors with joist strengthening; reinstatement of all joinery; and M&E fit-out.



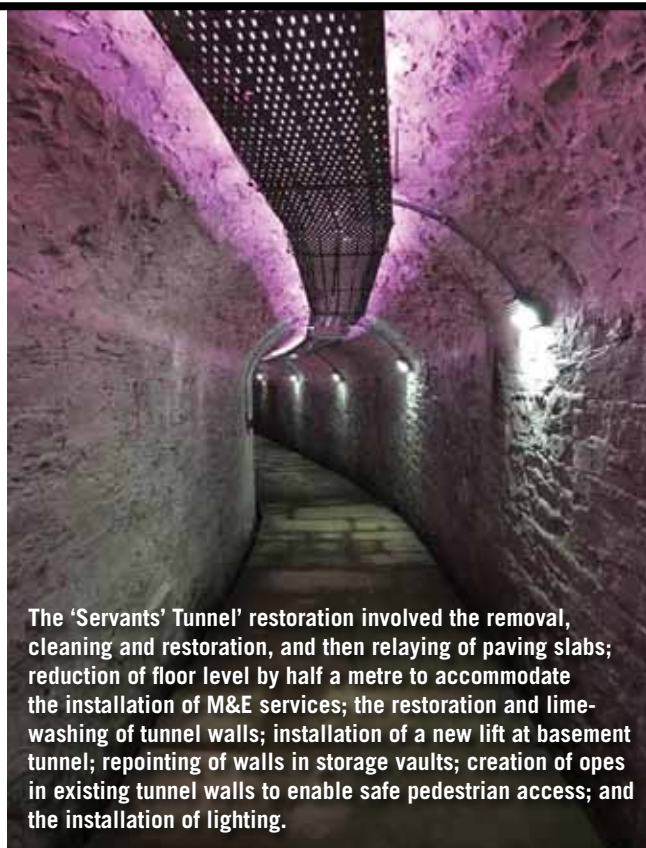
This dressing room was refurbished including replastering and refinishing of walls; reinstatement of ceiling finishes; repair of plaster mouldings and cornices; removal, fireproofing and reinstatement of floors with joist strengthening; reinstatement of all joinery; and M&E fit-out.

works where possible,” continues Tom O’Brien. “External works involved repointing areas of the original stone walls and provision of fire roads and an intercept land drain around the property to alleviate groundwater penetration to the substructure. Major work items were undertaken in the basement of the castle, including the upgrading of a pedestrian entrance tunnel some 90 metres long and the provision of a new plant room, including the lift plant room, and a new sump and pump to maintain a lowered water level in the area to prevent historic flooding.”

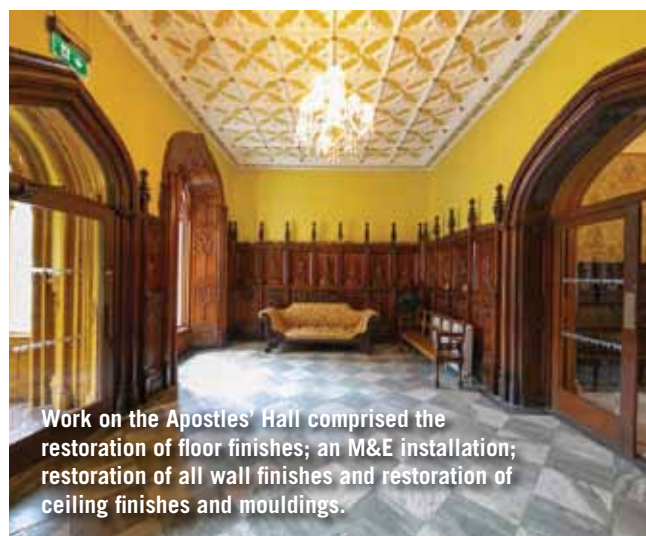
Tom O’Brien says that the project demonstrates his company’s ability to meet the specific needs of public bodies on buildings of historical significance, ensuring a high level of care in the restoration of the public buildings to their former glory and the repurposing of those buildings to ensure their effectiveness into the future.

PORTFOLIO OF WORK

Tom O’Brien Construction has an impressive portfolio of



The ‘Servants’ Tunnel’ restoration involved the removal, cleaning and restoration, and then relaying of paving slabs; reduction of floor level by half a metre to accommodate the installation of M&E services; the restoration and lime-washing of tunnel walls; installation of a new lift at basement tunnel; repointing of walls in storage vaults; creation of opes in existing tunnel walls to enable safe pedestrian access; and the installation of lighting.



Work on the Apostles’ Hall comprised the restoration of floor finishes; an M&E installation; restoration of all wall finishes and restoration of ceiling finishes and mouldings.

conservation work, with previous works garnering national and international design and construction awards for major works such as Waterford’s Medieval Museum, completed in Waterford’s Viking Triangle; Carrick-on-Suir’s new town hall; Enniscorthy Courthouse; and most recently, Waterford’s Christchurch Cathedral.

Current projects include the refurbishment of Clonmel’s original town hall, an 1840’s building, into a revamped Gaelscoil and the restoration and redevelopment of Enniscorthy’s Market House, an 1813 building, into modern local authority offices.

“Our firm has a fine record in the conservation field with strong specialist knowledge and a keen interest in preserving historic buildings for the next generation,” Tom O’Brien concludes.

Johnstown Castle is now being operated by the Irish Heritage Board and is being enjoyed as a showpiece castle. It has been open to the public for museum tours since summer 2019. **C**

To contact Tom O’Brien Construction, phone 051 873 455, or visit www.tobcon.ie

GOING VERTICAL – OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES OF BUILDING ‘UP’

CHRIS EMERY, Senior Manager for Vertical Construction at Topcon Positioning, discusses the new-age of technology increasing productivity and reducing conflicts and mistakes for upward projects, improving delivery times and bottom lines while capturing a true digital twin.

A growing population continues to put pressure on buildings and infrastructure across the world. As our numbers grow, an increasing amount of us are moving to cities; with 70% of the world's population expected to live in cities by 2050. With so little space and so many people to accommodate, construction firms are looking up for the solution.

But the industry is notoriously behind the curve when it comes to modernisation, meaning the delivery of vertical projects is often slow and difficult when using traditional construction workflows. Professionals alongside government bodies are urging more project delivery teams to adopt new digital methods to avoid any additional time and cost needed for reworks.

The idea of the sky being the limit has never been truer for the construction industry. In cities across Europe, there are already over 500 skyscrapers, with nearly another 100 in planning or under construction. The number of tall buildings in Europe is continually increasing, and at a rapid rate as major cities try to keep up with demand for more living and working space.

We're facing the challenges of innovating new and better ways of building taller, and we still have to adhere to requirements set by timelines and budgets, with the ever-increasing need to reduce material waste, bring down carbon emissions and provide meaningful data.

How can we overcome the complexities of vertical construction and deliver on-budget, on-time, sustainably-built buildings that are fit for the future?

Part of the answer lies in technology, and this technology already exists and delivers benefits for forward-thinking construction firms across Europe.

TIME IS MONEY

Building upwards requires a significant

“ THE GTL-1000, ALONGSIDE TOPCON'S MAGNET AND CLEAREDGE VERITY SOFTWARE, ENABLES THIS VERIFICATION AT ANY AND EVERY STAGE, WHILE COMPILING A DIGITAL PICTURE OF THE AS-BUILT STRUCTURE. WITH THIS, REWORKS CAN BECOME A THING OF THE PAST. ”

investment of time in design and planning to ensure the structure, while being built and, once complete, is stable and safe. To make sure project delivery teams are sticking to that meticulously crafted design, regular verification of the as-built form is critical. Without this, misplacements and deviations are easily missed, which can have



Chris Emery, Senior Manager for Vertical Construction, Topcon Positioning.

a knock-on impact on progress ahead of the next scheduled scan and check, where the scale and eventual cost of the issue escalates. Verification technology also allows us to account for and adapt to unanticipated design variations almost instantly.

Verification technology has been available for years, but it has been a lengthy and expensive process. Many construction firms have needed to outsource the equipment and expertise to third-party scanning teams, meaning there would often be months between scans due to budget constraints not permitting frequent data collection. The reality is that without constant validation and verification on the job-site for every part of the build, mistakes or variations that are not tracked will inevitably lead to waste, delays and overspend.

With industry reports suggesting that five to 12% of construction budgets are being used in fixes and rework, this is a clear area where improvements can be made, so budgets aren't exceeded. A new workflow specifically for vertical construction projects has been introduced to the market just this year. A high-quality scanner combined with a robotic total station provides one device that is quick, easy to use for site engineers and feeds into powerful software that can provide reports on items out of tolerance in near real-time. The GTL-1000, alongside Topcon's MAGNET and ClearEdge Verity software, enables this verification at any and every stage, while compiling a digital picture of the as-built structure. With this,

COMMERCIAL FEATURE: TOPCON POSITIONING IRELAND



The GTL-1000.

reworks can become a thing of the past.

RESPONSIBLE RESOURCE USE

If we look at reducing reworks through regular validation, we can instantly expect a reduction in material waste from issue areas being removed and reconstructed. Couple this with reduced time using plant and equipment for reworks and the project could also expect to see resource savings, not only in workforce time, but also in energy usage.

As reworks have such a significant impact on budgets and timescales, there's an opportunity to readjust the flow of finances into improvements on site and for the final structure. Funds can be funnelled into better quality materials that are more sustainable, more easily maintainable or are even self-regulating or healing to reduce maintenance costs for the future.

With the workforce remaining focused on optimal tasks, rather than reworks, timescales are less likely to spiral, keeping team members focused and working appropriate hours, rather than fatigued and working around the clock. This will keep site safety at the top of the agenda and allows for a happier, more productive team.

Time savings on mistakes also give the project more flexibility and breathing space to adjust to late design changes.

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION

There's a perception in the industry among many, but not all, that there's too much risk involved in sharing intellectual property. That a company's data should remain the sole property of that company, and

releasing that information could mean some form of financial loss. However, a report compiled by PlanGrid, an Autodesk company, providing productivity software to the industry, found that: "Globally, an average of 52% of rework was caused by poor project data and communication, representing a worldwide cost of [USD]\$280bn in 2018". There's a clear cause and effect presented here that not sharing data results in financial loss, rather than the other way around.

Furthermore, if it were possible to calculate the emissions caused by these reworks across the globe, just imagine the impact we could have on global carbon reduction targets if we were able to manage projects better to avoid reworks. But we can. Software exists that shares designs, design updates and scan data all in real-time with teams in offices and on site, no matter where they are in the world. This ensures everyone is essentially singing from the same hymn sheet to avoid any cross-overs of old and latest data sets. And technology exists to ensure all of the machinery being used is working from the same data, too – Topcon's MAGNET suite is just one example of full project delivery team connectivity.

AFTER CONSTRUCTION

Once constructed, ongoing maintenance of tall buildings is key. With these structures always surrounded by other buildings in densely populated areas – to make the most of the skyspace for residents and businesses – any decay or failure could be catastrophic. Appropriate data captured during the construction of the building and, once finished, can be shared with

building facilitators to ensure appropriate maintenance of the building throughout its lifecycle. This data can be the whole history of the structure, including the exact dimensions of steel beams, any items marginally out of tolerance that were approved, and provides a full digital twin for future planning for extensions, adjustments or demolition.

We know there is technology available to improve the construction process of tall buildings, but take-up of this technology is slow. The construction industry has been berating itself over the critical comments in the 'Farmer Review' of 2016 and is talking about modernisation and the adoption of technology. But, as Topcon GB's own research with the Institution of Civil Engineers, 'Breaking Barriers in Infrastructure' in 2018 found, current corporate culture is one of the biggest barriers to the adoption of new technology and working processes, second only to financial implications.

The adversity to risk and belief that change isn't necessary for the industry is fuel to the fire that investment in new technology isn't worthwhile. Topcon sits at the intersection of infrastructure and technology specifically to work in partnership with the construction industry to ensure these technologies deliver real, tangible results. As more businesses realise the opportunities and possibilities of technology and step away from old processes to lead the way, I hope and expect that we will see more consultants, contractors and full project delivery teams backing the technology that can help us reach new heights. **C**

Back row: Ruth Hayes, Mary Griffiths and Hazel Bye.
Front row: Lorraine Coughlan and Deirdre Callanan.



BUILDING EQUALITY

ROBBIE COUSINS talks to the female team that led Cleary Doyle Construction's renovation of the Institute of Education in Dublin.

According to the latest CSO Labour Force Survey, Q2 2019, the number of women working in the Irish construction sector is increasing, if only marginally. The survey indicates that of the 146,300 people employed in the construction industry at this time, 11,200, or 7.6%, of these are female. The CSO Labour Force Survey, Q2 2018, recorded 8,400, or 5.8%, of the workforce being female.

The CIF #BuildingEquality campaign has been highlighting the increasing presence of women across all levels of the Irish construction sector. More women in construction will lead to a more productive,

diverse and efficient industry, which will benefit the industry as a whole.

Cleary Doyle Construction's recently completed Institute of Education renovation would seem to have achieved a new diversity milestone in that practically all of the senior project team on the development were female.

According to Brian Byrne, Joint Managing Director, Cleary Doyle, the client representative, project architect, health and safety manager, senior quantity surveyor, and specialist flooring and tiling contractor on the project were all women.

"While this obviously did not come about by design," Brian Byrne says, "I

am delighted that at a time when women make up such a small percentage of the construction workforce, this project had five women in central roles, driving the success of the project, and showing that the on-site gender balance is changing."

DEIRDRE CALLANAN, THE CLIENT

As Head of Operations & Capital Projects with the client, The Institute of Education, Deirdre Callanan has a unique perspective on this project. She also holds strong views on the role of education in creating more inclusive and diverse workplaces. Having worked in the area of operations and capital projects for over 15 years, she has engaged



Deirdre Callanan, Head of Operations & Capital Projects, The Institute of Education.

with quite a few building contractors.

"From my observation, while the construction sector is very much male-dominated, in the last number of years, I have worked with more women, particularly in senior roles. This is very encouraging, as I believe women have a lot to offer in this area."

She says the industry is becoming more diverse as there is an increasing number of routes into the field, and it has so many great opportunities to offer everyone, regardless of gender.

"At the Institute of Education, we have seen an increase in the numbers of our female students opting to pursue Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects. This is very encouraging. Education has an essential role to play in achieving greater gender balance. Girls should be encouraged and supported to pursue STEM subjects at second and third level. Science, technology, engineering and maths hold the key to some of the most exciting, diverse and rewarding careers both here in Ireland and further afield. The sky is the limit when it comes to the opportunities available to both males and females.

"The current education system has a strong emphasis on the academic side of learning. I believe this facilitates the pursuit of professional careers."

Speaking about the project that has brought these women together, Deirdre Callanan says, "I have thoroughly enjoyed the process. We are all very excited to reveal the results to our students when they return. Students at the institute have a strong sense of common purpose, and we provide them with an exceptional learning environment



Lorraine Coughlan, Senior Architect, John Fleming Associates.

“ EDUCATION HAS AN ESSENTIAL ROLE TO PLAY IN ACHIEVING GREATER GENDER BALANCE. GIRLS SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED AND SUPPORTED TO PURSUE STEM SUBJECTS AT SECOND AND THIRD LEVEL. ”

DEIRDRE CALLANAN,
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION.



Mary Griffith, Senior Quantity Surveyor, Cleary Doyle Construction.

in which they are supported to realise their potential in the fullest sense. The addition of these new facilities further supports our unwavering commitment to the delivery of an excellent educational experience for every one of our students.

"We look to the future and how we can further enhance our facilities to meet the needs of our students who are at the centre of everything we do. This year we celebrate 50 years of excellence in education. We remain committed to the delivery of excellence in education and will never compromise on the high standards we set for ourselves."

LORRAINE COUGHLAN, THE ARCHITECT

Lorraine Coughlan, Senior Architect, John Fleming Associates, says while she has noticed a gradual increase in the number of women in professional roles, the process is slow.

"I have noticed a gradual increase in the number of women working in the various consultant disciplines, such as architects, planning consultants, mechanical and electrical engineers. But, in general, change is very slow. Women's input, in contrast to men's, is minimal. Men still make up over 90% of all teams. Women are a notable minority.

"The industry still has a very long way to go before it reaches equal composition of women and men, she says. I think if school children – both girls and boys – were given a clear insight into the various diverse disciplines that constitute the construction industry, it might encourage more girls to become interested at an early age. We still



Ruth Hayes, Health and Safety Officer, Trittech Engineering.

live in a society whereby physical labour/technical drawing is seen as a man's job. If these old fashioned stereotypes could be broken down at school age, we would notice a significant difference in gender balance. But this will take time."

MARY GRIFFITH, THE QUANTITY SURVEYOR

The project senior quantity surveyor Mary Griffith of Cleary Doyle Construction says she has observed an increase in the number of women on design teams or acting as the client's representative in recent times.

"Previously, there were rarely any other women present at site meetings, whereas today, I see at least one other female on most projects. However, the number of women I have encountered in the trade sector remains very low."

She believes the construction industry is slowly becoming a more diverse sector to work in, but the current rate of change is too slow.

"I would like to see the construction industry presented more as a real career option for girls in secondary schools. The industry requires a range of skills and offers a wide variety of roles throughout the professional and trade sectors. Once you follow one route into the industry, there is the potential to branch out into many different areas.

"Many of the women I have met in the sector come from a construction family background. I would like to see more girls in secondary schools being offered the subject choices of construction studies and engineering to allow them to develop an interest in the sector. If they enjoy the



Hazel Bye, Managing Director, Hazel Bye Flooring and Tiling Contractors Ltd.

“ TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN WOMEN, COMPANIES NEED TO OFFER FLEXIBLE WORKING TIMES AND LOCATIONS OR PART-TIME WORKING. ”

MARY GRIFFITH, CLEARY DOYLE CONSTRUCTION.

subjects in school, it will encourage them to follow a career in the construction industry."

Mary Griffith also has some advice on how contractors might make changes to make their businesses more attractive to women.

"The construction industry is known for long working hours and the need to work significant distances away from home. To attract and retain women, companies need to offer flexible working times and locations or part-time working. Current technologies,

such as cloud storage services and mobile broadband, make working from multiple locations in the one week achievable.

As a parent of four young children, it is Cleary Doyle's flexibility and investment in technology that has facilitated my continued work in the sector."

RUTH HAYES, THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OFFICER

Ruth Hayes, Health and Safety Officer, Trittech Engineering, and project health and safety officer, says it is increasingly the norm to find women in senior roles within construction these days.

"From the start of my career, I have primarily worked with women. My manager at Trittech is a woman. The majority of the health and safety officers that I come across from other contractors are women as well. I am happy to see how well accepted, and respected women are in the construction industry."

She says the industry is changing, but there is some way still to go.

"In many ways, I think the construction industry is becoming more diverse, but it is happening very slowly. The health and safety department in Trittech is made up of women, and the majority of women I see on site are health and safety officers. It is great to see women on sites, especially in more significant numbers, but I'm yet to see a woman working on tools."

She says there are still some people who are surprised to hear what she does for a living or would ask why she would want to be on a building site. "But for the most part, these are in the minority. As more women enter construction, the view that the sector is male-dominated will change.

"I've have noticed the emphasis on promoting women within the industry in previous issues of *Construction* magazine. There are several support roles in construction that often aren't seen but are crucial elements to every construction project; purchasing, accounts, estimation, and HR, for example. Having male and female speakers go to colleges and schools to talk to young women about apprenticeship, health and safety, engineering and architecture roles, is essential. Other sectors such as science, engineering, and even Bus Eireann and Dublin Bus are targeting women. At a time when there is such a shortage of labour on building sites, all construction firms must get behind the campaign to recruit more women."

Offering advice to anyone, regardless of gender, starting a career in construction, she says, "If you're going to be working on a building site have the confidence to make



L to r: Mary Griffith, Lorraine Coughlan, Deirdre Callanan, Brian Byrne (Joint Managing Director, Cleary Doyle Construction), Hazel Bye and Ruth Hayes.

your voice heard, ask questions, ask for help and ask for things to be explained to you if you need it. For example, I don't have an electrical or plumbing apprenticeship, so when I'm on-site, I have to ask the lads what they're doing and how they do it. I've been lucky to work alongside some great foremen and workers who are happy to include me, bring me into a variety of meetings, when necessary, and help me understand the work going on throughout the project."

HAZEL BYE, THE FLOORING AND TILING CONTRACTOR

Hazel Bye, Managing Director, Hazel Bye Flooring and Tiling Contractors, started her career in the 1980s. After completing a Construction Technician's course in Bolton Street, she began working in the office with DD O'Brien. In the following years, she moved through the ranks, taking on roles such as surveyor and contracts manager. In the 90s, she completed a Masters in Business Studies specialising in Health and Safety, and she established her own business in 2003.

Hazel Bye was one of a group of women within CIF, which she says included Doreen Murtagh of Shay Murtagh Precast and Rose Wright of Wright Windows, who lobbied for greater participation by women in construction in the early noughties. She says it was great to have worked with such a strong group of women in CIF to lobby for greater gender balance.

Hazel Bye Flooring and Tiling's project portfolio of work includes the Diageo Brewhouse, Dell, Microsoft, Mount Anville, and Willow Park Schools, as well as many hospitals and hotels across Dublin and Ireland.

She says that she is delighted to see an increase in the number of women in construction professional and project management roles in recent times, but would like to see greater female participation in the trades.

"When I started, there were very few women working on sites, and I would see the occasional eyebrow raised when I arrived to site. But today, there are many more in project roles. Unfortunately, there

are not enough in some of the trades. While there are female painters, electricians, carpenters and occasional tilers, I have never come across a female floor fitter or carpet layer. Carpet and vinyl rolls can weigh up to 140kg, so it is hard physical work.

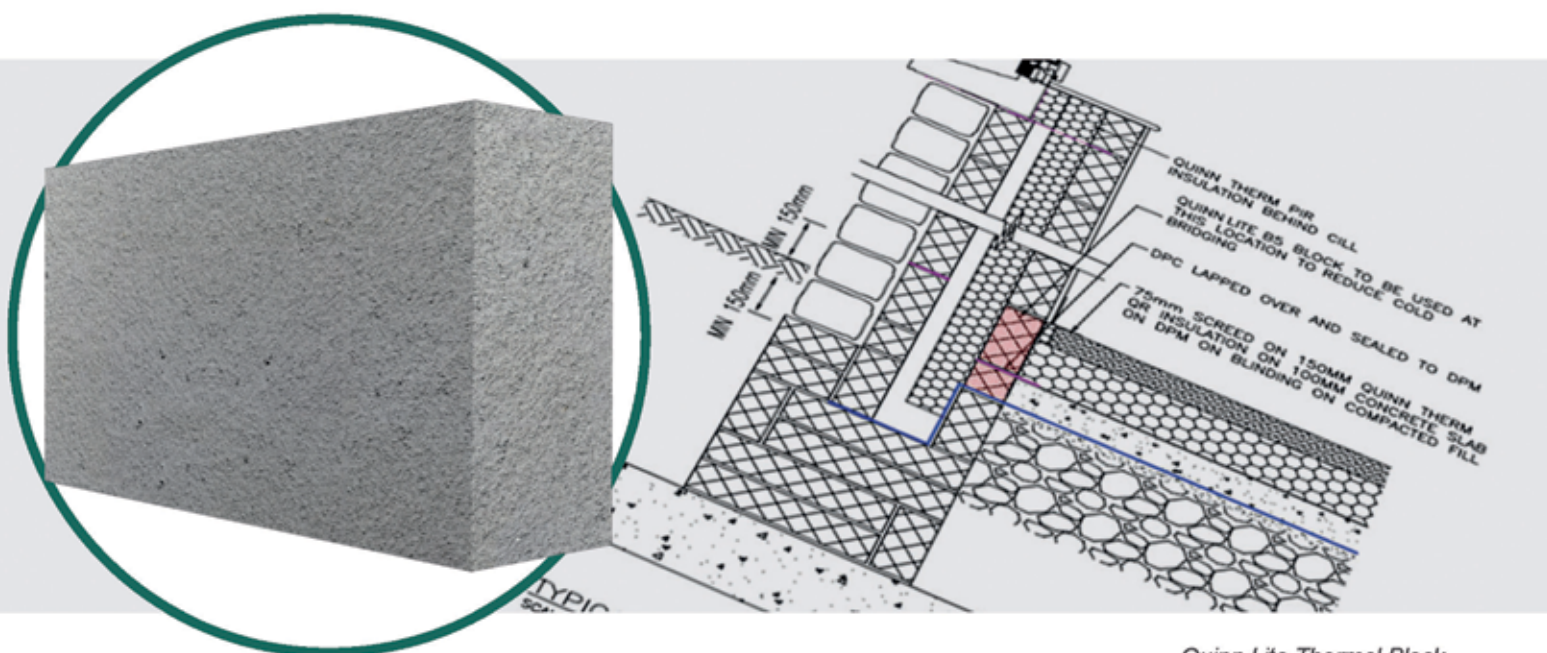
"I have employed a couple of excellent female tilers over the years. One addressed the physical challenge of moving the tiles by requesting that they be delivered to the exact space she is working in."

Hazel Bye believes that many of the women she has observed on building sites are very good at detail and making decisions.

"In general, I have found that women have a very good eye for detail and are quick to observe and address issues that arise. They are also more likely to make important decisions on the spot without referring up the chain of command. The sites of today move at a far quicker pace than the sites of the past and having someone who can do this is a real asset to any project," she concludes. **C**

RISKING NON-COMPLIANCE WITH 13N BLOCKS?

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION TO CLARIFY COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS REGARDING SPECIFICATION OF THERMAL BLOCKS IN IRELAND



Quinn Lite Thermal Block

Irish Architects, Specifiers and Developers may be at risk of non-compliance when it comes to the specification of thermal blocks at or near ground level for durability purposes.

Specifically, confusion has arisen in relation to Table 14A of NSAI publication SR325, "Recommendations for the design of masonry structures in Ireland to Eurocode 6," where some specifiers have misinterpreted the requirements in relation to the specification of 13N blocks.

Why Specify a 13N Block?

13N blocks may be specified for one of two reasons

1. **Structural requirement** – If the blockwork is subject to loads greater than the capacity of the standard 7.5N block, then a 13N block will be specified, for example in high rise or some commercial buildings.
2. **Durability requirement** – The higher cement content of a 13N block makes it more durable than the standard 7.5N block therefore in locations where a higher level of durability is required, a 13N block may be specified.

This is relatively straight forward for the specifier when dense concrete blocks are adequate, however, where a thermal block is required, meeting all the requirements can prove more difficult.

Table 14A sets out the various exposure conditions below or near ground level, starting with MX2.1, low saturation without freezing, going on to low saturation with freezing, high saturation without freezing and finally, the worst case scenario, MX3.2, high saturation with freezing. The table defines MX3.2 as being located between 150mm above and 150mm below finished ground level and it's at this location where thermal blocks can be incorrectly specified.

The requirement set out in table 14A to meet condition MX3.2 are,

1. The block must have a mean compressive strength $\geq 13\text{N/mm}^2$
2. The block must have a density $\geq 1500\text{kg/m}^3$
3. The block must be manufactured using dense aggregates

There are 13N lightweight aggregate thermal blocks available on the market in Ireland, which are being specified to meet the requirements for MX3.2. These block however are **less than 1500kg/m³ and they are not manufactured with dense aggregates**, therefore they do not comply.

Currently there is no thermal block on the market which meets all three requirements for aggregate blocks.

For all other exposure conditions set out in Table 14A, a 7.5N/mm² block is adequate, however the block should still have density in excess of 1500kg/m³ and should be manufactured using dense aggregates. For this reason, **lightweight aggregate blocks do not comply with the requirements of SR325.**

Condition	Lightweight Aggregate Block	Quinn Lite Block
MX2.1: Low saturation without freezing	NO	YES
MX3.1: Low saturation with freezing	NO	YES
MX2.2: High saturation without freezing	NO	YES
MX3.2: High saturation with freezing	NO	YES

Thermal Blocks Suitable for Use in Compliance with Table 14a

The Solution

There is a solution if you need to specify a Thermal block in condition MX3.2, that being the Quinn Lite thermal block. AAC blocks, such as Quinn Lite, are not covered in table 14A, instead it directs the reader to the manufacturer for advice on suitability of use. The key difference between aggregate concrete blocks and AAC blocks is that there is currently no test method to establish the freeze/thaw resistance of aggregate concrete blocks, whereas there is a recognised test method for AAC blocks.

All Quinn Lite thermal blocks have been tested for freeze/thaw resistance and are third party certified for used in all exposure conditions up to and including MX3.2.

In summary, for any of the conditions outlined in Table 14a, from low saturation without freezing right up to high saturation with freezing, the Quinn Lite thermal block is the only thermal block available is certified for use these conditions.

For further information, contact the Technical by Quinn Team on technical@quinn-buildingproducts.com or call 1800 322 122.

For more information call 1800 322 122 or email technical@quinn-buildingproducts.com



The founders of Vision Contracting, L to R: Aidan Drummond, Pharma and Industrial Director; Colm Fehily, Commercial Director; Niall O'Meara, Managing Director; and Mick Allen, Construction Director.

CLIENT-FOCUSED APPROACH TO PROJECT DELIVERY

On the verge of exceeding €55m in turnover this year, Vision Contracting is one of Ireland's fastest-growing contracting firms. **ROBBIE COUSINS** reports on the contractor's rapid rise and success.

Vision Contracting was founded in 2011 by Niall O'Meara, Managing Director; Mick Allen, Construction Director; Aidan Drummond, Pharma and Industrial Director; and Colm Fehily, Commercial Director.

Each of the directors has extensive experience in delivering medium to large scale projects across Ireland and in the UK.

Headquartered in Cork, the firm is one of the fastest-growing companies in the Irish construction market. With a turnover of €36.2m in 2018, it placed 44th in the *Construction* magazine 'CIF Top 50 Contractors; and turnover is expected to exceed €55m in 2019. Vision Contracting also has a strong pipeline of secured contracts for 2020.

PROJECTS

Its broad client base includes blue-chip FDI companies such as Apple, BioMarin, MSD, Eli Lilly, Patron Capital Partners and Moorepark Technology Ltd (MTL), and it also has many small and large Irish companies and institutions on its client list.

Recently completed projects include a new production and food research facility at Moorepark Technology Ltd,

Fermoy; refurbishment of the Legal Aid Board offices in Tallaght and Portlaoise; the refurbishment and upgrade of Code Hostel, Talbot Place, Dublin; the upgrade and extension of the private member suites at the Old Head of Kinsale Golf Club; the construction of a new vaccine production bio-pharmaceutical facility for MSD, Innishannon, Co Cork; and the refurbishment and upgrade of the Commercial Building at Central Plaza at College Green, Dublin.

It is currently on site with the construction of a new TK Maxx extension at Liffey Valley Shopping Centre, Dublin, and undertaking the fit-out of the RDI Hub and Fexco office facilities in Killorglin, Co Kerry. It has also recently commenced works on a new production and research facility for E-TEC Power Management in Blanchardstown.

MANAGEMENT VISION

Niall O'Meara says the senior management team had a clear vision of what they wanted to do from the start.

"Our goal was to create a new kind of progressive, owner-driven construction services company that is customer-focused,

operating across multiple construction sectors, and with each director taking a hands-on approach to every project," he explains. "Each one of us has different skill sets and strengths and having worked together as team for approximately 20 years we are well experienced in delivering complex projects. We also take pride in being able to meet the specific needs of all our clients across the country.

"Setting up during the downturn meant from the start that we were tendering for work in a very competitive market. As a new company, we found it challenging to prequalify for public contracts, so we focused our initial attention on the pharma and industrial market. This quickly expanded to include projects in the commercial and hospitality sectors in the south of the country and nationally. We secured several London-based residential projects with O'Callaghan Properties Ltd, and this helped us to scale. From 2013, Vision Contracting intensified its efforts to secure a sustainable foothold in the Dublin market, which now accounts for approximately 50% of its business.

"Within a few years, our technical, commercial and business-related

“ OUR STRATEGY IS TO SCALE OUT RATHER THAN SCALE UP. ”

NIALL O'MEARA, MANAGING DIRECTOR, VISION CONTRACTING.

construction expertise enabled us to build relationships with clients that continue today. We have extensive design and build, turnkey and Early Contractor Involvement experience, and we have been directly involved in the delivery of a diverse range of construction projects, with values from €0.5m to more than €100m. We are now active in most constructions sectors.”

LEAN CONSTRUCTION

With Lean a central part of its operations, Vision Contracting has been very successful at delivering complex projects successfully with a customer-focused and hands-on working approach. It has used the Last Planner System to help improve productivity in its construction processes for its pharma operations and to improve predictability and reliability in construction production.

“The Last Planner system allows production planning and related decisions to be mapped at the process level. Our Lean approach also helps to promote the use of offsite construction to reduce site man-hours and in turn improves the quality of our building and installations,” explains Aidan Drummond, Pharma and Industrial Director, Vision Contracting.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Vision Contracting works in close partnership with its clients, their design teams and advisors to achieve optimal construction solutions that deliver the best value.

“We have distinguished ourselves from our peers by focusing on precisely what the client wants and delivering that on time and within budget. Our commitment to solutions-based working and our collaborative and partnering approach to projects has resulted in us winning repeat business from many of our clients,” Colm Fehily, Commercial Director, Vision Contracting, explains.

“Our core values are founded on our

MSD Brinny, Cork.



Gilead Sciences distribution centre, Dublin.

absolute dedication to customer service, giving value for money, operational excellence and the protection of the health, safety and welfare of our people and all those involved in our construction activities.”

Vision Contracting offers a comprehensive range of building and refurbishment activities across a diverse range of industries and sectors. These include main contracting; management contracting; construction partnering; civil, structural and architectural (CSA) work package contracting; and design and build contracting.

“When a client works with Vision Contracting, they are partnering with a highly progressive company built around a strong, experienced and proven team,” he says.

“As a medium-sized contractor working on a national basis, our strategy is to stay

lean and agile, and to take on a range of projects from mid-sized to major, but always with a customer-centric, hands-on approach.”

NICHE MARKETS

With a view to the company's future sustainability, Vision Contracting has established a foothold in several specialist niche markets, where entry barriers are high. The company concentrates its efforts on securing repeat business as it works to secure more framework opportunities, and it partners with developers and funders as an alternative to traditional tendering and procurement arrangements.

“For example, we invest in developer-led projects and provide building services as required,” Niall O'Meara explains. “We can deliver all groundworks, building work and fit-out works from our own resources. This makes us responsive to clients' changing



Carrigaline Youth Centre ,Cork.



Moorepark Technology Ltd, Fermoy.

needs and allows for greater flexibility at site level. We also have a proven background in pre-construction, value engineering, project and construction management, and provide complete delivery solutions.

“Our strategy is to scale out rather than scale up. By doing this, we spread the risk.

“Vision Contracting is not your standard building firm. We have a broad base of expertise within the company, and we are adding to this all the time. Experience has taught us that it is better to have diversity in what we do rather than focus on one market area where many companies are competing.”

RECRUITMENT

Vision Contracting employs over 80 people. Recruitment is one of the biggest challenges facing the company.

“Like everyone else, getting the right people is challenging. We have been fortunate as we have a broad network of

contacts in the industry, and many people who have worked with us in the past and emigrated, have returned in recent years and joined the Vision Contracting operation. But in a market where there is practically zero unemployment, even if a candidate has the right qualifications on paper, they may still not be an ideal fit for the company,” Niall O’Meara explains.

Mick Allen, Construction Director, Vision Contracting, is concerned about the dwindling number of trades-based managers on site.

“While construction professionals are essential in project management, having experienced tradespeople who can build and manage people is of as much importance. Unfortunately, the high number of tradespeople coming to retirement age is worrying. The sector must bring through enough new talent to replace them.”

ADDRESSING ON-SITE CHALLENGES

Speaking about current on-site challenges that contractors have to overcome, Mick Allen says that some projects continue to be held up because of incomplete design information and late decision making.

“Delays in projects because of drawings or amendments not being ready on time are frustrating and costly, and this issue needs to be addressed. I understand that design teams are under-resourced, but delays cost money and create conflict.”

He suggests more Early Contractor Involvement on projects could go some way to reducing delays.

“If contractors and subcontractors can sit down with the design team at an early stage in the process, many problems can be ironed out on the drawing board before they get to site.”

THE FUTURE

Looking at the coming 18 months, Niall O’Meara says that Vision Contracting plans to extend its footprint within the industry by sector and location.

“We currently have offices in Cork and Dublin and will open a regional office in Limerick in the coming months. The strategy to spread ourselves wide, but remain focused on customer service, continues to work. The high level of repeat business we get is confirmation that this approach has been successful. We will also continue to expand our workforce as we find the right people.

“We are delighted with the progress we have made since we set up in late 2011, and look forward to working with existing and new clients as the business grows,” he concludes. **C**

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CIF BRANCHES DRIVING CHANGE LOCALLY AND NATIONALLY

MIMI MURRAY reports the views of CIF branches on opportunities and challenges for the Irish construction industry.

The CIF branch network forms the backbone of the Federation. It is this network through which members' views and opinions are gathered on issues affecting the Irish construction industry, locally and nationally, and channelled through the system to be addressed by the appropriate authorities or bodies.

The CIF branch network brings together local contractors of all sizes to ensure that projects in their local area and region can move from planning through to completion as smoothly as possible, contributing to the social and economic wellbeing of local communities across the country.

While securing project finance, recruitment and procurement are critical issues that all branches are working to have addressed, Brexit, Irish Water and National Development Plan (NDP) project roll-out are the three most topical and urgent issues that chairpersons are reporting as being of concern to their members at this time.

The lack of clarity around Brexit leaves many questions. How will issues around product certification, freedom of movement, and recognition of UK qualifications, be addressed?

Irish Water's rate of infrastructure roll-out, specifications and



connection agreements are issues on which branches would also like to see greater clarity.

The rate of roll-out of NDP infrastructure projects in the regions will impact significantly on the ability of members to deliver local projects across the country. It is essential that the Government's 'Investment Projects and Programmes Tracker' provides real and up-to-date reporting for the industry to plan and prepare.

On the positive side, many chairpersons are reporting an increase in on-site member activity. Cautiously welcoming this, they believe that once they know where they stand with regard to Brexit, and have greater clarity on the rate at which NDP projects will start to be rolled out, then they will be better placed to plan for activity in the years ahead. **C**

JAMES BENSON, SECRETARY, KILDARE BRANCH

James Benson, Director, Housing, Planning and Development Services, CIF, also acts as secretary of the CIF eastern region branches. He says that the €120m M7 widening scheme in Co Kildare is a significant piece of infrastructure work for the county and the eastern region. When completed, it will open up the Kildare commuter belt for further investment.

"Kildare has a strong mix of commercial and industrial development, with some significant projects in the county on the way," he says. "The National Development Plan (NDP) lists Kildare town as a strategic investment priority. This proposal will act as the catalyst for a significant urban regeneration of Kildare town centre to improve the urban environments for town inhabitants and visitors. Monasterevin is also in line for investment to regenerate the centre. But all projects are dependent on much-needed investment through 'Project Ireland 2040'.

"Recently, County Kildare has been doing reasonably well, due in no small part to its proximity to Dublin, but there are a number



James Benson, Director, Housing, Planning and Development Services, CIF.

of concerns for members. Labour shortages continue to be challenging for members in all sectors in the branch. Continuous work and focus on attracting new blood into the industry is vital."

He says that on the residential side, 2019 has brought on several developments in the county.

"Recent CSO figures show an increase of 49% in commencements between January and June, with just over 1,100 units started. Securing financing, particularly in the residential market, is still a challenge for smaller builders. When you move outside of Dublin, many of the pillar banks don't want to lend, and alternative sources of finance are required. In a time when viability is on a knife-edge, this brings another challenge."

James Benson adds that uncertainty around Brexit is not helping matters.

"While many have been focused on the impact that Brexit will have on industry products and standards, the wider impact could be much more significant. We know labour shortages already exist. We need to know if the qualifications of those from the UK working in Ireland will be recognised. The same question relates to the movement of companies and their employees from Northern Ireland. There may also be an impact on the contractual side of proposed projects," he concludes. **C**

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TARA FLYNN, CHAIRPERSON, CIF GALWAY BRANCH

There are a significant number of developments underway or about to commence in County Galway, which is “very encouraging” Tara Flynn says.

“The commencement of housing developments on both sides of Galway is a very positive sign for the west. A residential development in Knocknacarra, valued at €13.5m, includes 78 social housing units. In Barna, there’s a residential development with 48 units; 39 units in Claregalway; and a scheme of 17 social housing units in Ballinasloe. There is also a 212 residential unit development due to start in Oranmore soon.”

There are two significant student accommodation developments well underway. Westwood will accommodate 400 students, and Fairgreen will house 147 students. NUIG has been granted permission for Phase 2 of a student accommodation development, with 674 bed spaces due to come on stream.

A GMIT extension is also well underway. This is an extension to its ‘iHub’ with an



Tara Flynn, Chairperson, CIF Galway Branch.

investment of €5m.

On the commercial side, Tara Flynn says the signs are also very positive.

“The Crowne Square Plaza is a mixed-use development, and Bonham Quay is another, which includes accommodation for 350 students. The commencement of work on a new hotel at a value of €4.5m in Prospect Hill is also welcomed.

“Ballinasloe is also experiencing massive investment with several developments progressing. Western Postform has commenced construction of a factory on a greenfield site at the cost of €5m, which will employ 50 to 60 people. As well as this, an extension to Surmodics Medical Ltd comprises a cleanroom and warehouse extension with a project value of €1.5m.

“The Government has launched a review of the procurement policy for public works projects, but it is envisaged that this process of engagement will extend over the next 12 to 18 months, which is too long to wait. We need early contractor engagement and less reliance on low price criteria,” Tara Flynn adds. “For our regional SMEs that have a track record, restrictive pre-qualification criteria automatically rule them out of projects,” Tara Flynn concludes. **C**

PADRAIG HANNON, CHAIRMAN, CIF MIDLAND BRANCH



Padraig Hannon, Chairman, CIF Midland Branch.

Padraig Hannon says that business is quiet and “there is a lot of uncertainty in our region.

“My company, Leamore Construction, was fortunate to win an FDI project in an IDA technology park in Tullamore. There has been other activity in the surrounding business parks, but no major infrastructure projects. There are several small school extensions and two housing schemes started by Offaly County Council,” he adds.

“Tullamore is the main county town, and one would expect demand for housing, but at the minute there is one private development taking place there, and reports are they have sold just 13 houses out of 24, in the first phase. With the completion of the show house due in the next few weeks, they hope to see a big increase in demand.

“This is a nice development. Three-beds are starting at €249,000, climbing to €289,000 for a four-bed semi’s. They are well finished and fully interior designed, so you’d expect more interest. But people are cautious and waiting to see how this one

transpires.”

Padraig Hannon adds that there are a few other developments in the pipeline, but with so much uncertainty surrounding Brexit, things are lagging.

“On the Government contracts side, the National Children’s Hospital is impacting negatively on local development. For example, there’s a school project just outside Tullamore. It was supposed to start in June, but has only just gone out for tender now, so it will be the new year before it starts,” he says.

He adds, “With the amount of paperwork required now, you need dedicated office staff working solely on tendering. It’s onerous, with not the same level of activity, but more work going into crossing the ‘i’s’ and dotting the ‘i’s,” he says.

“The sooner the Brexit scenario is put to bed, the better; People can then get on with their lives, make decisions and move on. With the current scenario of ‘will they or won’t they’, it has rendered the economy to a stalemate,” Padraig Hannon concludes. **C**



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JOHN O'SHAUGHNESSY, CHAIRMAN, CIF SOUTH EAST BRANCH

There have been several major civil infrastructure projects in the south-east region recently, including the N25, the River Barrow bridge – one of the longest extradosed bridges in the world – as well as the Enniscorthy motorway by-pass.

However, the region continues to struggle with the slowest growth and the largest rate of unemployment of all the regions, according to John O'Shaughnessy. He doesn't see any major projects in the region in the next few years either.

"There is nothing in the National Development Plan to boost infrastructure and economic activity here. There are 22 schools planned during its lifetime: three are on site, the rest are in the various stages of planning and design. Infrastructural projects need to be brought forward, to create employment," he says.

"Waterford is one of five cities identified for 50% growth, but it's hard to see where that's going to come from," he adds.

"Under the Urban Regeneration Development Fund, Waterford has been allocated €6m for infrastructural projects to

support the Waterford North Quays project. This €6m is for a bridge over the River Suir to support that development. This investment by the State is most welcome, but Waterford and the south-east needs a lot more," he says.

He sees housing as the biggest challenge. "An Bord Pleanála, for example, has rejected 30% of Strategic Housing Developments (SHDs) applications based on low-density levels," he says. "The market doesn't want higher density levels. It's fine for Dublin, maybe even Cork, but not for regional cities and towns. If you submit a SHD and it doesn't have high density, it will be rejected."

Insufficient water supply is also a key concern.

"We know for a fact that in Tramore there is a demand for housing, but you can't build there because Irish Water doesn't have the infrastructure in place. They tell us they are dealing with it, but with no concrete dates. This is potentially putting some housebuilders out of business," John O'Shaughnessy concludes. **C**



John O'Shaughnessy, Chairman, CIF South East Branch.

SEAN CLIFFORD, CHAIRMAN, CIF KERRY BRANCH

There is enormous pressure for social housing in the Kerry region, according to Sean Clifford, with Kerry County Council only putting out small contracts around the county. "These include 22 houses in Killarney, seven in Listowel and 12 in Milltown. In Tralee, where the biggest demand is, there is little movement," he says.

"The private side has collapsed in Tralee as prices tend to be under the €200,000 mark, and that's holding development back," he continues. "The local authority is buying up property at reasonable prices. In Killarney, 61 houses were completed, through Cluid, and they will end up with an additional 20 homes once these are handed over.

"There have been some small school extensions, but the labour force is stretched to the limit, with one or two small contractors picking up these projects, as they know the system.

"Our blocklayers are travelling to Cork for good money because of the



Sean Clifford, Chairman, CIF Kerry Branch.

stronger labour market there. Nobody is unemployed in Kerry, but there are no big jobs.

"An extension to Tralee Institute of Technology is in the pipeline, but this is two

years away," he adds.

"There are moves to get a wastewater treatment plant off the ground in Castlemain at a project cost of €4m," he continues. "In Milltown, some private houses are being built and selling steadily.

"At the end of the summer season, hotel refurbishments will become a big thing again," he adds.

Sean Clifford's primary concern at the moment, however, is about Irish Water.

"Issues with Irish Water are causing havoc. Houses that were built or are being built based on old specifications for the laying of pipes are now having difficulty getting their watermains and sewage connected. On a second scheme that was ready for handover, the contractor is now redoing the pipework to the new specification. This means undoing footpaths and roads already finished, and it will delay the handover of schemes by 12 months. Add to this the additional cost and the scarcity of finance, Kerry has issues that need to be addressed urgently," Sean Clifford concludes. **C**

AIDAN MANGAN, CHAIRMAN, CIF CORK BRANCH



Aidan Mangan, Chairman,
CIF Cork Branch.

With a population of around 550,000, Aidan Mangan says he classes Cork as the most economically viable hub in Ireland, outside of the greater Dublin region. However, members are “extremely concerned” about delays to strategic infrastructure, including to the Dunkettle Interchange, the M28, and the Cork Event Centre. Other issues include increased demands from unions, as well as an increase in materials costs.

“We welcome the increase in activity, predominantly by private investment in the county, which is starting to gain traction and is slowly building. There is still a very competitive market in Cork,

but with Brexit looming, our members are concerned about delays in strategic infrastructure.

“The three projects mentioned are vital for expansion and growth in the city and the county. On a positive note, we are hugely excited about the plans contained in the National Development Plan (NDP) and look forward to the implementation of this in the near future. However, if we can’t get these three projects off the ground, it doesn’t look great for those within the NDP. The Dunkettle interchange and M28 would free up the docklands, and the Cork Event Centre is vital for a large number of other projects, as well as attracting further inward investment. But these are very slow to happen.

“We can see an increase in housing. Roads are ongoing, and there has been an increase in office development and student accommodation. That is where we see growth in the next 18 months. However, the only apartments we can see being built in the city are for students,” he says.

“Labour is still available in Cork and costs are very competitive, Aidan Mangan continues, but Brexit is a huge concern, as people are going to wait to invest.

“Getting materials and certification are key Brexit concerns. I don’t think people can put measures in place when they don’t know what’s going to happen. They can put provisional plans in place, and maybe stock up, but nobody knows what’s going to happen with Brexit,” he concludes. **C**

LORCHAN HOYNE, CHAIRMAN, CIF MID WEST BRANCH

According to Lorchan Hoyne, in the mid-west, there hasn’t been a huge amount in the way of commercial development in the mid-west, with most of it clustered around some key areas, such as the Shannon Free Zone and the National Technology Park adjacent to University of Limerick (UL).

“Outside of that, there is very little commercial construction in the region. In terms of Government projects, six new schools were delivered in 2018, two primary care centres, and 17 wastewater projects are in progress. There are 33 schools at various stages of planning, design and construction – but many are in the planning and design stages, so we would call on Government to release those,” he says.

Lorchan Hoyne continues by explaining that while the branch “is not asking Government to do works that the private sector can do for themselves, there are certain critical areas of strategic infrastructure that Government needs to provide, including schools, healthcare facilities and universities, as well as roads



Lorchan Hoyne, Chairman,
CIF Mid West Branch.

and motorways.

“Rural towns have suffered due to the fall-off in commercial activities. We want to see the roll-out of the plans for schools, the Adare bypass, and the M20, as well as town regeneration projects in Thurles, Ennis, and ‘Limerick 2030’, which will help breathe life

back into our regional towns.”

He says that he wants Limerick and the mid-west to become a regional hub.

“We need to make regional cities strong if we are going to fix the imbalance in the population demographics. There is too much happening in Dublin.”

He says a major concern is that funds allocated to regional development are going to be absorbed into projects like the National Children’s Hospital and National Broadband Plan.

“The Government has committed that this is not going to happen, but it needs to be watched very carefully. Procurement procedures need to be addressed as we can’t have a repeat of that.”

Central Bank rules also need to be looked at, he says.

“Circumstances have changed, and I think it’s time that Central Bank rules be reviewed. We need a way to maintain the regulatory requirements while making it easier for young families to buy their first home. For example, the rent outlay should be factored into any ability to pay a mortgage,” he concludes. **C**

BRENDAN DUNNE, CHAIRMAN, CIF WICKLOW/NORTH WEXFORD BRANCH

The economic recovery and the recovery of construction in the Wicklow/North Wexford region has been sporadic and concentrated in the Dublin commuter belt areas, according to Brendan Dunne.

Current activity includes private housing developments by Wood Group Homes and Cairn plc located in Delgany, Kilcoole and Greystones. In Bray, there is a much-needed local authority development of 42 units. There are also various residential developments ongoing in Wicklow town and its environs.

"From a commercial/retail perspective, the new Florentine Shopping Centre in Bray is nearing the completion of its external structure. The primary healthcare centre in Bray is also well underway.

"House building in the north of Co Wicklow will be sustained in the coming years as demand rises, given its proximity to Dublin, and our members are reporting near full order books for the coming months. Demand for one-off houses, extensions and house conversions remains high. An Bord Pleanála's decision



Brendan Dunne, Chairman, CIF Wicklow/North Wexford Branch.

concerning Cosgrave's development at Fassaroe, Bray, is eagerly awaited.

"Key concerns include the lack of skilled labour and apprentices, increasing costs due to onerous regulations and standards, and rising house prices compromising affordability," Brendan Dunne continues.

He is also worried about the lack of finance and affordable finance available for small builders/developers for sites of fewer than 10 units.

"A more pragmatic approach to regulation needs to be adopted to encourage more growth in the industry. The current 'one size fits all' approach is not sustainable, with large developers and small contractors being subjected to the same stringent requirements. A grant or a tax rebate should be encouraged to contribute towards the cost of constructing environmentally-friendly and energy-efficient homes," he says.

"Meanwhile, small developers, who traditionally built less than 10 units and were the backbone of the industry for generations, find themselves unable to access affordable finance to rebuild their companies.

"The pillar banks have little interest in financing developments of fewer than 10 units, and similarly, Home Building Finance Ireland cannot provide finance for developments of this size. This needs to be urgently addressed by Government," he concludes. **C**

JOHN HENRY, CHAIRMAN, CIF NORTH WEST BRANCH



John Henry, Chairman, CIF North West Branch.

A delay in projects going to site after they have been tendered for and awarded is a critical concern in the north-west region.

"Sometimes, the delay can be as much as three months because the various voluntary and public bodies are having to secure their funding before projects can commence on site. These delays make it difficult to plan ahead in terms of planning for other work and trying to maintain resources for moving on to the next project," John Henry says.

"Labour for various trades is not as scarce as in major urban areas. However, in some instances, for example, professional construction managers or quantity surveyors, supply isn't meeting demand at the minute," he continues.

"Brexit is also difficult to plan for. It applies more to builders merchants or suppliers that source goods from the UK. No one really knows what will happen until closer to the time, perhaps extra tariffs will be placed on goods, restrictions on imports or a temporary shortage of materials. We are taking a wait and see approach. A year ago, there was a shortage of insulation material, but that was down to scarcity in the worldwide market. Talking to different suppliers, we haven't experienced shortages yet, but it might change after October.

"In terms of this, we are taking advice from CIF circulars and hopefully by September concerns may ease if there's an overall deal done," he concludes. **C**

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ALAN HORA, CHAIRMAN, CIF NORTH EAST BRANCH



Alan Hora, Chairman, CIF North East Branch.

A huge expansion of Facebook's campus in Cloness, on the Dublin/Meath border, is the most significant piece of activity in the north-east, according to Alan Hora, along with house building projects in commuter belt areas.

"There is a small bit of education and State work, but that's fairly limited, and there are no major infrastructure projects going on in the region, and nothing from the National Development Plan," he says.

"Brexit is causing a lot of uncertainty, and for this reason, there is no sign of any major projects kicking off in the next 18 months," he adds.

"In the border region, Monaghan and Cavan, there is particular worry about Brexit impacts. Private industrial clients also seem to be holding back, taking a wait and see approach.

"There's also much Brexit fatigue. People don't know what to expect. They can't plan for it, so they're waiting to see how it pans

out. It is in the back of their minds, but on a day-to-day basis, you have to keep going and hope it all works out. There might be an issue with supply and materials. Coming up to the March deadline previously, people took in extra stock and material to try to get over it. There was an uncertain period for a few months, and then it didn't happen. Certification issues with products coming in from the UK might also be a problem," he says.

"Other issues of concern in the north-east include Irish Water connection agreements and disposal of soil and stone. Increased construction costs and access to labour are high on the list of members' concerns," he adds.

"To deal with the long-term labour shortage, CIF has been putting education programmes into schools, and that is where we need to start to get students interested in construction careers again from a young age. The industry gets a lot of bad press and is seen as a lesser career for some people, so this needs to be changed," he concludes. **C**

MICHAEL RAGGETT, CHAIRMAN, CIF KILKENNY/CARLOW BRANCH

In Kilkenny and Carlow, one of the major issues facing members is the inability to get on the pre-qualification list for many of the bigger jobs in the region.

"This is generally down to turnover. It has been difficult for contractors to build their turnover when the number and value of contracts have been low in the region. Then, as they increase their turnovers, the turnover requirements increase," Michael Raggett says.

"The issue is not being addressed," he adds, "and it is ongoing since pre-consultation came into being.

"Local contractors have the experience and expertise, but a box-ticking exercise prevents them from getting on these lists. There is no consistency; every organisation or local authority has its own criteria for pre-qualification.

"Our local contractors are left with smaller contracts, State or Semi-State jobs, of which there aren't a lot. But those smaller jobs are keeping a lot of lads going, in fairness," he adds.

Good quality labour is also becoming



Michael Raggett, Chairman, CIF Kilkenny/Carlow Branch.

an issue, with many from the region, particularly from Carlow, travelling to Dublin each day.

"When you talk to people about coming back, they concede that their work/life balance would improve dramatically without the daily travel, but they won't get the same money, and for most this prevents them from making a move," he says.

In terms of what is coming down the tracks, Michael Raggett explains, "There is a considerable amount of social housing underway, compared to private housing, where very few sites have opened up. The Abbey Quarter redevelopment of the Smithwicks brewery site in Kilkenny city is an exciting new project," he says.

"There is also an €8m infrastructure scheme in the western environs of Kilkenny city, which will open up a large area of zoned land, and it's hoped 800 houses will be built there in the short term. That is underway, and it is a very positive development," he concludes. **C**

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DERMOT GILDEA, CHAIRMAN, CIF DONEGAL BRANCH



Dermot Gildea, Chairman,
CIF Donegal Branch.

According to Dermot Gildea, in the past year, Donegal has seen some small amounts of council works, including water treatment works, roadworks and school works, but not much residential development.

"In terms of turnkey housing schemes, where the council purchases the houses from developers for social housing upon completion, this is often problematic," he says, "as lack of finance may cause some of them not to go ahead at all."

He continues, "In the region, there is a long border with Northern Ireland – around 150km – and this means a lot of competition with builders from the north. Add to this the pre-qualification lists with the issue of turnover, and it is putting people at a significant disadvantage."

"But you can't even get the job as there's a vicious circle for medium- and smaller-sized builders because they don't qualify to tender for public jobs that they were regularly doing 10 to 12 years ago."

"There has to be some incentive, a weigh-in system on tendering, for instance, to try to keep work within

the community. You could have a €5m job with only 10 local people working on the whole thing. Local contractors are missing out and not able to provide full-time employment as a result, so it doesn't encourage people to stay in the trade."

Lack of apprentices is also a key concern.

"In our company, we are third generation builders, but very few new people are coming through now. We need some funding mechanism. We used to take on apprentices, but with work slowing down, it's hard to take them on. The increasing prevalence of zero-hour contracts and the loss of the family tradition of builders are going to be a big loss to the industry. In nearly every family, there was someone involved in trades, but all young people want a permanent position now."

"Being so close to the border," he adds, "Brexit could cause a recession on both sides very quickly. A lot of contracts would go to Northern Ireland. With sterling so low, it would be a big incentive for them to come across and work in the Eurozone," he concludes. **C**

BARRY MCMENAMIN, EXECUTIVE BODY REPRESENTATIVE, CIF DONEGAL BRANCH

Irish Water works, school refurbishments and road replacement works form the majority of the activity in Donegal, Barry McMenemy says.

"It is somewhat better than it has been, but there is still no big spending. A lot of that is going to larger national construction companies. So while the outlook in the north-west is better than it had been four to five years ago, it is far from buoyant," he says.

"On the horizon, there are a series of small programmes of work, including bridge rehabilitations and sewage infrastructure improvements, as well as some commercial work from private companies, including manufacturing, and some small expansions," he adds.

Barry McMenemy says that a critical concern in the region, like the majority of the rest of the country, is the instability being caused by Brexit, which is having a detrimental effect on speculation for any development work or big planning projects.

"There is also considerable concern about labour and material costs as a result of Brexit. The labour and materials costs spiral is exponential, being driven by the lack of new people coming into the industry and the industry not attracting new people at the levels that are needed. We also have an ageing workforce and more construction volume, with the effect that it is impossible to get any sort of labour," he says.

In trying to deal with some of these issues, members are targeting relatively short-term jobs, three to six months in length.

"Price fluctuation on those is a lot less relevant. Many local contractors are teetering along, covering overheads in the hope



Barry McMenemy, Executive Body
Representative, CIF Donegal Branch.

some stability will come about to give a platform to expand more rapidly or grow. But for now, this is not the time for rapid expansion. The risks around the whole industry, particularly in the border areas, are such that they are really unknown," concludes. **C**

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PLANNING FOR YOUR RETIREMENT

SUSAN O'MARA sets out some questions you should be asking yourself about your retirement plans.

We mean two things when we talk about planning for retirement.

The first part of the plan is to set up a pension scheme, either a personal pension or participation in your employer-sponsored occupational pension scheme. Then you will need to regularly contribute, throughout your working life to accumulate a pot of money, which you can then use to replace your salary when you retire.

The second is to plan for your retirement, by preparing yourself, both financially and psychologically, for this new chapter in your life. In this piece, we will touch on some of the main points that should be on your retirement planning checklist.

DO YOU KNOW YOUR BUDGET?

It's a simple enough question, but in my experience, a difficult one for people to answer. What is your income versus your outgoings? What will the gap be when you retire? If you can't answer the second part of this question easily, it should be the first part of your new plan.

ARE YOU SAVING ENOUGH?

At the later stage in your career, you may be in a position to increase the contributions you are making to your pension fund. You may have less financial outgoings than in earlier life stages. Whether retirement is 10, seven or five years off, it would be beneficial to establish precisely how much is in your pension fund, and what it should provide you with in retirement. Your pension provider will be able to prepare an illustration showing what you are currently on target for, and if necessary, how additional contributions will enhance the picture. Many pension providers also offer online tools that you can use to establish this for yourself.

IS YOUR INVESTMENT CHOICE APPROPRIATE?

Unless you are taking regular financial advice, you may be invested in the same



Susan O'Mara,
Milestone Advisory.

fund you started with all those years ago when you began your pension. You should now establish what this fund is, and whether it is suited to your current and future goals. Your pension scheme may offer a lifestyle investment strategy as the default investment fund. A standard lifestyle strategy will automatically and gradually reduce the investment risk in your fund in the run-up to retirement. Traditionally, these funds are suitable for those who plan to purchase a pension or annuity at retirement, as they match assets suited to this choice. They are likely to have a high weighting in bonds and cash in the final few years. However, for those thinking about the approved retirement fund (ARF) option, this might not be suitable. Some pension schemes and providers now offer an ARF lifestyle strategy.

PENSION OR ARF?

While it seems like a decision you can leave until your retirement date, from both a financial and investment perspective, it is something you should consider in advance. Pension or annuity is where you take your pension fund at retirement and convert it to a fixed income paid for the rest of your life. There are several variations within this option that you can choose. Do you need a spouse's pension to start on your death? Do you want to inflation-proof your pension? These options come at a cost, and you should consider that in advance before making a decision. The pension/annuity option provides peace of mind and security, but its value is based on prevailing market rates at the time of your retirement, and you cannot take advantage of subsequent market

“ WHETHER RETIREMENT IS 10, SEVEN OR FIVE YEARS OFF, IT WOULD BE BENEFICIAL TO ESTABLISH PRECISELY HOW MUCH IS IN YOUR PENSION FUND, AND WHAT IT SHOULD PROVIDE YOU WITH IN RETIREMENT. ”

improvements.

Meanwhile, your other choice is the ARF option, in which your money remains invested after you retire. From this, you make regular withdrawals to fund your income in retirement. The obvious advantage of this is that you keep control of your money throughout your retirement, and, with current life expectancies being well over 20 years from normal retirement age you can participate in future market growth. However, your money is not guaranteed, and you will need to take ongoing financial advice.

IN CONCLUSION

The above outlines ways of engaging with the financial side of your retirement. However, retirement is not just a time of financial change, it is also a time of emotional and psychological changes. Many challenges lie ahead, and it is important to address these so that you can prepare yourself for the next phase of your life. **C**

Susan O'Mara is a financial services consultant with Milestone Advisory. Milestone Advisory DAC t/a Milestone Advisory is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland.

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ARE YOUR BUSINESS LEADERS IN CERS?

FRANCES McNALLY outlines why business managers should have their key personnel in the Construction Executive Retirement Savings scheme.

The Construction Executive Retirement Savings (CERS) scheme was established in 1975 as an umbrella scheme to provide pension and protection benefits for employees in the construction and related industries. The scheme is administered by CIF Pension Administration Services (CPAS), which also administers the Construction Workers Pension Scheme (CWPS) for large numbers of employees within the construction sector.

CERS compares very favourably with other executive pension schemes in terms of general features, while at the same time offering some important and highly valuable additional benefits.

KEY BENEFITS OF CERS:

Bespoke and Flexible

- CERS is designed to enable employers to collate bespoke elements for their employees' benefits scheme to assist in the recruitment and retention of key employees.
- CERS is established in many construction businesses as a core element of the rewards packages of these key employees.
- CERS compares very favourably with other executive pension schemes in terms of general features, while at the same time offering some important and highly valuable additional benefits.
- The CERS structure allows bespoke and flexible contribution and benefits solutions for each employer.
- CERS is not a "one size fits all" scheme. Many employers elect to have different categories of members within their

scheme, each category with different attaching benefits. This allows employers to reward senior staff, loyal staff or other groups differently, as decided by the employer.

MASTERTRUST ARRANGEMENT

- CERS was established under what is called a Mastertrust arrangement, which means it has specific advantages over most other executive pension schemes on offer in Ireland in that it saves employers time and money.
- Mastertrust structures have been identified by the Pensions Authority in Ireland as a core element of the retirement solution in this country, as the authority seeks to reduce the number of pension schemes in existence.
- The Mastertrust approach results in significant economies of scale, reduced costs, and no trusteeship responsibilities for each employer.

EXCELLENT MEMBER FEATURES

CERS delivers advantages for its members, alongside the benefits enjoyed by the employer. These include:

- An excellent range of investment funds that meet the requirements of all members, irrespective of their age and risk appetite.
- Online access – Members can view their entitlement at any time.
- A facility to make additional voluntary contributions (AVCs) for employees who want to avail more of the generous tax reliefs available and enhance their retirement lifestyle further.



Frances McNally, Manager, CERS.

- CERS mobile pension consultants can meet clients and members at their workplace throughout Ireland.
- Access to excellent life assurance and income protection benefits, optionally provided by employers, and that will attract generous non-medical limits, reducing underwriting requirements within a sector where such underwriting is typically very onerous.

The CERS scheme is an industry-specific scheme, designed and run by professionals with a commitment and interest in the specific needs of participants in the construction sector. It is administered by CIF Pension Administration Services (CPAS), which also administers the Construction Workers Pension Scheme (CWPS) for large numbers of employees within the construction sector. **C**

Frances McNally is the manager of CERS. To find out more about how CERS can deliver a flexible and bespoke scheme to meet the needs of your organisation, contact CERS at info@cers.ie or by phone at 01 407 1430.



Hubert Fitzpatrick, COO, CIF.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CERS

Hubert Fitzpatrick, Chief Operations Officer, CIF, is a director of CPAS, the registered administrator of CERS. He says that since recently taking up the role of COO, he has become increasingly involved in a number of the subsidiary parts of the organisation.

"CERS has particularly caught my attention, as I see the flexible nature of the scheme and how it can be applied in a bespoke way to meet the needs of all executives, senior staff and key employees within our sector.

"It is encouraging to see employers recognising the importance of equality and inclusivity in their business. We are seeing an increasing number of female directors and key staff, office staff and other employees being included in the CERS scheme. When we retire, we all will require a standard of living in line with our expectations, irrespective of our level of seniority, role or gender. Everyone should be offered access to a pension to provide for retirement and a pension scheme adequately."



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CARRIGALINE TO GET €30M SCHOOL CAMPUS

TOM MOLONEY, Managing Director, Construction Information Services (CIS), writes that despite there being some large-scale education projects on-site at the moment, more school space is needed to keep class sizes at recommended levels.

Almost one in five students in primary schools last year were in classes of 30 or more, with six schools recorded as having classrooms with 40 or more pupils. An analysis of data published by the Department of Education on over 22,700 mainstream classes in over 3,100 primary schools across the Republic shows 19.8% of all pupils are in classes, which could be considered overcrowded. It reveals that 45% of all primary schools had at least one classroom of 30 pupils or more in the 2018/19 school year. According to the OECD, the average class size in most developed countries is 21 pupils.

Despite large numbers of new teachers

being recruited in recent years, many schools continue to experience difficulty in keeping class sizes at recommended levels. With that in mind, the graphic on the bottom left shows the current status of classroom projects that have had plans submitted and plans granted, as well as the number of classrooms that have commenced construction and those that are to be delivered by year-end.

The following are some of the major school projects that commenced in 2019.

€9.5M PRIMARY SCHOOL AT HARCOURT TERRACE, DUBLIN 2

Pre-qualification questionnaires have



Tom Moloney, Managing Director, Construction Information Services (CIS).

been issued to building contractors for the development of a €9.5m primary school in Harcourt Terrace, Dublin 2, with the development to take 20 months to complete.

€30M CARRIGALINE EDUCATION CAMPUS, CO CORK

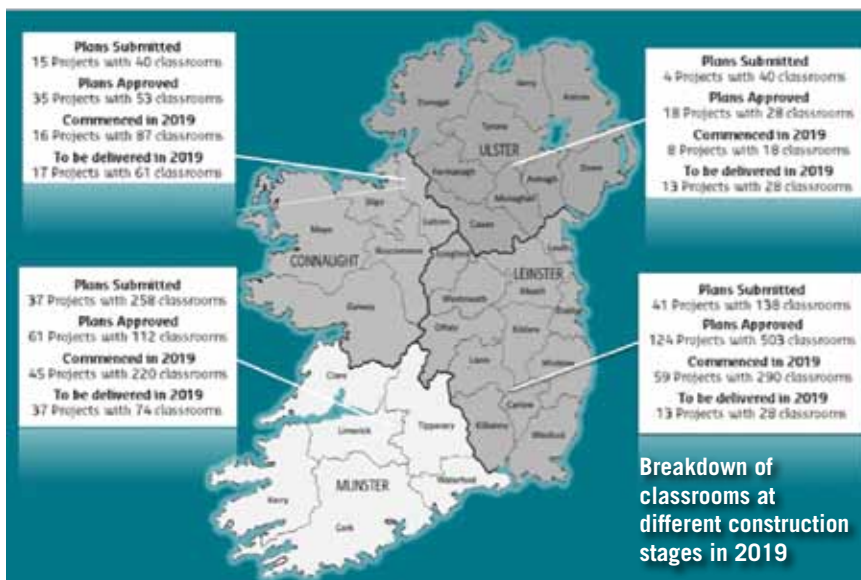
MMD Construction has been appointed for the construction of three new schools. This new complex will be known as Carrigaline Education Campus and will be home to Gaelcholáiste Charraig uí Leighin, Gaelscoil Charraig uí Leighin and Scoil Sonas. Works commenced on this project in June and will take 21 months to complete.

€7.4M SCHOOL EXTENSION, ENNIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE, ENNIS, CO CLARE

Coolsivna Construction, Co Galway, commenced works at the €7.4m school extension at Ennis Community College in August 2019. The project has an 18-month programme. **C**



CGI of Carrigaline Education Campus.



SCHOOL PROJECTS, PLANS GRANTED – DECISION DATES FROM 1ST JANUARY TO 20TH AUGUST 2019

Value	Projects	Classrooms
Under €1m	169	339
€1m-€5m	13	134
€5m +	7	221

SCHOOL PROJECTS START DATES FROM 1ST JANUARY 2019

Value	Projects	Classrooms
Under €1m	104	219
€1m-€5m	14	158
€5m +	10	238

Construction Information Services (CIS) provides comprehensive, researched, verified and real-time information on all building projects throughout Ireland – North and South.



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ENERGY EFFICIENCY MADE EASY WITH SSE AIRTRICITY



STUART HOBBS writes about the extensive range of energy upgrading services available to homes and businesses from SSE Airtricity.

SSE Airtricity is a proud sponsor of this year's Construction Safety Week.

At SSE Airtricity, safety is our number one value, and we mandate all of our employees, at all levels of our organisation, that 'if it is not safe, we don't do it'.

We want to ensure that all of our employees and contracting partners get home safe every day. The principles of our 'Safety Family' programme, aligned with our ambitions to reduce all health and safety incidents by 50% by 2020, have seen a dramatic reduction in life-changing incidents and we are on track to achieve this ambitious target.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY UPGRADES AND RETROFITS

Over the last 10 years, SSE Airtricity Energy Services has been proud to work with local authorities, businesses and homeowners across Ireland to deliver energy efficiency upgrades and retrofits for thousands of homes, as well as schools,

community centres, businesses, and other public buildings.

As Ireland looks to reduce its carbon emissions and take action on climate change, energy-efficiency is a key focus of national policy. The new national Climate Action Plan sets out ambitious goals for energy upgrades and retrofit projects, with an overarching target to improve the energy efficiency of public sector buildings by 50% by 2030.

ONE-STOP, TURNKEY SOLUTION

We offer a one-stop, turnkey solution for these projects, from financing, including applying for SEAI grants on your behalf, to the design and delivery of the works, right through to quality assurance.

Our range of upgrade works can include the installation of heat pumps, smart heating systems, solar panels and electric vehicle charging points, as well as improvements to insulation and airtightness, replacement of windows and doors, and more.



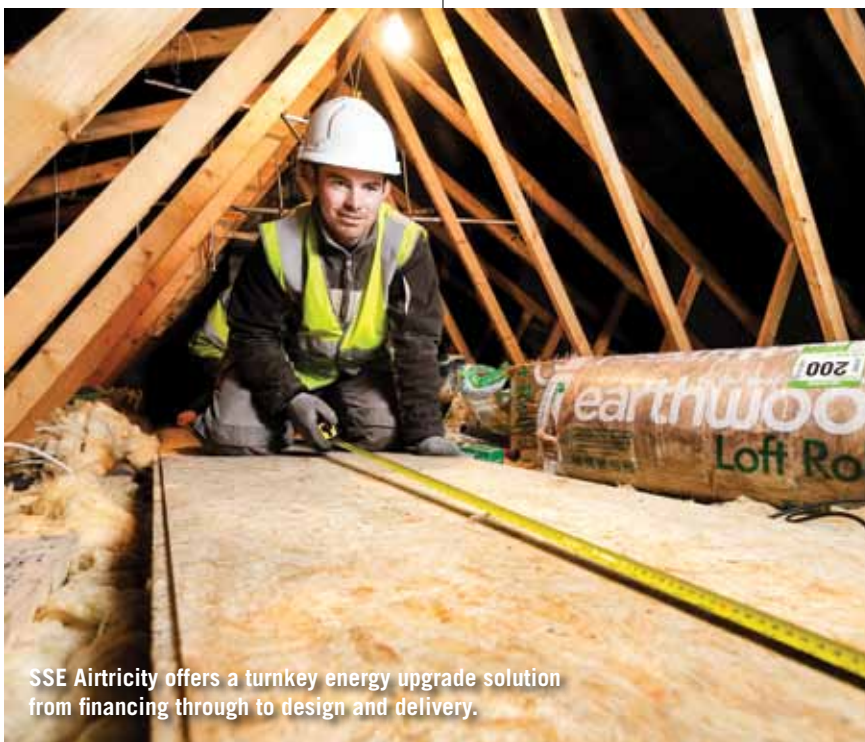
Stuart Hobbs, General Manager, Home Energy Services, SSE Airtricity Energy Services.

WATERGATE COMPLEX, LIMERICK

Last year, we completed our most ambitious partnership project to date, partnering with Limerick City and County Council and the SEAI to deliver transformative retrofits at the Watergate complex in Limerick city, originally built in 1969 and comprising 100 apartments. As a result of this significant redevelopment, residents in each apartment are benefitting from energy savings of over 9,000kWh each year, as well as improved home comfort. We embed safety by design in all of our projects and ensure that each project and the works completed are executed with the highest safety standards.

Alongside landmark projects such as Watergate, SSE Airtricity Energy Services has also worked with local authorities and housing associations in Longford, Wexford, Clare, Fingal and Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown to fund deep retrofits and energy efficiency upgrades for homes.

We see energy efficiency as a win-win. As your energy efficiency partner, we can work together to tackle climate change, while reducing bills and improving comfort for energy customers at the same time. With ambitious targets now set for 2030 and beyond, the challenge is clear. It's time to take action; it's time to build a better energy future for generations to come. **C**



SSE Airtricity offers a turnkey energy upgrade solution from financing through to design and delivery.

BATHROOMS WHICH WORK FOR ALL

Mark Bowman of Marmox offers some advice on ensuring the design and installation of bathrooms both large and small is a success

From the Supreme Court of America to the smaller council chambers across rural England, the issues regarding the creation shared or 'gender neutral' washroom facilities for public use have proved to be a legal as well as a political hot potato; and the debate is certain to carry on for the foreseeable future. For architects and interior designers, however, there are many other technical considerations which must be respected if their work is to be regarded as a success for all the potential users. For instance, whatever the size of the bathroom or washroom being created, it is essential that the background structure and substrates to the room are fit for purpose able to offer such attributes as strength, durability and resistance to moisture. Other requirements including thermal or acoustic performance and the need to provide access for the less able bodied are all addressed by the different Approve Documents to the Building Regulations

Ever since the emergence of the Egan Report, offsite construction or prefabrication have been gathering momentum across most of the sectors with fully fitted bathroom pods playing a pivotal role in the rapid delivery of different developments from student accommodation to hospitals, hotels and commercial buildings. Whatever the scale, from an individual en-suite to a large washroom with multiple facilities, they enable a major part of the building services work to be completed away from the site environment, speeding progress and improving quality. Though some pods feature reinforced concrete bases, the weight penalty sees the majority assembled using a light gauge steel or engineered timber frame, with a variety of board products providing the substrate for fittings and finishes.

It is worth noting that despite using concealed steel frames with sizeable securing bolts, the increasingly popular "wall hung" toilet bowls and urinals normally transmit a proportion of their load to the wall itself. So whether the specifier selects a decorative laminate or a tile-backer board such as a Marmox Multiboard, they will have to be fixed over a 15 mm or thicker layer of plywood to prevent flexing. These tile-backer boards do, however, offer very good compressive strength, as well as a number of other positive physical characteristics, making them a popular choice for building either in-situ or offsite.

Employed in wall or floor build-ups, they can sustain a distributed load of 40 tonnes per square metre, making them fully able to support the weight of pedestrians, wheelchairs and even mobility scooters when covered by appropriate




floor tiles. This performance stems from their construction featuring an extruded polystyrene core, bonded between two layers of glass-fibre reinforced polymer concrete. This combination of a rigid outer shell and XPS core - able to absorb lateral movement - will allow it to serve as an effective decoupling layer.

Importantly, this structure not only earns and ODP score of Zero and a Class O rating for flammability under BS EN 476, but the XPS also delivers excellent thermal characteristics. The insulation offers a thermal conductivity of 0.034 W/mK, and with the tile-backer board being available in thicknesses of up to 60mm, they can make a significant contribution to achieving Part L requirements.

Furthermore, the ability to reduce heat loss will also help combat condensation and associated mould growth, with its potential health impacts and this could be of real benefit in refurbishment work, where the energy performance, as well as the physical condition of the walls is generally a concern.

In fact, high performance tile-backer boards are regularly employed on social

housing sector contracts, where kitchen and bathroom renovations have to be completed to a very tight timescale, with the residents still in occupation. They can be screw fixed over blockwork and brickwork, or bonded using a cement based adhesive across uneven substrates; including existing ceramic tiles. Arguably the top end of bathroom specifications is to be found in the fitting out of wetrooms or steam-rooms, which is where the fully waterproof performance of XPS and reinforced polymer concrete comes to the fore. Such rooms can be effectively 'tanked' by applying the special waterproofing tape to all joints and other details, including corners, prior to tiling or plastering.

Given the UK's humid temperate climate and the increasingly exacting design aspirations of developers and specifiers, choosing the right materials for the construction of bathrooms or other washroom facilities is paramount. With the endorsement of the Energy Saving Trust, CE marking and all other necessary accreditations XPS based tile-backer boards (Marmox Multiboards) make a powerful argument for inclusion. 

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NEW CONSTRUCTION AND ELECTRICAL CONTRACTING SEOS EXPLAINED

ANTHONY BRADY, Executive, Industrial Relations and Employment Services, CIF, outlines the terms of the new Sectoral Employment Orders in the Construction and Electrical Contracting Sectors.

The Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act 2015 provides the legal basis for Sectoral Employment Orders (SEOs). It allows a trade union of workers, a trade union or an organisation of employers, or both parties jointly, to make an application to the Labour Court to examine the terms and conditions relating to the remuneration and any sick pay or pension scheme, of the workers in an economic sector.

Following an application, the Labour Court first invites interested parties to provide a written submission and then to attend a Labour Court hearing. Should the Labour Court deem it appropriate to do so, they will then make a recommendation to the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation on the terms of an SEO. These are then put before each House of the Oireachtas before being signed. The terms of any new SEO remain in place for a minimum of 12 months.

CONSTRUCTION SECTOR SEO

A new SEO was applied for in December 2018 by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), in which they sought (inter alia) a 4% pay increase in each of the next three years (12%), and a one-hour travel allowance per day that amounts to a further 12.8% increase. In the CIF's submission to the Labour Court, we strongly advised against both a national travel allowance and the substantial pay increases. We requested that the new entrant rate would remain in place for three years and that there would be a lead-in period of up to six months.

The SEO (Construction Sector) 2019 (SI No 234 of 2019) was signed into law on 28th May 2019, and is the second SEO in this sector, following the first which was introduced on 19th October 2017. This SEO, which becomes legally binding on 1st October 2019 to all employers of craft workers, general operatives and apprentices in the construction industry, provides for the following:

- An increase in hourly rates of 2.7% on 1st October 2019;
- An increase in hourly rates of 2.7% on 1st October 2020;
- The basic working week to be set at 39 hours, consisting of four days of eight hours work between 7am and 5pm, Monday to Thursday, and seven hours work between 7am and 4pm on Fridays;
- Overtime rates are applicable after normal working time;
- Pension, sick pay and death in service contributions to increase in line with increases in pay;
- The new entrant rate of pay to remain in place for two years, which was only in place for one year in the previous SEO;
- A lead-in period was provided up to 1st October 2019, unlike the first SEO which became legally binding on the day that it was signed.

ELECTRICAL CONTRACTING SEO

The SEO (Electrical Contracting Sector) 2019 (SI No 251 of 2019)



Anthony Brady, Executive, Industrial Relations and Employment Services, CIF.

was signed into law on 4th June 2019 and is the first SEO in this sector. It became legally binding on 1st September 2019 to all employers of qualified electricians and apprentices in the electrical contracting sector, and provides for the following:

- Electrician rates as follows:

– Category 1 (newly qualified)	€23.49
– Category 2 (third year after qualification)	€23.96
– Category 3 (sixth year after qualification)	€24.34
- Apprentice rates, as a percentage of the Category 1 rate, as follows:

– Apprentice Year 1 (30%)	€7.05
– Apprentice Year 2 (45%)	€10.57
– Apprentice Year 3 (65%)	€15.27
– Apprentice Year 4 (80%)	€18.80
- The basic working week to be set at 39 hours, consisting of four days of eight hours work between 7am and 5pm, Monday to Thursday, and seven hours work between 7am and 4pm on Fridays;
- Overtime rates are applicable after normal working time;

Pension contributions have been included. However, they are currently the subject of high court proceedings and have been granted a limited stay until the determination of the proceedings. **C**

For queries relating to any of the above, please contact a member of the Industrial Relations & Employment Services Department on 01 406 6000.

The CIF operates a members-only repository for industrial relations updates, with access permitted at www.cif.ie/member-area/irhr

The Industrial Relations & Employment Services Department has also recently launched an 'A-Z Employment Guide for Employers', and CIF members can access this useful tool at www.cif.ie/a-z-employment-guide



PREPARING FOR BREXIT

SARAH NEARY, Principal Adviser of the Built Environmental Advisory Unit at the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, provides current guidance on the importing and distribution of construction products in a 'no-deal' Brexit scenario.

The UK is due to leave the European Union on 31st October 2019. No one knows yet what shape Brexit will take or what the full impact will be on the Irish economy. We do know, however, that the Irish construction industry is import-dependent, with about one-third of inputs (goods and services) imported. Approximately 40% of those goods come from the UK.

Over the past few years, the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government has closely monitored Brexit developments and the implications for the supply of construction products. Working in collaboration with other Government departments and State agencies, the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government has raised awareness of the impacts of a 'no-deal' Brexit at numerous stakeholder meetings and sectoral events.

Construction sector stakeholders – including the registered users of the Building Control Management System (BCMS), encompassing all those actively involved in construction projects – have received the latest information. This has included the EU Commission's 'Notice to Stakeholders', and 'Questions and Answers' document.

More recently, BCMS Alert 03/2019 titled 'Impact of a No-Deal Brexit on Construction Products' was issued to about 110,000 registered users of the BCMS.

PRACTICAL IMPACTS OF A NO-DEAL BREXIT

This ongoing awareness-raising campaign has helped increase understanding of the practical impacts of a 'no-deal' Brexit for manufacturers, distributors, importers, authorised representatives and end-users of certain construction products certified by UK 'notified bodies'. The department continues to underline these



Sarah Neary, Principal Adviser of the Built Environmental Advisory Unit at the Department of Housing, Planning And Local Government.

communications through printed and digital publications and construction sector stakeholder meetings.

The most recent meeting of the Construction Industry Stakeholder Group, which the department convenes, was on 16th September. The Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government, Eoghan Murphy, TD, addressed the group and urged all to continue preparing for a no-deal Brexit. It was an engaging meeting from which it was clear that representative bodies such as the Construction Industry Federation (CIF) are relaying key messages to their members.

KEY STEPS TO PREPARE FOR A NO-DEAL BREXIT

In a no-deal Brexit scenario, the UK departs without a ratified agreement and orderly transition. In such circumstances, it is vital that all members – manufacturers,

distributors, importers/exporters and retailers – are prepared. As Brexit approaches, more end-users such as builders, certifiers, designers and specifiers will want to know that after Brexit the construction products they source are compliant with EU marketing rules.

Everyone in the construction sector supply chain can take simple steps to ensure their supply of construction products continues smoothly after Brexit. Certain construction products need a 'Declaration of Performance' (DoP) from the manufacturer and a CE Marking before they can be legally placed on the market in the EU. For some construction products, third-party conformity assessment is required. Only 'notified bodies' may undertake such an assessment. Notified bodies must be established in a member state and be designated by the member state's 'notifying authority'.

If a no-deal Brexit happens, UK notified bodies will lose their legal status. This means that construction products reliant on 'Certificates of Conformity' from a notified body registered in the UK can no longer be placed on the market after the UK leaves the EU. This is because they will no longer be compliant in Ireland or elsewhere in the EU (EU27) with the Construction Products Regulation (CPR).

At the recent Construction Industry Stakeholder Group meeting, the department reiterated the importance of the key measures industry need to take to minimise disruption to the supply of construction products and any potential delay to construction projects.

CERTIFICATES OF CONFORMITY FOR MANUFACTURERS

If you are a manufacturer and your products are still reliant on Certificates of Conformity provided by a UK notified body, you can do one of two things:

1. Arrange for these certificates to be transferred to a notified body registered in the EU, or
2. Apply for new Certificates of Conformity for those products from a notified body registered in an EU27 country.

Make sure you have the (updated) certificates before 31st October 2019.

CERTIFICATES OF CONFORMITY FOR IMPORTERS/DISTRIBUTORS

If you are an importer, distributor or authorised representative of construction products:

- Check if the DoP and CE markings are based on Certificates of Conformity from a notified body registered in the UK
- Consult the manufacturer in the first instance to establish whether they have taken the necessary action (See points 1 and 2 above)
- If the Certificates of Conformity are from an EU27 notified body, you do not need to do anything.

DISTRIBUTORS AND REPRESENTATIVES

These processes may take longer than the period between now and any no-deal Brexit. If that is the case, explore the option of finding an alternative supply of the product, with a valid DoP and CE marking.

Under EU law, if you import CE-marked construction products from the UK, you are currently classified as a distributor. After a no-deal Brexit, you will become an importer and will take on additional responsibilities. You can read about these on the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government's website (www.housing.gov.ie/housing/buildingstandards).

After a no-deal Brexit, if you are an authorised representative or become an importer, you must be registered in an EU27 country from the date the UK leaves the EU.



The cut-off point for products relying on a UK notified body will be based on whether the product is considered as having been 'placed on the market'. 'Placing a product on the market' is the process in which the individual product is first made available on the EU market for distribution, consumption or use after the manufacturing stage.

Placing on the market does not require physical delivery of the product but does require that the product has been physically manufactured. More clarification on what this means is available in the EU Commission's 'Questions and answers' document referenced earlier in this article.

We would encourage all CIF members to relay this article's key messages to their network of contacts in the sector and to regularly check the department's webpage on the CPR and Brexit: www.housing.gov.ie/corporate/brexit/brexit-constructionproducts-regulation.

www.housing.gov.ie/corporate/brexit/brexit-constructionproducts-regulation. **C**

For support and guidance on standards and certification, you can contact the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) at www.nsai.ie/Brexit or Tel: 01 807 3800.


* EU Commission's 'Notice to stakeholders' (https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/industrial_products_en_1.pdf), and 'Questions and answers' document

** 'Questions and answers' document https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/qa_brexit_industrial_products_en.pdf

*** BCMS Alert 03/2019 titled 'Impact of a 'no-deal' Brexit on construction products' <https://www.housing.gov.ie/corporate/brexit/construction-products-regulation/communication-department-housing-planning-and-0>

IMPORTANT BREXIT STEPS FOR CIF MEMBERS

There are a few other important steps that CIF members and other readers can take to prepare for Brexit, including registering with the Office of the Revenue Commissioners for an EORI number (Economic Operators' Registration and Identification Number) so you can trade internationally. You can find a comprehensive Brexit Preparedness Checklist at www.dbei.gov.ie/en/Publications/Brexit-Preparedness-Checklist.html

<div style="text-align: center;">  19 </div>	
Anyco. Ltd, PO Box 123, Leeds, UK	
Product A1234 - DoP No. 5678	
<div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;"> EN123-5: 2009 </div>	
Notified Body No. 2511	
Internal & external use in walls & partitions	
Essential characteristic 1:	PASS
Essential characteristic 2:	50 MN
Essential characteristic n:	NPD
www.anycoltd.co.uk/dop	

ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/nando/
1. Once on this webpage click "Construction

FIND AN EU27 REGISTERED NOTIFIED BODY

If you need to find a notified body currently registered in an EU27 country for a particular construction product, you can visit the EU Nando-CPR database at <https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/nando/>

products", then click "Regulation (EU) No 305/2011 - Construction Products".

2. Click "Standard" (from the bar above the "Bodies" heading).
3. Click "Harmonised Standards".
4. Using the product's "Standard" (the Standard can be found where the red circle is marked on the sample CE Marking in this article) find and click on the correct Standard, located under the "Code" column on the Nando webpage.
5. Use the "Country" column to find a 'notified body' from an EU-27 country.

CIF PRE-BUDGET 2020 SUBMISSION

JEANETTE MAIR, Economic and Policy Research Executive, CIF, outlines the key recommendations made by the CIF in its Pre-Budget 2020 Submission to Government.

The construction industry underpins the competitiveness and productivity of the domestic economy by providing and maintaining the infrastructure necessary for it to function well. Ensuring Ireland has a dynamic construction industry, with the capacity to deliver construction projects efficiently and cost-effectively, is critical.

CIF's pre-Budget 2020 recommendations fall under the four main headings of 'People', 'Infrastructure' (including strategic infrastructure), 'Housing' and 'Climate Action'.

The CIF believes that its recommendations should be introduced as part of a package of new measures in Budget 2020 to allow for continued effective and high-quality delivery of the 'National Development Plan' (NDP) and 'Project Ireland 2040'.

PUBLIC CAPITAL INVESTMENT

Since recovery in the sector began, construction growth has been dominated by growth in the private residential and non-residential sectors. There has been limited output growth in public construction.

The civil engineering sector suffered significantly from the major cuts in public spending beginning in 2008, which led to a decade of under-investment in infrastructure and a concurrent retrenchment of construction skills.

The CIF is confident that the planned increase in public capital investment in areas such as transport infrastructure, will help to boost output in this key sector of the industry as projects reach the procurement and construction stages in the years ahead. Coherent implementation of the NDP should support sustainable growth in all sectors of the construction industry.

This is important because Brexit could have a profound effect on the construction industry. A 'no-deal' Brexit would mean increased tariffs on construction material imports from and exports to the UK, which is a significant market for construction materials and services in Ireland.

Considering the uncertainty surrounding Brexit, the CIF supports the Government's planning for two budgetary scenarios for the period 2020-2024 to safeguard the long-term health



Jeanette Mair, Economic and Policy Research Executive, CIF.

of the public finances. The stimulatory commitments made to increasing capital expenditure and investment over the medium term will help to cushion Brexit's effects and safeguard the economy in the years ahead.

PEOPLE, INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSING AND CLIMATE ACTION

With investment in the industry expected to reach €41bn in 2023 and construction costs continuing to increase, the CIF is focused on addressing capacity constraints and encouraging more people to enter the construction industry, so that skills shortages are not holding back growth of the industry or the wider economy.

There was a 20% increase in the volume of Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF) in building and construction in 2018, with €26bn invested during the year. Growth in the construction sector overall is expected to average 16% in 2019, before moderating to 10% in 2020. The Department of Finance has predicted investment in the sector will increase to €41bn by 2023.

An extra 10,600 workers joined the

construction industry in 2018, which helped to meet the 20% increase in investment in the sector. The industry now employs 146,300 people.

However, the attraction and retention of talent are fast becoming one of the most critical issues for the construction industry. The availability of managerial and human capital, especially for Irish construction SMEs, presents significant competitive pressures for the construction industry and broader economy.

The timeline for infrastructure projects is predictably uncertain, yet, despite a huge immediate economic and social demand for infrastructure, and a commitment to invest, the relatively small spends on preparatory works are not prioritised. This will delay projects unnecessarily and ultimately cost the Exchequer as inflation erodes investment.

The quantum of expenditure allocated to capital projects should be sufficient to cover maintenance and depreciation and tackle the backlog in a number of sectors, for example, in water and wastewater infrastructure.



The 'Help to Buy' scheme has been a major factor in the ability of house builders to present viable development proposals to their funders to secure the required development finance and commence development.

The planning and procurement process for projects contained in the NDP should be expedited. One of the many inhibitors to greater regional cohesion and economic development is that clusters of industry and economic activity outside the Dublin region have poor road and rail interconnectivity.

Budget 2020 should, therefore, make every effort to introduce measures that would support balanced regional development and the speedy delivery of regional infrastructure through fast-tracked regional infrastructural investment.

Another key issue facing the industry and Government remains how to deliver quality homes more efficiently and at a sustainable cost. To achieve the levels of investment forecasted, the CIF needs clarity around the 'Help to Buy' incentive scheme, which is due to end on 31st December 2019. It has been a major factor in the ability of house builders to present viable development proposals to their funders to secure the required development finance and commence development.

Based on recent trends, such as softening house prices, other leading indicators and external factors, it could take longer than

“ THE CIF IS CONFIDENT THAT THE PLANNED INCREASE IN PUBLIC CAPITAL INVESTMENT IN AREAS SUCH AS TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE, WILL HELP TO BOOST OUTPUT. ”

expected for supply and demand to find equilibrium in the Irish housing market.

As the economy grows and the need for climate action becomes even more pressing, we must plan, invest in, and deliver infrastructure and services that meet the needs of citizens, both now and in the future. The industry wishes to work closely with Government on implementation of the Climate Action Plan and has set out several recommendations in this regard.

IN CONCLUSION

CIF has recommended to the Minister for Finance and Public Expenditure and Reform that consideration is given to its various budget recommendations. These recommendations are focused on achieving the greatest return on investment from existing and planned expenditure in terms of:

- Enabling a better quality of life and improved wellbeing for all citizens;
- Improving Ireland's economic competitiveness and climate resilience; and,
- Addressing capacity constraints across the economy and the built environment. **C**

FOCUSING ON EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT CAN IMPROVE STAFF RETENTION

ROBERT BUTLER, Head of Learning & Development, CIF, outlines how to put in place an effective career development plan for individual employees and how this will help retain staff.

When considering how to reduce staff turnover through employee retention strategies, companies need to identify the reasons employees are leaving. Employees may leave their present jobs for a variety of reasons. These reasons might include lack of adequate supervision; lack of appreciation; lack of feedback; the company not having a personal development programme; or the work not being challenging.

REDUCING EMPLOYEE TURNOVER

One area where a company can get a significant return for its investment is in employee development. Providing guidance for an employee's career path development demonstrates respect for them. It shows that their work is appreciated and that their employer is concerned about their professional development.

Career development programmes support employees' goals as they work to support the organisation's goals. This type of support facilitates a better developed and motivated workforce, which results in higher productivity and role satisfaction. The most important point to know here is that employees must be encouraged to take primary responsibility for managing their careers. No one should care about this goal more than they do.

EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT CULTURE CRITICAL STEPS

As a manager, you can take many actions to engage with employees when discussing career development. Here is a five-step approach to establishing an employee development programme:

STEP 1: CONSIDER BUSINESS GOALS

Before you set objectives for an employee development plan, try to align their development needs with your company's business needs.

Consider your long- and short-term business objectives. Do you need one of your construction managers to move into a project management role? Does someone in accounting need to learn to use and implement new software?

Once you've identified your objectives, you can identify the necessary skills, knowledge and competencies that support these objectives.

Developing internal candidates to bridge the gap between current employee skill sets and skill sets needed for the future would be of great value to the company.

Putting time and effort into employee career path development programmes now can save you time and money on recruiting, onboarding and training outsiders. Creating a career path and demonstrating advancement and promotion opportunities through development can help you retain your business's top talent.



Robert Butler, Head of Learning & Development, CIF.

STEP 2: TALK TO YOUR EMPLOYEES

Don't assume you know your employees' skill levels and career aspirations. Talk with each of your team members to get a better understanding of what their career goals are.

You should also ask your employees to assess their own work and discuss any challenges they're having in their current position. Find out what are the areas in which they struggle most and if they would benefit from additional training or mentoring?

Some of your employees may already have development goals in mind but not know how to get started or if the company will support those plans. Other employees may not realise you see potential in them, or may need encouragement to reach for the next step in their career.

By talking to employees, you can work together to figure out what role your business can play in their plans as well as what opportunities you can offer them.

STEP 3: RECOGNISE POTENTIAL VERSUS READINESS

As you assess your staff, it is important to remember that there is a difference between potential and readiness. Readiness comes in a variety of forms, encompassing desire, skills and experience.

Keep in mind that not every employee wants to – or should – move into management, no matter how good they are in their current position. Leaders often make the mistake of thinking that someone who is a great site supervisor (potential) will, in turn, be great at managing the construction site/project (readiness). 'Doing' and 'managing' are very different skills sets and pushing an employee into a job they aren't ready for can have devastating consequences.



STEP 4: CONSIDER ALL TYPES OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Now that you know what the objectives are, it is time to figure out how your employee will acquire their new skills. Developmental programmes do not have to be expensive and may take numerous forms. Formal classroom training or online courses are only one way to help your team expand their talents.

Most learners need to be engaged to deeply learn a new skill or gain knowledge. That's why other types of development may be even better than a course. These could include:

- Stretch assignments and special projects
- Working directly with a subject matter expert
- One-on-one coaching or mentoring.

Taking on pieces of the next job up the ladder is a particularly good way to prepare to take over the whole job one day. It gives less experienced employees the chance to learn and grow and builds your readiness so you can promote from within.

STEP 5: CREATE A PLAN FOR BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER

Once you've identified some specific learning opportunities, create a plan with specific and timely goals. It's much more difficult to measure an employee's progress when the objectives are vague, overly broad or don't have a deadline.

Next, you need to address the following questions:

- What is it going to take to put your employee's plan into action?
- Is there any preparation work that needs to be done? Is anyone else involved?
- Will the employee need to take time away from work?
- Will someone else need to cover for them while they are training?

Before the training or new assignment starts, make sure your employees understand why they are being asked to learn this new skill, what you expect them to learn, and how this benefits the company and their careers. After training is completed, the business will need to help them apply their new skills in the workplace.

You are spending a considerable amount of time and possibly money on helping your employees improve their skills. Your employees need to be able to put those new skills to work in

“ EMPLOYEES MUST BE ENCOURAGED TO TAKE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR MANAGING THEIR CAREERS. NO ONE SHOULD CARE ABOUT THIS GOAL MORE THAN THEY DO. ”

your company so that you can get the highest possible return on investment.

Set up some opportunities where your employees can quickly apply the new skills to the job and get feedback. These opportunities will help them reinforce and refine their new skills. If they don't use the new knowledge when it's fresh, they're likely to lose it.

THE TAKEAWAY

Creating an employee career path plan not only helps you make your workforce more effective and knowledgeable, but it can also improve employee job satisfaction. When your employees are happy, they're less likely to go looking for work elsewhere.

Career development is a multipurpose and appropriate component of an employee retention strategy. It's a win-win, with employees feeling valued and motivated, and the organisation retaining engaged, talented and satisfied workers. **C**

For more information or any enquiries, contact Robert Butler, Head of Learning & Development, CIF, on 01 406 6071, or email: rbutler@cif.ie

INVESTING YOUR PENSION IN PROPERTY

PAULA FINLAY, Financial Planning Specialist, Davy, writes that buying or investing property through a pension fund can be an attractive option, offering a steady income for the long term.

One key benefit of investing your pension in bricks and mortar is that no income tax is paid on any rent received, ie, all rental income is ring-fenced within the pension fund. If you ever sell the property, the pension fund will not have to pay capital gains tax (CGT) on the transaction, which at 33% is a significant saving. A sometimes-overlooked advantage is that funds used have not been subject to income tax – considerably broadening your investment options.

POTENTIAL PITFALLS

A pension fund cannot be accessed until you retire. You can access a lump sum and then have the option to purchase an annuity or transfer the remaining balance to an approved retirement fund (ARF). Annuity income is subject to income tax and universal social charge (USC) and any withdrawals from an ARF may be subject to income tax, USC and PRSI. ARFs are subject to mandatory annual taxable withdrawals, depending on your age and the size of the ARF.

The minimum entry level for investing in direct property is high, potentially impacting your liquidity and incurring ongoing costs both expected (insurance, maintenance, etc) and unexpected.

You have to consider what is the impact on your overall investment strategy. Will your portfolio be adequately diversified? Will you have sufficient liquidity to maintain your lifestyle?

These are all vitally important considerations.

HOW TO INVEST

If the pros outweigh the cons, ensure you have a self-administered pension arrangement giving you the control over your options. This can be either a self-administered scheme, a personal retirement savings account (PRSA), a personal retirement bond (PRB) or if you have already retired, an ARF.

Revenue rules prohibit investment in a property that you own yourself or one that is owned by anyone 'connected' to you (eg, an employer or relative). Similarly, your pension fund cannot then sell the property to a connected person (including yourself).

Property development for a quick sale is prohibited, while the property must be commercial or residential. Your financial adviser should run through these options with you.

CAN YOUR PENSION FUND BORROW?

As long as you don't have an ARF, you can borrow – subject to certain restrictions and some proposed changes (refer to IORP II below). Only assets purchased by the loan can be used to provide security to the lender eg, you cannot assign rental income to the bank as a means of repayment.

The loan should be repaid in full before the normal retirement age. And, while banks have become more flexible, you cannot take out an interest-only loan or borrow for more than 15 years.

IORP II

A new EU directive on the activities and supervision of institutions



Paula Finlay, Financial Planning Specialist, Davy,

for occupational retirement provision (IORP II) will be transposed into Irish law shortly. IORPs are funded occupational defined benefit and defined contribution pension schemes, including small self-administered schemes.

The scheme's assets must be predominantly invested in regulated markets; therefore, direct property investments will be restricted. Also, borrowing will only be allowable for liquidity purposes and on a temporary basis, which will affect a scheme's ability to borrow for direct property.

Pension structures like PRSAs, Personal Pensions and Buy out Bonds are not subject to the IORP II directive.

NEXT STEPS

On balance, there are solid reasons to consider investing in property through a pension fund.

Ireland's property market is beginning to surge ahead, both in terms of value and rental yields. These key indicators provide reasonable expectations of a steady stream of income to your pension fund over a long period. As with all major financial decisions, it is vital to seek professional advice tailored towards your own goals and circumstances. Scheduling a meeting with a financial adviser is your first step. **C**

Warning: There are risks associated with pensions. The value of investments may go down as well as up.

Warning: This information is based on Davy's understanding of current tax legislation in Ireland and is subject to change without notice. It is intended as a guide only and not as a substitute for professional advice. You should consult your tax adviser for the rules that apply in your individual circumstances.

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Middleton CBS Transition Year Vocational Class students with teachers, Declan Hourihane, TY Vocational Class Coordinator (fifth from left); Barry Speight, TY Programme Coordinator (fourth from right) and Maurice Keohane, Principal (far right).

MIDDLETON CBS LAUNCHES VOCATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR FUTURE APPRENTICES

ROBBIE COUSINS reports on a new vocational education programme that prepares second-level students to take up apprenticeships.

Middleton CBS Secondary School has just begun a two-year 'case-study' vocational module as part of its Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP). The module aims to facilitate students who have indicated that they do not wish to follow the CAO route to further education but would be interested in entering trade-specific industries offering blended work/education opportunities.

The module was initially trialled as part of the school's 2018-2019 Transition Year (TY) curriculum in response to a trend that saw 80% of the school's students going on to third-level education, while the other 20% had no structured support to progress to further education.

Thirty TY students, having indicated that they had no interest in pursuing a CAO third-level education, opted for the vocational module to learn more about taking the trade-specific apprenticeship route to building a career.

These students were offered an independent module called the Transition Year Vocational Class (TYVC). The module included Safe Pass training, visits to a Solas training facility, and mentoring classes with leading construction and engineering firms. The students also attended the hugely successful Ireland Skills Live event at the RDS in March and participated in relevant work experience programmes.

CIF SUPPORT

A number of CIF member firms assisted Declan Hourihan, TY Vocational Class Coordinator, Middleton CBS, in the delivery of the programme by providing class

mentors and work experience opportunities for students.

Maurice Keohane, Principal, Middleton CBS says that the students were particularly engaged in the classes given by the mentors, who presented the reality of the challenges that lay ahead as well as the exciting opportunities awaiting those who succeeded.

"During these classes, the mentors explained what level of education was required to get an apprenticeship. They also spoke about the career development and future education opportunities that were open to successful apprentices. They explained that to be accepted into apprenticeships, students must show proficiencies in practical subjects such as mathematics and physics. This advice coming from potential employers had a greater impact on the students than it would have had if it came from teachers, and it motivated many to apply themselves in relevant subjects."

PROGRAMME GOAL

The overall goal of the programme was to show the extensive career-long opportunities that apprenticeship can offer and to provide guidance to students to prepare themselves to take up an apprenticeship of their choice.

Looking at the bigger picture, nationally 37,500 students sat the Leaving Certificate exams in 2018. Of these, 6,000 (17%) did not apply for the CAO. In addition, one in six third-level students (6,000-7,000) are dropping out of third-level in their first year, and one in three students drop out of

courses requiring 300 points or less (Source: Higher Education Authority).

BLENDED EDUCATION

"The CAO system is failing these students," explains Barry Speight, TY Programme Coordinator, Middleton CBS. "But if a vocational route to further education was presented to them in an accessible format, then they would see they have valuable alternative pathways to follow into careers."

Following the success of the TY module, the Department of Education approved CBS Middleton to run the case study two-year module from TY through to Leaving Certificate.

The module comprises two classes per week. Students taking the vocational modules learn about a chosen apprenticeship course they wish to pursue. They have practical classes in subjects such as technical and construction studies, mathematics and physics. Industry mentors also provide support so they can learn specific skills for their chosen trade.

Barry Speight sums up everything by saying, "We are not reinventing the wheel here. If the CAO is not for a particular student, then a blended education approach through an apprenticeship is a viable alternative. We want our students to be prepared and to have an advantage when it comes to getting a career start. This programme will enable them to take more control of their own career path and to get the encouragement and support that students pursuing the CAO route already receive." **C**



IS IT TIME TO END RETENTION PAYMENTS?

FINOLA MCCARTHY, Partner, Ronan Daly Jermyn, examines alternative means to retention of providing protection for clients, and questions what real value retention brings to projects.

Retention is a longstanding feature of construction and engineering projects whereby a percentage of the contract price is withheld by the client as a safeguard against remedying defects. Half is released at project completion, and the other half is released following the expiry of a defects liability period. In preparing contracts, the debate is generally focused on the percentage of retention that is to be applied, and the question of whether or not retention is appropriate is not considered.

Is the time now right to review this practice?

THE ISSUES

The retention of money has a considerable impact on cash flow for contractors and subcontractors, and many have experienced delays in the release of retention monies at the end of a project without justification. Research carried out in the United Kingdom in 2017 found that 71% of contractors surveyed experienced delays in



Finola McCarthy, Partner, Ronan Daly Jermyn.

receiving retention monies over a three-year period, with over half of those surveyed reporting that they had experienced non-payment of retention (Department

for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy BEIS Research Paper 17 'Retentions in the Construction Industry', October 2017).

The extent of the delay is more pronounced for tier 1 and 2 subcontractors than for main contractors. Statistics on the total amount of retention held in Ireland are not published. In England, it is estimated that the total amount held in retentions in the construction sector over the course of a given year could be £3.2bn to £5.9bn.

The collapse of Carillion and other company failures has highlighted again the difficulties that arise with the loss of retention in the event of insolvency.

Other impacts throughout the construction sector supply chain identified in the UK research paper include:

- Higher business overheads
- Administrative time incurred in obtaining payments
- Costs of construction sector works are deemed generally higher
- Weakened relationships with clients and the rest of the supply chain

- The amounts withheld can add aged debt to balance sheets which can affect the capacity of contractors to borrow.

ELIMINATION OF RETENTION

Given the difficulties that arise, there is a growing call for the elimination of the use of retention. The CIF, in its 'Medium-Term Strategy' in 2017 called for the practice of retention to be done away with completely, as there is little evidence to show that retention helps to avoid defects. In June 2019, Build UK (a leading representative organisation for the construction industry), as part of its campaign to eliminate the use of retention by 2023, published a guide on minimum standards on retention, with the aim of changing the current practice, together with a 'Roadmap to Zero Retentions'. It advocates that achieving zero retentions is a vital part of becoming a more collaborative and efficient sector.

The 'Minimum Standards Guide' sets out a number of policy principles, together with suggested contract wording, to address these principles (by way of amendments to the JCT Design and Build contract and the NEC4 Engineering and Construction Contract). These key principles are:

- No more onerous conditions – The retention in any subcontract should not be more onerous than in the main contract, to ensure fairness and transparency throughout the supply chain.
- No retention on temporary works – Retention should only be deducted from payments made in respect of permanent works. This is because the risk of defects in temporary works such as scaffolding is low enough not to require security by way of retention.
- Only one retention deduction – To improve cashflow, retention should only be deducted as a single sum towards the end of the project rather than from interim payments throughout.
- Lower percentage – The retention amount should be 1.5% on the basis of a single sum payment, reducing to 1% from 2021.
- Separate release – In subcontracts, the release of retention should not be linked to release of retention under the main contract.
- Minimum threshold – There should be no retention for contracts at any tier with a starting value of less than £50,000 (increasing to £100,000 from 2021).

While implementing these suggestions might seem radical, some of the ideas could be workable in Irish projects with limited complication. For example, the application of one single reduced percentage of retention to the payment at practical



completion should still provide adequate protection to employers to address any defects during the defects liability period. During the construction phase, usually interim payments can be adjusted to address any workmanship issues anyway. The suggestion of not applying retention to temporary works might be less attractive, depending on the level of the supply chain involved. It could give rise to administrative difficulties and uncertainties in assessing separately the elements of the works that are not permanent, and applying a zero rate to these.

ALTERNATIVES TO RETENTION

There are a number of other mechanisms which potentially can be used to provide protection as an alternative to retention, such as retention bonds, performance bonds, parent company guarantees, project bank accounts, escrow stakeholder accounts and retention held in trust funds.

The advantages and disadvantages of each of these alternatives are set out in the UK's research paper. The main finding was that there is limited evidence of widespread use of the alternative mechanisms in the United Kingdom. The main disadvantage of a number of the mechanisms is the administrative cost and time required to implement them. While retention bonds are frequently used, the costs of bonds are high and could be a barrier for smaller subcontractors. The research paper identified two mechanisms that warrant further investigation as viable alternatives to retention, namely retentions held in trust and a retention deposit scheme.

Retention held in trust involves keeping the retention amount in a separate account, which keeps the monies ring-fenced from the outset of the project. It is protected in the event of an insolvency. The monies cannot be used for any other purpose by the employer.

In relation to the retention deposit scheme, it is suggested that the contract would be registered with a Government-approved retention deposit scheme (essentially a mechanism for protecting the retention monies) and then the retention

monies would be paid over to the scheme, where it would be held in trust. The scheme would also need to provide for the release of retention. Draft legislation to provide for the scheme has been prepared as a private member's bill, (The Construction (Retention Deposit Schemes) Bill), but its progress has stalled currently. Other jurisdictions such as New Zealand, Canada and Australia have introduced protections for the release of retention.

WHAT NEXT?

The main forms of contract used in Ireland (RIAI, GCCC, FIDIC and NEC) all provide for retention, and in general, the process is similar in each. If the policy principles set out in the Build UK Minimum Standards are to be implemented, some limited amendments to these contracts would be necessary.

The RIAI Yellow and Blue forms already provide for retention held in trust, for a joint account retention fund, and for a mandatory retention bond at practical completion. However, in most private sector projects, it is common for employers to amend these provisions (mostly driven by funder requirements).

Implementing changes to established practice can be slow, and buy-in from all stakeholders (including funders and investors) will be needed. Introducing policy changes on retention practices through revised guidance on the GCCC contracts would provide an effective lead, as in general, this would likely persuade the private sector to follow. Additional legislative support might be necessary, and this could be done through amendments to the Construction Contracts Act.

Either way, there is no better time than the present to progress the review of current retention practices with the objective of improving much-needed cashflow in the Irish construction industry. **C**

Finola McCarthy is a partner with Ronan Daly Jermyn. If you have any queries relating to this or other related legal issues contact Finola at Tel: 021 480 2700, email (The Construction (Retention Deposit Scheme) Bill)

PLANNING PROCESS DELAYING CRITICAL HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE WEST

JUSTIN MOLLOY, Regional Director, Western and Midland Region, CIF, outlines why there must be an urgent review of Ireland's planning and legislative system.



Galway is expected to grow at twice the rate of Dublin according to the Government's 'Project Ireland 2040' plan.



Justin Molloy, Regional Director, Western and Midland Region, CIF.

In the past five years, several critical projects have experienced significant delays in our planning/legislative system, which has resulted in these projects being delayed or shelved altogether.

Our members operate across every community in the west of Ireland, and they are reporting a worrying lack of activity in the region. The CIF's recent National Crane Count showed 123 cranes were operating in Dublin, while there were only two operating in Galway city. Galway is expected to grow at twice the rate of Dublin according to the Government's 'Project Ireland 2040' plan. The disparity in activity between the two cities indicates that Project Ireland 2040 targets for the western region are unlikely to be met.

JUDICIAL REVIEWS

Our concern is that the window to begin these projects with any hope of completion on time is closing rapidly. Judicial reviews and other delays in our planning system are a significant threat to the delivery timelines of projects critical to the development of the western region. The use of judicial reviews to challenge the decision-making procedure is increasing. Their usage should be carefully monitored, and where they occur, they should be managed in a timely fashion. Too many critical regional and national projects have been delayed, and in the case of the Apple data centre in Athenry, shelved, to the detriment of the people in the west.

In 2018, there were 41 judicial review proceedings, while in 2019, to date there have been 34. If this trend continues, the

“ THE CIF IS REQUESTING THAT THE GOVERNMENT EXAMINES JUDICIAL REVIEWS WITHIN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS TO ENSURE THEIR USAGE IS OPTIMAL. ”

number of judicial reviews will likely double in 2019. As a result, the CIF is requesting that the Government examines judicial reviews within the decision-making process to ensure their usage is optimal. Critical will be the need to set strict timeframes to assess the validity of judicial reviews and their subsequent processing through the courts. The CIF has stated that the principle of *locus standi* should be applied as a threshold before a judicial review is undertaken. This would mean that only those living in an area affected by a proposed development can object.

PLANNING SYSTEM FUNCTION

The function of our planning system is to regulate our built environment in the interests of the common good and in line with our planning legislation. Project Ireland 2040 seeks to develop towns and cities in the west of Ireland at double the rate of the capital over the next 20 years. Local authority development plans are being reviewed to ensure they align with the objectives set out in Project Ireland 2040 and the emerging regional spatial and

economic strategies.

If the objectives set out in these ambitious development plans are to be met, we need our planning and legislative system to adjudicate on planning applications and appeals in a timely manner. Otherwise, delays in the system have the potential to exacerbate the disparity of activity between the west and the rest of the country.

STRATEGIC HOUSING DEVELOPMENT LEGISLATION

The new Strategic Housing Development legislation is welcome as it gives statutory time frames to which An Bórd Pleanála must adhere. However, while our planning system sets out time frames for deciding on planning applications/appeals, no such timeframes exist when decisions by planning authorities, or indeed An Bórd Pleanála, are the subject of judicial review. We are calling on Government to address this issue to ensure we have the most effective and efficient system, and one that protects the individual's rights, while enabling the type of sustainable development that benefits entire regions. **C**

GOVERNMENT DELAYS ON PROJECT IRELAND 2040 DELIVERY THREATENS SOUTHERN REGION

CONOR O'CONNELL, Regional Director, Southern Region, CIF, calls on TDs, local authorities and representative groups to work together to streamline infrastructure delivery so critical projects are delivered on time and on budget.

Ireland's economic and societal progress is dependent on the development of thriving regions. Unfortunately, Government commitments in 'Project Ireland 2040' are being delayed, resulting in significant threats to the regions and the wider Irish economy.

INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY SLOWDOWN

The Government has told us that Cork, Limerick, Waterford and Galway cities need to grow at twice the rate of Dublin over the next 20 years. To achieve this, and to have any chance of achieving a balanced Ireland, we need to see a significant increase in investment in infrastructure today. We have seen a slowdown in the delivery of infrastructure in the regions. The Government has committed significant funding to this area, but it is being stymied by bureaucracy, Ireland's inadequate judicial review system, and our antiquated public sector procurement system. There is also a growing suspicion that the upcoming National Broadband Plan has eaten into the existing capital plan and that underestimated budgets for other projects, or projects that were costed several years ago, have reduced the available funding for many essential regional projects.

Over the past 20 years, there has been



Conor O'Connell, Regional Director, Southern Region, CIF.

significant population and employment growth in the south-west region. Private sector investment has seen a buoyant period of activity in Cork city in particular, with many exciting projects commenced or in the pipeline. However, the industry and other business partners in the region are extremely concerned about the slow pace of the delivery of infrastructural projects that will help the region grow even further.

CRITICAL SOUTHERN REGION PROJECTS

Several critical projects, including the

Dunkettle Interchange, the Cork Event Centre, the M20, the M28 and the city centre flood protection scheme, as well as funding for urban regeneration and social housing projects, are all delayed. At the same time the existing transportation infrastructure is at levels far exceeding its capacity.

While it is easier to track the progress of the larger schemes, southern CIF members are reporting delays in the procurement, planning and delivery process for public infrastructural projects across a range of sectors.

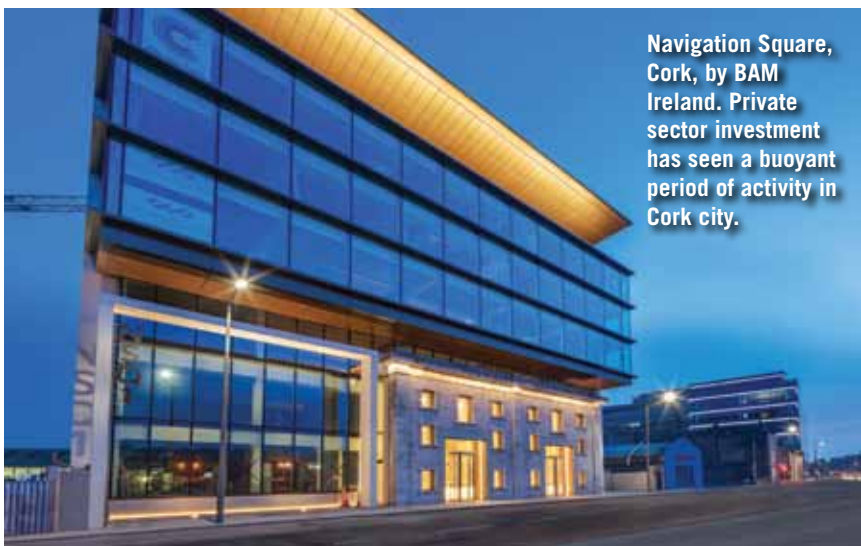
COST OVERRUN THREAT

Many of the larger schemes mentioned also enable significant further private sector construction works. If these major infrastructural projects are not fast-tracked, it will impede further economic growth and result in a lost economic opportunity for the region, as well as damaging Ireland's economic growth.

Even short delays of these projects today mean future cost overruns and exponential increases in future completions dates. The Government, most business organisations, and economists in Ireland have highlighted the need to invest in public infrastructure. However, delays on the ground in our region have reached a chronic situation. We are calling on all TDs, local authorities and representative groups to work together to streamline infrastructure delivery, so that critical projects are delivered on time and on budget for the overall good of the region and the broader economy.

While the CIF locally has engaged in an extensive information campaign in the local media, with all the region's TDs, local authorities and other business groups, it is essential that members also engage with their public representatives and make them aware of projects that are being delayed or stalled. **C**

For further information or if you have details of publicly funded projects that you are aware of being delayed or stalled, please contact Conor O'Connell at coconnell@cif.ie



Navigation Square, Cork, by BAM Ireland. Private sector investment has seen a buoyant period of activity in Cork city.

IMPROVED PRODUCTIVITY WITH A STREAMLINED ACCOUNTING AND JOB COSTING SYSTEM

The 'Evolution M' construction-specific financial management and job costing software system has enabled one CIF member to streamline its business processes and plan for future growth.

J Vaughan Electrical Contractors Ltd recently made the switch to 'Evolution M', a construction-specific financial management and job costing software solution by Integrity Software. Established for more than 40 years, J Vaughan Electrical Contractors Ltd is a mid-size electrical contracting and engineering company based in Blanchardstown, Dublin. It has projects in the medical/health, commercial, residential, State and heritage sectors. Past projects include the Google EMEA headquarters, Dublin, and Ryanair head offices in Swords. It is also currently carrying out the electrical installation at the EXO building, Dublin's highest office building.

GENERIC ACCOUNTING SYSTEMS

Having outgrown its previous generic accounting system, which did not have integrated job costing or specific construction industry modules for plant or subcontractor management, the company's management team recognised the need for a fully integrated system to achieve their planned growth.

Paul Vaughan, Finance Director, J Vaughan Electrical Contractors Ltd, says that the original accounts system was unable to handle the increasing complexities of contract accounting as it relied on spreadsheets that lacked accuracy and completeness.

"It was important for the business that a new system was user-friendly," Paul Vaughan explains, "as it would be used by different departments and team members to consolidate project cost information and enable real-time reporting."

EVOLUTION M

After an evaluation process involving several suppliers, the management team chose Evolution M, a single source multi-award-winning system, to help it reduce administration and data checking, along with streamlining the contractor's processes for procurement and subcontractor RCT processing.



Google EMEA headquarters, Dublin.



The EXO Building, Dublin.

J Vaughan Electrical Contractors Ltd is very excited about its investment in Evolution M. Paul Vaughan is confident it will lead to significant efficiencies in the back office, by providing real-time contract costing information to the team, so they can manage contracts proactively.

"Often, in the past, we relied on spreadsheets, which took a long time to collate information and prepare. When the data was finally available, it was often too late to identify contract spend overruns.

"We are confident that a lot of time will be saved and management can have true confidence in the accuracy, completeness and timeliness of the information that our new system produces."

RADICAL IMPROVEMENT IN BUSINESS PROCESSES

J Vaughan Electrical Contractors Ltd was looking for much more than just a contract costing system. It believes the fully integrated nature of Evolution M, with a full suite of financial modules, and the fact that it is linked directly to ROS for RCT and payroll administration, along with other modules like procurement, works order and plant management, will radically improve business processes throughout the whole company.

Paul Vaughan summed up his feelings by saying, "We had reached a level of activity at which we could no longer continue to operate with our fingers crossed. We spent a long time looking at other systems. We believe that we have found the system that gives us the timely and robust management information that we need and provides the opportunity to streamline our business processes, and improve productivity, enabling the company to continue on an upward trajectory."

Paul Corbet, Senior Account Manager, Integrity Software, says the company is delighted to have another top Irish contractor using its software and services.

"More and more construction industry companies are recognising the importance of accurate job costing management. We look forward to working very closely with the team at J Vaughan for many years to come." **C**

If you would like to know more about Evolution M, including organising an on-site demonstration, contact Integrity Software at 01 906 1444 or email construction@integrity-software.net

GAINING COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE WITH YOUR SUSTAINABILITY AND CSR RECORD

SustainIQ is an app that enables contractors to collate data on their sustainability, environmental responsibility, staff development and contribution to local economies, to gain competitive advantage when it comes to tendering and recruitment. **SEAN MURPHY** reports.

SustainIQ is a mobile web-based app that facilitates businesses to monitor, measure and report on their social, environmental and economic performance in real-time. One of the core benefits of this is that it provides for increased tendering opportunities – particularly when it comes to working for US FDI companies – by enabling contractors to demonstrate their sustainability, environmental, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) credentials.

The SustainIQ company was founded by Liam McEvoy and Maria Diffley in 2017, with the app being launched in 2018.

Liam McEvoy says, “By providing real-time reporting, SustainIQ increases the speed and efficiency with which businesses can collate information and calculate the impact of their investments in sustainability, staff development and CSR. It reduces the need for in-house resources to collate and analyse data, and it provides visibility of CSR benefits right across an organisation.”

“We have developed the software to meet clients’ bespoke requirements,” he continues. “This includes refinements for greater ease of use and added features, including bulk uploads of historical data from other software or Excel records. The app can be branded with client logos, and language that aligns with company strategy, as employees will engage better with a company-branded app.”

Maria Diffley says the app is regularly updated to meet clients’ changing requirements.

CLIENTS

Operating across Ireland and the UK, SustainIQ has been rolled out for many top contractors. These include Gilbert-Ash, Heron Bros, Felix O’Hare, Henry Brothers, and JP Corry Ltd.

Noel Mullan, Commercial Director, Heron Bros, says that the multi-user, multi-site app has helped Heron Bros increase awareness of its corporate responsibility strategy by engaging staff across all its projects.

“This has resulted in a significant improvement by positively impacting the communities in which we work, the natural environment and our economic performance,” Noel Mullan explains.

Maria Bradley, HR and Quality Manager, Gilbert-Ash, says, “SustainIQ has enabled us to quantify our social impacts and gather stakeholder feedback across all of our business operations throughout the UK.”

FOUR DESIGN PILLARS

“By focusing on four key pillars, SustainIQ can capture all aspects of CSR,” continues Liam McEvoy.

- Pillar 1 – Responsible Business – assists organisations in managing their supply chains responsibly by measuring their local, national and international socio-economic impact. It promotes the use of sustainable and responsibly-sourced products, materials and services.
- Pillar 2 – Resource Efficiency and the Natural Environment – assists with implementing waste management plans and calculating carbon footprint while increasing resource efficiency and promoting biodiversity.
- Pillar 3 – People, Health and Diversity – assists with recording



Maria Diffley and Liam McEvoy, founders, SustainIQ.

and monitoring staff training and development opportunities, improving health and wellbeing, and providing employment and career development opportunities.

- Pillar 4 – Community Engagement and Partnering – assists with maximising the positive impact companies have on their local communities by recording and monitoring engagement with community and voluntary organisations.

INDUSTRY CHALLENGES

Liam McEvoy says that the app was developed to address several crucial concerns for contractors.

“With companies investing a lot of resources in their sustainability and CSR programmes, we found that their greatest pain point was trying to capture and collate all of that information to allow them to report in a time-effective way. This is traditionally difficult to capture because there are so many people within the organisation with responsibility for different parts of sustainability and CSR. When you add the fact that an organisation can have multiple sites to cater for, this becomes even more onerous.”

TENDERING ADVANTAGE

Maria Diffley explains why SustainIQ comes into its own for tendering, particularly for US FDI firms.

“SustainIQ provides an opportunity to showcase the added value companies can bring to projects, such as a trained local workforce, environmental protection, community outreach, and the value of their supply chain to their local economy.

“Many US FDI firms have a stringent focus on sustainability and social impact. They expect their contractors to be able to showcase their social impact and environmental protections. This is particularly important in the building sector in Ireland as it has become the location of choice for many global leaders setting up headquarters in Europe,” she concludes. **C**

A webinar about how SustainIQ operates is available in the members section of the CIF website www.cif.ie

To learn more about SustainIQ, or to organise a demonstration, contact Maria Diffley at phone: 0044 28 9521 0508, email: maria@sustainiq.ie, or visit www.sustainiq.ie

NEW TEMPORARY TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT REGULATIONS SIGNED INTO LAW

CHARLIE KERR, Managing Director, Tobar Segais, outlines key changes in temporary traffic management regulations.

Maintenance and renewal work on our road network requires careful management of safety for both the road user and the roadworker. All scales of work introduce risk, from building new roads and additional lanes to cutting hedges and sweeping streets. The requirements for how these risks are controlled are set out in road legislation, as well as in safety, health and welfare at work legislation. All works undertaken must comply with these pieces of legislation.

There have been fatalities and serious injuries within the sector, resulting, and rightly so, in continuing efforts to make sure we are all kept safe using the latest standards, and best practice. A uniform and consistent treatment of similar hazards at roadwork sites through the application of standardised layouts promotes safety by assisting the public in recognising potential hazards and negotiating safe passage through or around the works.

The legal requirements for how traffic is controlled at roadworks are specifically detailed in Chapter 8 of the 'Traffic Signs Manual', last updated in 2010. The Traffic Signs Manual constitutes a ministerial direction, which specifies all temporary traffic management measures to be used at worksites to warn, inform and guide road-users safely through or around the roadworks; the circumstances in which roadwork traffic signs may be used; and guidance on the technical and other standards to be followed. No other format of signs or methods is permitted. Guidance for how to apply the requirements was given in 'Guidance for the Control and Management of Traffic at Road Works', first published in 2007 and last updated in 2010. However, this guidance only covered single carriageway roads.

NEW GUIDANCE WORKING GROUP

In 2017, the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (DTTAS) established a working group and project team to update and renew the standards, and produce guidance documents for both design and operations. The working

group included stakeholders from the Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), local authorities, Local Government Management Agency (LGMA), Health and Safety Authority (HSA), Construction Industry Federation (CIF), and Motorway Maintenance and Renewals Contracts (MMArC) Contractors.

NEW STANDARDS

In August 2019, the new standards were signed into law and a transition period will be permitted, where the 2010 standards can still be used, until June 2020. The project included updating the training provided (and now clearly defined within the documents), including work by Solas in updating the Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) suite of traffic management training.

The working group identified a number of gaps within the 2010 documents, namely

- The road classification system used was inconsistent with design standards specified in the 'Design Manual for Roads and Bridges' (DMRB) and the 'Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets' (DMURS)
- There was a large scope for interpretation on roadwork types
- There was insufficient standards and guidance in urban areas, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists
- There was insufficient guidance for semi-static works leading to improper and inappropriate use
- There was insufficient guidance across the motorway network.

DTTAS provided clear goals for the project team involved. These were:

- To give clear guidance on the safe and effective design, management and installation of temporary traffic management
- To ensure consistency of practice across the country
- To ensure that standards are consistent and appropriate to the level of risk. (Moving from a "design standard approach" to a "risk-based approach that is consistent with design standards".

The new guidance suite now consists of three documents:



Charlie Kerr, Managing Director, Tobar Segais.

- Chapter 8 of the 'Traffic Signs Manual' – This constitutes a road traffic regulation
- 'Temporary Traffic Management Design Guidance' – This replaces the old 'Guidance for the Control and Management of Traffic at Road Works'. This gives guidance to Traffic Management Designers on how to apply the new standards. It also sets out the audit and inspection requirements for clients on works they commission; and,
- 'Temporary Traffic Management Operations Guidance' – This gives guidance on how the new measures should be implemented and managed on-site.

ROAD CLASSIFICATIONS

Road classifications have been simplified to just three levels. These are:

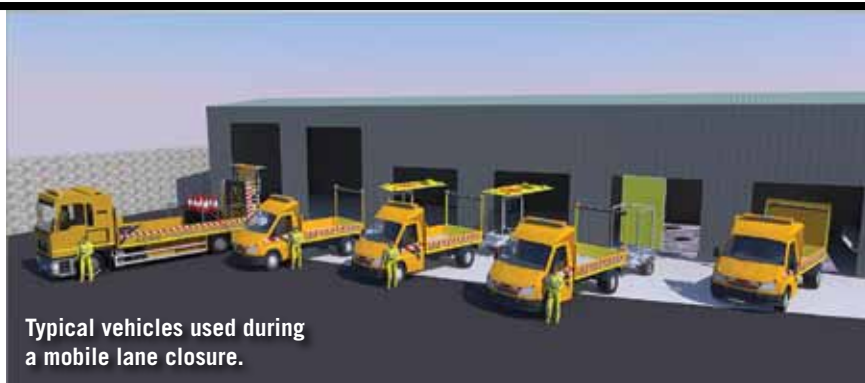
- Level 1 – Low speed and urban areas that use assessments and geometric standards set out in DMURS
- Level 2 – Rural single roads that allow a flexible and appropriate range of implementation approaches
- Level 3 – High-speed dual carriageways and motorways using a geometric standard set out in DMRB.

ROADWORK TYPES

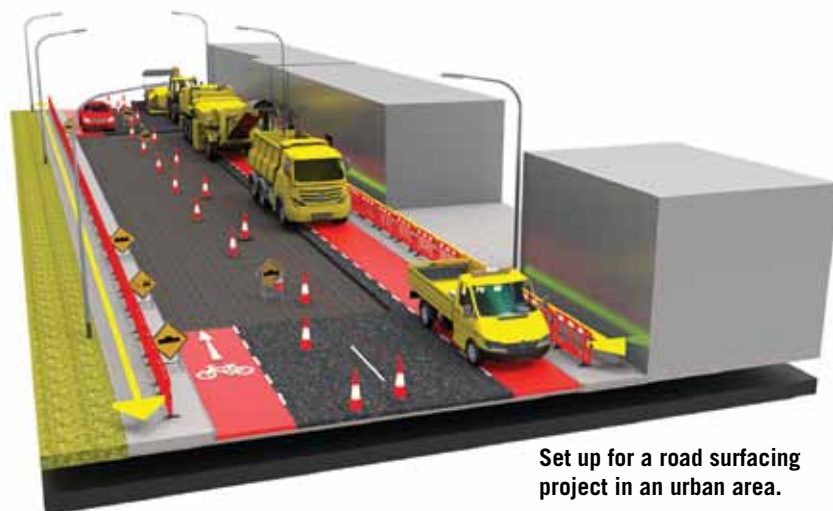
The definitions of roadwork types have also been redefined and clarified. Type B works now effectively replaces the old Type C, and the former Type C classification has been redefined as very short duration works (less than 15 minutes) for low-risk situations.

OTHER KEY CHANGES

Some other key changes include new guidance for the following:



Typical vehicles used during a mobile lane closure.



Set up for a road surfacing project in an urban area.

- Multi-lane roads
- Roundabouts
- Urban dual carriageways
- Motorway traffic management operations including;
 - Visibility to all traffic management arrangements have now been defined,
 - Hard shoulder running,
 - Merges and diverges,
 - Narrow lane systems,
 - The use of square signs (rather than diamond) on motorways,
 - Revision of Mobile Lane Closure signs and arrangements,
- Roadwork ends now cancels all restrictions (with the exception of the roadworks speed limit)
- General revision/renewal of sign decals to aid comprehension (eg, Site Access has been amended)
- Vehicle actuated traffic signals should now be used, except where described in the documents
- 450mm Stop/Go board signs are now legal
- Minimum mounting heights have been defined for signs on all roads

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL

Competence, including training, requirements have been set out for the various tasks involved in traffic management. In summary, all persons

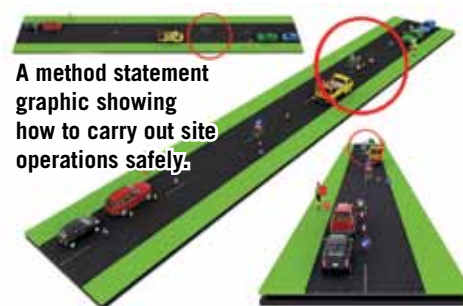
involved (relevant to their task) should have:

- Experience appropriate to the scale of the works and hazards present.
- Knowledge of the following:
 - Works to be undertaken
 - Hazards present
 - Staff and equipment resources available
 - Organisation's safety management system, safe operating procedures or method statements

PERSONNEL TRAINING

In terms of training, the following applies:

- The TTM Designer should have a minimum Level 6 engineering or safety qualification, and an accredited TTM design qualification (Note CSCS SLG on its own does NOT satisfy this requirement).
- The TTM Auditor should have a Level 6 Engineering or Safety Qualification, and an accredited TTM design qualification OR TTM audit qualification. The TTM Auditor should also have a minimum of seven years' post-graduate experience, with five years' experience in road design, road construction, or TTM.
- The Temporary Traffic Operations Supervisor (TTOS) must hold the three-day Signing, Lighting and Guarding at Roadworks card undertaken as part of the CSCS Sign, Lighting and Guarding. If supervising works on motorways



A method statement graphic showing how to carry out site operations safely.

or dual carriageway roads, the TTOS must have an accredited TTM Level 3 qualification for the particular work type being carried out as follows: Static Operations: Static Operative qualification or Mobile Operations: Mobile Operative qualification. On Level 3 roads, depending on the size or hazards of the tasks to be undertaken, the employer may determine that supervisors also require an accredited Level 3 Supervisor qualification. **C**

Charlie Kerr has facilitated a CIF webinar on 'Changes in Temporary Traffic Management. This is available to watch on the CIF Virtual Academy website at www.ciftraining.ie

Charlie Kerr, BE CEng MIEI, MIAT, MNISO, is a member of the project team who drafted the new documents and training courses. If you require any further information, you can contact Charlie Kerr at Charlie@TobarSegais.com or on 087 285 7237.

NEW TEMPORARY TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT REGULATIONS INFORMATION SESSIONS

Over the coming weeks, the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport will be running information sessions (These are NOT training sessions) at the following locations

Dublin – Engineers Ireland, Clyde Road, Dublin 4. 17th October

Dublin – Ballycoolin Regional Training Centre, IDA Business Park, Ballycoolin, Dublin 15. 16th October

Cork – Ballincollig Regional Training Centre, Innishmore, Ballincollig, Co Cork. 22nd October

Tipperary – Roscrea Regional Training Centre, Monastery Road, Roscrea, Co Tipperary. 23rd October

Donegal – Stranorlar Regional Training Centre, Railway Rd, Stranorlar, Co. Donegal. 5th November

Mayo – Castlebar Regional Training Centre, Gorteendrunagh, Castlebar, Co Mayo. 6th November.

These seminars are free, but booking is essential as places are limited. You can book by emailing ttm@dtas.ie

Working at height is one of the recurring causes of fatalities and serious injury in Ireland.



GET PLANNING NOW FOR CONSTRUCTION SAFETY WEEK 2019

Construction Safety Week 2019 will run from Monday, 21st October to Friday, 25th October, coinciding with European Safety Week. **JOHN EGAN**, Executive, Safety and Training, CIF, offers some timely advice of organising events for this year's campaign.

Construction Safety Week is an initiative of the Construction Safety Partnership Advisory Committee (CSPAC) and is administered by the CIF. The CSPAC is a grouping of all the main stakeholders in the construction sector in Ireland, namely employers, unions, State bodies (in conjunction with the Health and Safety Authority) and professional bodies.

Planning for Construction Safety Week is already well progressed to ensure that there will be a suite of reference materials, posters, videos and webinars available for participating companies to access and utilise at their discretion.

The CIF is delighted to have the support of SSE Airtricity, Collen Construction, Walls Construction, Irish Water, Gas Networks Ireland, Kirby Group, Hilti,

Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH), and Keating Construction as sponsors for this year's Construction Safety Week, with additional support anticipated.

Alan Worrall, Health, Safety and Environmental Coordinator, Walls Construction, says that Construction Safety Week has a huge part to play in highlighting on-site health and safety on construction sites and offices.

"Construction Safety Week 2019 is an excellent opportunity for the industry to reaffirm its commitment to health and safety and to ensure its position at the top of all Irish building contractors' business agendas, so that its impact is felt on all activities, especially site operations."

Irish Water continues its support and participation in the campaign in 2019.

Fergus Collins, Head of Capital Services, Irish Water, says, "Irish Water is delighted to be an official partner of Construction Safety Week 2019, and we look forward to working with the CIF and our delivery partners, to strengthen the construction industry's safety and wellbeing culture."

Speaking about plans for this year, Dermot Carey, Director, Safety and Training, CIF, says, "The CIF is once again calling on all persons engaged in construction to get actively involved in Construction Safety Week, and in doing so to reaffirm a commitment to working safely to ensure their own health and wellbeing."

Tommy Drumm, Managing Director, Collen Construction and President, Master Builders and Contractors Association (MBCA) says, "The CIF and the MBCA work well together on issues such as



Alan Worrall, Health, Safety and Environmental Coordinator, Walls Construction.



Dermot Carey, Director, Safety and Training, CIF.

safety and wellbeing. Construction Safety Week helps everyone focus on their own wellbeing and that of their workmates, and to have access to appropriate information and materials to help with this.

“Frank Kelly, Chairman, CIF Safety, Health and Welfare sub-Committee, and Dermot Carey in CIF, work tirelessly to align and support us for the greater good in all matters safety-related.

“I ask all members to do your best to participate in the week and bring your own leadership and ideas into the week for the benefit of all,” he adds.

DAILY THEMES

The CIF Safety and Health sub-Committee has identified five key focus topics for Construction Safety Week 2019.

Monday, 21st October – Mental Health & Wellbeing in Construction

As discussed at the inaugural CIF Health and Safety Summit in November 2018, workplace stress and the consequential adverse effects on a worker's mental health is increasingly of serious concern for employers.

In accordance with EU legislation, employers are obliged to protect workers from psychosocial risks and ensure such risks are considered in workplace risk assessments. The workplace is a particularly influential environment, given the large amount of time people spend at work and in the company of their work colleagues.

A recent mental health study undertaken on behalf of the European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW) and the European Construction Industry Federation (FIEC) found, “Psychosocial risks and work-related stress are among

the most challenging – and growing – occupational safety and health concerns” for construction workers.

Tuesday, 22nd October – Working Safely with Electricity

According to the HSA's 'Code of Practice for Avoiding Danger from Underground Services', injuries that result from damage to live electricity cables are usually caused by the explosive effects of arcing current and by any associated fire or flames that may follow when the sheath of a cable and the conductor insulation are penetrated by a sharp object such as the point of a tool, or when a cable is crushed severely enough to cause internal contact between the sheathing and one or more of the conductors. Typically, this causes severe and potentially fatal burns to the hands, face and body. Some high-voltage electricity cables (eg, 38kV and higher voltage) are filled with oil and, if damaged, the oil may auto-ignite and create an explosion or fire. There is also a risk of electric shock when underground services are damaged.

Contractors are responsible for managing the risks associated with work near overhead electricity wires and underground cables, thus a competent person, or persons, needs to review past site records and utility drawings in advance of works and to liaise with the respective utility providers (where applicable). Avoid construction activity within 10 metres of live overhead electricity lines and any activities that may result in a reduction in the safe line to ground clearance.

Wednesday, 23rd October – Working Safely at Heights

Working at height is one of the recurring

cause of fatalities and serious injury in Ireland. A review of construction-related fatal accidents, as undertaken by the HSA for the years 1989 to 2016, identified falling from height as the single most common cause of fatal accidents. The findings demonstrated that 40% of all deaths in the construction sector, and 49% in non-construction businesses engaged in construction, were attributable to working at height. This includes accidents where the victims themselves fell and accidents where the victim was standing on a structure that collapsed, for example, a roof or a ladder.

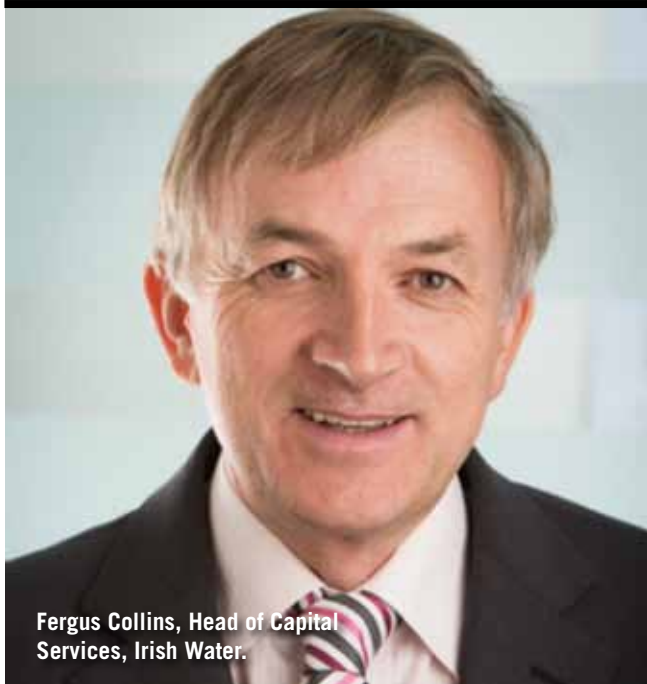
According to the HSA, working at height is defined as “work in any place, including a place at, above or below ground level, where a person could be injured if they fell from that place. Access and egress to a place of work can also be work at height”.

The key messaging from the HSA to ensure safe working at height is as follows:

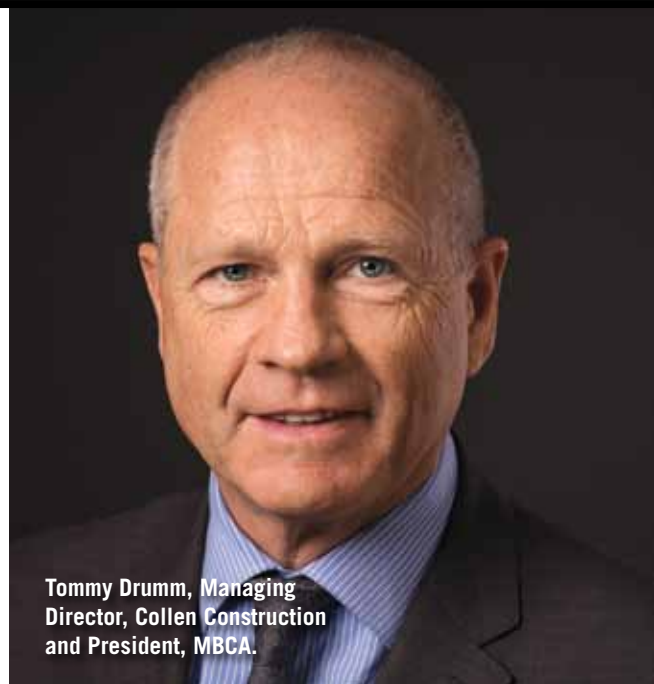
- Carry out risk assessments for work at height activities and make sure that all work is planned, organised and carried out by a competent person;
- Follow the 'General Principles of Prevention' for managing risks from work at height, taking steps to avoid, prevent or reduce risks;
- Chose appropriate work equipment and prioritise collective measures to prevent falls (such as guard rails and working platforms) before other measures which may only reduce the distance and consequences of a fall (such as nets or airbags) or may only provide fall-arrest through personal protection equipment.

Thursday, 24th October – Vehicle Risk & Safety in Lifting Operations

The hazards and associated liabilities of employees driving for work pose many



Fergus Collins, Head of Capital Services, Irish Water.



Tommy Drumm, Managing Director, Colleen Construction and President, MBCA.

issues, which are exacerbated through speeding or a loss of attention caused by driver distraction, fatigue or other influence (eg, intoxicants). The HSA identifies the primary risks for fatality and injury as follows:

Main causes of fatalities

- People being struck by vehicles
- Work-related road collisions
- People falling from vehicles
- Vehicle impact and overturning
- Loads falling from vehicles.

Main causes of injury

- People struck by vehicles
- Physical strain
- Slips, trips and falls
- Items falling onto people

According to statistics shared by the Road Safety Authority (RSA), there were 139 fatal collisions and 146 fatalities on Irish roads during 2018. The 'Provisional Review of Fatal Collisions' undertaken by the RSA in 2018 demonstrates a progressively decreasing number of fatalities on roads in the Republic of Ireland. In 2017, there were 143 fatal road collisions that led to 158 fatalities; in comparison with the preceding year (2016), this represented a reduction of 18% in the number of fatal collisions and 15% fewer fatalities.

According to the HSA, an average of 20 people are killed at Irish workplaces each year following interactions with vehicles. The law requires that pedestrians and vehicles must co-exist safely both in indoor and outdoor places of work.

Where vehicles are operating, the vulnerable group may be co-workers, visitors or members of the public. To protect pedestrians, vehicle travel routes should be clearly delineated, with enough clearance

space between persons and vehicles.

The HSA highlights that employers or a person in control of a workplace must carry out a documented risk assessment of workplace transport hazards, to include an evaluation and assessment of vehicles and mobile work equipment in use in the workplace.

According to the European Commission Transportation Department, "It has been estimated that up to 25% of accidents involving trucks can be attributable to inadequate cargo securing". Cargo that is improperly secured can cause severe accidents, which may lead to the loss of lives, the loss of vehicles, the loss of cargo, or cause environmental damage. Cargo must be placed on the vehicle so that it can neither endanger persons nor goods and cannot move on or off the vehicle. During transport, all cargo items should be prevented from sliding, tipping, rolling, wandering, or substantial deformation and rotation in any direction by methods such as locking, blocking (local/overall), direct lashing and top-over lashing, or combinations of these methods.

All parties involved in the logistics process, including packers, loaders, transport companies, operators and drivers, have a role to play in ensuring that cargo is properly packed and loaded on a suitable vehicle. For loading and unloading of goods, there are three key duty holders, which are:

- The supplier sending the goods
- The carrier – the haulier or other company carrying the goods
- The recipient – the person receiving the goods.

CIF members are reporting an increased number of issues arising from lifting with

cranes, whether lorry loader or mobile cranes. Mobile cranes must be thoroughly examined by a competent person every 12 months, with a documented report of thorough examination generated. Any lifting equipment or lifting accessory (eg, grapples, grabs, slings, chains) must be thoroughly examined every six months and clearly marked with a safe working load (except for ropes and rope slings). Equipment must be examined and tested following any alteration or repair prior to use.

The slinger/signaller plays an essential role in attaching loads and directing lifting appliances; consequently, they must possess commensurate knowledge and skills to ensure lifting operations are undertaken safely at work.

Friday, 25th October – Working Safely with Hazardous Substances

Many workers are exposed to hazardous substances while at work. According to EU-OSHA, the industry sectors with a high prevalence of dangerous substances include agriculture (62%), manufacturing (52%) and construction (51%). If uncontrolled, these substances may potentially impact on a worker's health and contribute to either acute or long-term health problems (eg, skin irritation, respiratory diseases and cancer), or safety risks in the form of a chemical reaction, fire, explosion or suffocation.

The Chemical Agent Regulations 2001 and 2015 outline a specific requirement to complete a chemical agents risk assessment of the chemical agents used in the workplace, which include the following steps:

1. Identify the chemical hazards;
2. Consider who might be affected and

- how they might be harmed;
3. Evaluate the risks – current controls and further precautions;
4. Document and implement your findings;
5. Update and review as required.

Where concrete, stone or sand-based materials are altered (during formation, cutting, drilling, polishing or demolition) and made airborne, there is a potential for exposure to crystalline silica dust. Respirable Crystalline Silica (RCS) occurs when these materials are worked on to release a very fine, inhalable dust. When any dust is inhaled, its point of deposition within the respiratory system is very much dependent upon the range of particle sizes present in the dust. The respirable fraction (smallest particle size) of crystalline silica dust can penetrate deep into the lungs. Elimination and substitution of RCS containing materials, dust extraction and/or dust suppression are the primary measures advised to control potential exposure.

The EU's Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive has been updated and has classified RCS as a category 1 carcinogen. This will come into effect in EU member states as of 17th January 2020.

FIVE TIPS TO GET INVOLVED

The CIF is seeking the active involvement and engagement of individual workers and

companies during Construction Safety Week 2019.

The following suggestions may be helpful to anyone planning to organise activities:

- Consider organising a safety event during this week, for example, a safety talk or demonstration, and publicise this via social media, using the hashtag #CIFSafety19
- Advise the CIF of your planned actions in the 'Safety Week Activities' dedicated section of the CIF website at www.cif.ie/safetyweek and on social media using the hashtag #CIFSafety19
- Download a copy of the Construction Safety Week logo and use it on your website, in communications and as an addition to your email signature.
- Register as an official partner to Construction Safety Week by contacting Michaela Courtney: m.courtney@cpas.ie or phone 01 407 1400
- Get involved in European Safety Week by visiting the webpage of the European Agency for Safety and Health and downloading the OSH Campaign Toolkit at www.osha.europa.eu/en/healthy-workplacescampaigns

If your company is organising its own Construction Safety Week activities prior to Construction Safety Week, CIF asks that you use the hashtag #CIFSafety19 to help get the safety message out. **C**

RORY'S STORIES



Rory O'Connor, CIF Safety Ambassador.

Comedian and online star, Rory O'Connor, of 'Rory's Stories' fame, is the CIF Safety Ambassador for Construction Safety Week 2019. Over the past few months, Rory has immersed himself in this role by providing toolbox talks on mental wellbeing, and he will continue to do so up to and during Construction Safety Week 2019.

To learn more, visit the CIF's dedicated webpage for Construction Safety Week 2019

SAFETY LOGOS



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Team Ireland in Kazan, Russia.

IRELAND FINISHES 10TH IN 'WORLDSKILLS OLYMPICS'

The Ireland Worldskills team has won four gold medals and a bronze at the WorldSkills Competition in Kazan, Russia.

A 17-strong team of apprentices, trainees and students from Ireland competed over four days in the biennial WorldSkills Competition, displaying their skills across a wide range of career areas, including bricklaying, plumbing and heating, cabinet making, aircraft maintenance, beauty therapy, visual merchandising, restaurant service and cookery.

Overall, Ireland came 10th in the world, ahead of the UK in 16th place. It overcame stiff competition from many bigger and wealthier countries, which entered huge numbers of contestants across a range of skills.

The result is the best by an Irish team for a long time in the competition. In the previous competition in Abu Dhabi, Ireland secured seven medallions of excellence, but no gold.

Among those picking up gold for Ireland were Ryan Dempsey, from TU Dublin, and Luke O'Keeffe of Waterford IT, who won gold in the Building Information Modelling (BIM) contest. While not yet officially part of the competition BIM is one of a group of 'Future Skills' trialled alongside this year's event.

Olivier Bal-Petre, TU Dublin, won gold in Cloud Computing category. He also won a 'Best of Nation' medal for the highest scoring competitor from Team Ireland.

Megan Yeates, a TU Dublin student from Kildare, won gold in Freight Forwarding, and Adam Flynn from Lismore, Co Waterford, won bronze in the Industrial Millwright Mechanic (IMM) category.

Seven other Irish team members came home with 'Medallions for Excellence'. These were Jack O'Donnell (Galway) Plumbing and Heating; Patrick Twomey (Cork), Construction Metalwork; Jack Lynch (Cavan), Cabinetmaking; Christopher Kehoe (Wexford), Welding; Cormac Thompson (Roscommon), Aircraft Maintenance; Hanna Mathe (Waterford), Cookery; and Ruairi Grealish (Galway City), Restaurant Service.

Each member of the Irish team, all aged under 25, won their place at the international contest after competing in the hugely successful National Skills Competition at Ireland Skills Live in March 2019.

Ray English from TU Dublin, who chairs Worldskills Ireland and was a technical delegate at the Kazan competition, said that Team Ireland was delighted with the results.



Donal Keys, Co-Chair, World Skills Ireland, and David Tracey, John Sisk & Son, with Ryan Dempsey, TU Dublin and Luke O'Keeffe, Waterford IT, who won WorldSkills gold in the BIM category.

"There was minimal training time," he says. "We had an intense 10-week preparation period to get competitors to be the best that they can be so they can compete against the best of the best in the world. This was all their All Ireland's rolled into one day."

He continues: "There is a huge debt of gratitude to be paid to the ETBs, the Institutes of Technology and TU Dublin for letting their staff coach and mentor the team. This would not have been possible without the help of many industry experts who enthusiastically gave their time to this."

Shauna Dunlop, Director of Apprenticeship and Work-based Learning, Solas, said to represent Ireland on an international stage was "a massive achievement in its own right, but to also bring home so many medals is a wonderful achievement."

David Tracey, Joinery Works/Training Centre Manager, John Sisk & Son, was in attendance at the WorldSkills as an industry official observer, as he is a WorldSkills Ireland board member.

He said, "It was an absolute privilege and honour to be at the WorldSkills as an official observer. The Irish team, along with their experts and team leaders were all winners by getting Ireland into the top 10 of the WorldSkills tables. This was against 62 other competing nations. It is a remarkable achievement. IrelandSkills Live back in March in the RDS, Dublin was where industry/employers from all sectors got involved along with all ETB's and IT's. This laid the foundation for such a successful outcome." **C**



At Last year's Health and Safety Summit, L to r: Dermot Carey, CIF; Fergal O'Byrne, NSAI; Dr Sharon McGuinness, HSA; Fergus Collins, Irish Water; Steve Hails, Tideway, UK; and Brian Kennedy, John Sisk and Son.

FOCUS ON WORKERS' WELLBEING AT HEALTH AND SAFETY SUMMIT 2019

The CIF Health and Safety Summit 2019 will take place on 12th November at Croke Park.

The theme of this year's summit is 'Driving a Positive Health and Safety Culture in Ireland's Growing Construction Sector'.

The wide range of topics to be addressed will include:

- Engaging business leaders to drive continuous improvement
- Priorities and challenges for 2020
- Fostering wellbeing and resilience
- What does the GDPR mean for the construction industry, in particular for accident reporting?
- What does the future hold for the health and safety professional?

Dermot Carey, Director, Safety and Training, CIF, says the summit will be an opportunity for key industry health and safety stakeholders, to address major issues of concern around health and safety.

"The inaugural CIF Health and Safety Summit last year gave key health and safety personnel an opportunity to gather and address issues of concern. In a year of continued growth for the sector, we hope to see the lowest number of fatalities in construction accidents to date. The health and safety actions taken by the industry are making sites safer, but we must remain vigilant to ensure workers' health and wellbeing are the priority.

SPEAKERS AND PANELLISTS

Speakers and panellists will include: Michael McDonagh, Head of Construction



Frank Kelly, Construction Director, Walls Construction and Chairman, CIF Safety, Health and Welfare sub-Committee, addressing last year's summit.

Policy, the Health and Safety Authority; Tom Parsons, Beyond Zero Culture Manager Europe, Jacobs; Frank Kelly, Construction Director, Walls Construction and Chairman, CIF Safety, Health and Welfare sub-committee; Liam Berney, Industrial Officer, ICTU/Congress; Brian Byrne, Managing Director, ClearyDoyle Construction; Silvana Martin, Health and Wellbeing Leader, Laing O'Rourke, UK; Pdraig Daly, Head of Recruitment, JJ Rhatigan Building Contractors; Barry Reilly, HSE Director, Winthrop Engineering; Louise Martin, EHS Advisor, Walls Construction; Michael Norton, Managing Director, Proactive Safety; Sinead Gaines, Environmental, Health and

Safety Manager, PJ Hegarty & Sons; and Brian Kraus, Global Managing Partner, Safety Transformation, Environmental Resources Management (ERM).

ROUNDTABLES DISCUSSIONS

The summit's afternoon session will focus on roundtables discussions for delegates.

Topics for these discussions currently include:

- Stress management in the construction industry – Effective coping strategies for employees
- BIM for health and safety in construction
- How to prevent heavy lifting injuries in construction environments and a guide to implementing 'BS 1721 Code of Practice for Safe Use of Cranes'
- Health and safety training for non-English speaking workers
- Online safety training – The pros and cons
- Dust management – How to implement effective dust management plans.

The CIF Health and Safety Summit 2019 will be of particular interest to professionals with responsibility for managing and organising health and safety in their organisation, including, but not limited to, health and safety leaders, business owners, directors and managers, worker representatives, engineers and architects. **C**

To book tickets for the CIF Health and Safety Summit 2019, visit www.cifsafety.ie

SOUTHERN REGION SUMMIT REVIEWS DEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR COMING YEARS

The inaugural CIF Southern Region Construction Summit took place recently at the Clayton Hotel, Cork. **RONAN O'BRIEN** reports.

The southern region has been identified as a critical region of growth in Ireland in the National Planning Framework 'Project Ireland 2040' with the population of Cork, Limerick and Waterford due to grow by 50% in the next 20 years. The southern construction industry will be central to delivering this vision of Project Ireland 2040.

With this in mind, the CIF recently staged the inaugural Southern Region Construction Summit at the Clayton Hotel, Cork.

The summit brought together developers, planners, architects, engineers, consultants, contractors, material and solution providers, and other key stakeholders pivotal in the construction industry to explore the best strategies and plans to safeguard and maximise opportunities for the further expansion and economic growth in the region.

SPEAKERS

Speakers on the day included Paul Moran, Regional Manager, Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), who told delegates that it takes an average of eight to 13 years for a road scheme to be completed from the appraisal stage, saying that "these timescales are lengthening".

Other speakers outlined some of the many exciting projects that are planned for the southern region in Cork, Waterford and Limerick.

Marian Walsh, of project management firm Carron & Walsh, gave a presentation on plans for the North Quays project in Waterford, while David Conway, Limerick 2030, spoke about exciting proposals planned for Limerick. Conor Lee, Tower Holdings Group, showed delegates how the landscape of Cork City may look in the future with his presentation on tall buildings. This included details of the Custom House Quay Tower in Cork Docklands, which at 34 storeys, could become the tallest building in Ireland at 140m high.

Dr Frank Crowley, UCC, gave a presentation on the increased use of automation and robots in construction.

PANEL DISCUSSIONS

There were also several panel discussions across the day.

The day began with a panel discussion on the challenges of meeting the Project Ireland 2040 goals. This discussion featured Ann Doherty, Chief Executive, Cork City Council; and David Kelly, Director, Southern Regional Assembly; as well as Jim Cleary, KPMG; Gerald Knights, DRS Bond Management; and Conor O'Connell, Director, Southern Region, CIF.

Later, Simon Tritschler, BAM Ireland; David Purdon, Diatec Ireland; Joe O'Sullivan, John Sisk & Son; and Jonathan Argue, Topcon, addressed how the construction industry is innovating and increasing productivity.

The event concluded with an informative and entertaining panel discussion between Michael O'Sullivan Greene, Chairman, Cork House Builders; Michael O'Flynn, O'Flynn Group; and Brian O'Callaghan, Managing Director, O'Callaghan Properties, on housing delivery and the challenges faced by the industry in meeting the housing demand.

Journalist and Newstalk presenter Jonathan Healy hosted the



Brian O'Callaghan, O'Callaghan Properties; Michael O'Flynn, O'Flynn Group; Aidan Mangan, CIF Cork Branch; Michael O'Sullivan Greene, Cork House Builders; Conor Healy, Cork Chamber; and Conor O'Connell, CIF.



Delegates enjoying a panel discussion during the CIF Southern Region Construction Summit 2019.



In discussion, Brian O'Callaghan, Michael O'Flynn and Michael O'Sullivan Greene with Jonathan Healy.

summit.

Conor O'Connell Director, Southern Region, CIF, was delighted with the response of delegates to the conference saying, "There is a real appetite to deliver on Project Ireland 2040, but a number of big challenges need to be addressed. The high numbers in attendance at the conference showed how seriously contractors in the southern region are taking their role of delivering on the development goals of the plan. It is down to Government to ensure that they can deliver the projects in a timely manner with a fair and equitable procurement system."

SPONSORS

CIF thanks Gold Sponsor DRS Bond Management for its support. It would also like to thank Silver Sponsors Gas Networks Ireland and KPMG. **C**

The house builders panel discussion is available to view on the cif website www.cif.ie

All presentations and speeches can accessed at www.southernconstruct.ie/cifconsumpp-19

INDUSTRY NEWS

KIRBY OPENS NETHERLANDS OFFICE AS PART OF EUROPEAN EXPANSION

Mechanical and electrical engineering contractor Kirby Group Engineering has opened an office in the Netherlands as part of its expansion into mainland Europe.

Commenting on the new office, which is located in Schiphol, Dave McNamara, Director, European Operations, Kirby said, "Opening an office in the Netherlands is a strategic move in our expansion into the Dutch market and wider mainland Europe market. Not only will it support our growth, but it will also allow us to best serve our expanding client base in the region."

Kirby entered the Dutch market in late 2018, and it is proving to be a successful move for the company.

"We have already secured a number of high-profile projects in the data centre and life science sectors, with more projects in the pipeline," continues Dave McNamara. "Expanding our operations further into mainland Europe is a progressive step for Kirby, particularly given strong levels of investment in two of our key target sectors: data centres and life sciences."

Kirby provides full mechanical and electrical contracting services as well as specialist high voltage (HV) and medium voltage (MV) design and construction services across Ireland, the UK, and mainland Europe. The company has the capability to execute projects in Ireland, the UK, the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, Norway and Germany.

Kirby operates in a number of sectors including data centres,



Dave McNamara, Director,
European Operations, Kirby.

substations and renewables, life sciences, industrial manufacturing, petrochemical, and commercial.

With a total turnover of €166m in 2018, Kirby placed 16th in the *Construction* magazine CIF Top 50 Contractors 2019, and according to the company is on target for a turnover of €200m this year.

Founded in 1964, Kirby directly employs over 850 highly-skilled professionals. **C**

PERI OPENS IRISH SUBSIDIARY

Although its products have been available in Ireland since the early 90s, formwork and scaffolding specialist Peri recently opened an Irish operation in Dublin.

Colm McHugh, Managing Director, Peri Ireland, is confident that the global business's newest base in Ireland will grow from strength to strength.

While Peri is no stranger to Irish customers, the company plans to make itself more accessible to the market. Colm McHugh, says building strong partnerships with customers will enable the company to deliver the same comprehensive service as it does globally.

"We want to make sure that Irish customers have Peri on their doorstep," he says.

Although it is a contrast to how Peri previously traded in Ireland, Colm McHugh promises that the high-quality product offering will remain the same.

"We want our customers to know that there is no formwork, scaffolding or engineering problem that cannot be solved



Colm McHugh, Managing
Director, PERI Ireland.

with Peri Ireland as project partners, however simple or complex it may be."

The opening of Peri Ireland is timely as it coincides with the Government's 'Project Ireland 2040' plan and the current demand for new construction, especially with 'high impact' transport and infrastructure

projects on the horizon.

By providing healthy competition to the market, employment opportunities across a range of skill sets, and strong engineering capability, the company aims to facilitate industry growth.

"No matter what sector or complexity of the project, we have the products and expertise to deliver fast, safe and efficient solutions for our customers."

Colm McHugh adds that Peri Ireland will soon offer a full in-house engineering design suite to complement its formwork and scaffolding service.

"This service will include digital services such as BIM and 3D animation technology to facilitate the early stages of planning and decision-making, as well as fulfilling the growing requirement for BIM on public sector projects," he says.

He concludes by saying that additional services on offer to customers include a cleaning and repair facility, where regular maintenance of customers' Peri products will preserve the quality and enhance performance on site. **C**

MERCURY TO OFFER SPECIALIST TRAINING TO 50 DATA TECHNICIANS

Mercury has announced that it is to put 50 trainee data technicians through a new bespoke traineeship over the next three years. As there is currently no national trade for data technicians, Mercury has created its own standard for would be technicians, who will undertake technical education during their traineeship. Mercury's trainee data technicians will take part in a course that offers a solid mixture of on-site and off-site training.

The Mercury trainees will undergo the three-year training programme whereby they will learn the principal roles and responsibilities of a data technician. Mercury's trainees will work on key projects across a variety of clients' sites, in Mercury's newly created data technician training centre and with a variety of external training providers. Trainees will receive numerous accreditations from City & Guilds and CNet training, in addition to training and certification from all the major Global IT Infrastructure manufacturers on installation and commissioning, all of which are globally recognised.



Keith Foran, General Manager, Technologies, Mercury, said, "We are delighted to announce this fantastic new programme. This traineeship is a brilliant opportunity to offer an entry level role to 50 talented individuals who will form part of the next generation of data technology professionals."

Mercury's Technical Support Services (TSS) business unit provides highly specialist mechanical, electrical and ICT



Keith Foran, General Manager, Technologies, Mercury.

services to clients across Ireland and Europe. Its TSS experts have the in-depth knowledge to deliver a clients' vision.

Mercury is currently recruiting through its website for a number of trainee data technician roles to work on Mercury projects over the next three years. **C**

If you are interested in applying for a trainee data technician position with Mercury, visit www.mercuryeng.com/careers/

LMC GROUP SET TO CREATE 200 JOBS IN TIPPERARY

LMC Group has announced that its modular manufacturing division has taken over the former Procter & Gamble factory in Nenagh, Co Tipperary and plans to expand its workforce by more than 200 people.

Martin Lydon, Managing Director, LMC Group says that the company currently employs more than 100 people at its facilities in Birdhill, Co Tipperary, but demand for its products has meant that it will expand its workforce over the next three years.

"We plan to move from building modular rooms to full turn-key housing solutions over the next 12 months in our new Nenagh facility," he says.

"It is a testament to the versatility and hard work of our staff that we have decided to expand locally – the goodwill of the local Tipperary people combined with the support of Tipperary County Council, the planning office, and the recent engagement of Enterprise Ireland, have all combined to make the expansion to Nenagh the perfect fit for LMC."

Tipperary Labour TD Alan Kelly has welcomed the good news for the local economy, saying that originally the company had been planning to expand in Limerick, but had been convinced to instead invest in the new site in Nenagh.



Martin Lydon, Managing Director, LMC Group and Stephen McConnell, Director, LMC Group.

Stephen McConnell, Director, LMC Group, says, "The infrastructure in Nenagh, combined with its long successful history in manufacturing and its access through the M7 to the national motorway system, makes Nenagh the perfect location for LMC." **C**

GRAFTON MERCHANTING REBRANDS AS CHADWICKS GROUP

Grafton Merchanting ROI has announced it is rebranding to Chadwicks Group as part of a €5m investment programme in the business.

The €5m investment over the next three years will be in rebranding, refurbishment and a significant technology upgrade to provide a range of integrated online services for customers.

All Chadwicks Group branches will remain in their current locations across Ireland.

Chadwicks Group operates from over 50 locations nationwide. Of these 50 locations, all Heiton Buckley branches will now move to the Chadwicks brand, bringing the total number of Chadwicks branches to 37. Rebrand activity is expected to be completed by April 2020 while refurbishment activity will continue throughout the three years. Destination brands where there is a unique area of speciality within the Chadwicks Group will retain their current brand name. These include Heiton Steel, Panelling Centre, Davies, Telfords and Cork Builders Providers.

As part of the overall investment, Chadwicks Group is investing in its technology systems to improve overall customer experience and create a more seamless user experience to make life easier for its customers. The first step in this overhaul is the migration of all financial and product administration information for customers to a centralised ERP system, meaning customers will have access to their account details at any of its locations nationwide. This change in process will allow customers to shop in 43 of the Chadwicks, Heiton Buckley and Panelling Centre branches at any



Patrick Atkinson, CEO, Chadwicks Group.

time and receive one centralised statement every month. It will provide consistency in pricing and greatly reduce administration for customers.

Speaking on the announcement, Patrick Atkinson, CEO, Chadwicks Group, said, "The launch of the Chadwicks Group in Ireland marks a significant day in our company history. This considerable investment in our brand and technology over the next three years will provide our customers with a new and enhanced user experience across the Chadwicks Group estate.

"The construction sector is changing, and Chadwicks Group is helping to drive that change through better use of digital technology to improve customer experience and through closer integration of our businesses to ensure a complete and frictionless experience, he concludes." **C**

EAMONN MCGAURAN & SON AWARDED SAFE-T-CERT CERTIFICATION

Eamonn McGauran & Son Ltd, who celebrated 50 years in business last year, recently had its Safe-T-Cert A certification renewed to cover it for the next 10 years.

Safe-T-Cert is a certification scheme designed for certifying the Safety Management Systems of contractors working in the construction industry. The scheme's objective is to improve health and safety management by providing objective standards and certifying those contractors whose safety management systems have been assessed and approved.

This Sligo-based family-run business provides services to the industrial, residential and commercial sectors and has worked on numerous projects from domestic dwellings to commercial offices, pharmaceutical factories and hospitals. Its clients include some of the biggest building contractors in the country as well as various State bodies and private sector companies.

Eamonn McGauran Jnr and his wife Maria McGauran, Finance and HR Manager, took over the business from Eamonn's father in 2010.

Eamonn McGauran & Son Ltd currently employees 30 people, many of whom have been with the company for over 20 years.

Eamonn McGauran is delighted to have been awarded the Safe-T-Cert certification again, which he says enables the company to demonstrate to clients the stringent safety policy and standards the company follows on every project.

"We are delighted to have once again achieved the Safe-T-Cert



Tom Parlon, Director General, CIF (centre), presents Eamonn McGauran and Maria McGauran with their Safe-T-Cert certification.

A standard and continue to maintain and improve on our quality and safety standards. Our safety policy is designed to ensure that all tasks are within the competence and capacity of the employee. Our systems have been designed with that purpose in mind. It is an essential element of our safety policy to continuously review our standards and improve these beyond current best practices." **C**

FOR YOUR DIARY

Helping you plan ahead

SEPTEMBER

Wednesday 25th, @ 8:00pm-10:00pm NORTH WEST BRANCH MEETING

Location: Sligo Park Hotel, Pearse Road, Sligo

Contact: Justin Molloy

Tel: 091 502680, Email: jmolloy@cif.ie

OCTOBER

Tuesday 1st, 9:30am-4:30pm TENDERING WORKSHOP WITH INTERTRADE IRELAND

Location: Tower Hotel, Waterford

Contact: Ronan O'Brien

Tel: 021 435 1410, Email: robrien@cif.ie

Wednesday 2nd, 8:00am CIF ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2019

Location: Croke Park Conference Centre, Dublin

Contact: commms@cif.ie

Web: www.cifconference.ie

Thursday 3rd, 8:00pm-10:00pm DONEGAL BRANCH MEETING

Location: Mount Errigal Hotel, Letterkenny

Contact: Justin Molloy

Tel: 091 502680, Email: jmolloy@cif.ie

Monday 7th 1:00pm-3:00pm CORK BRANCH EXECUTIVE MEETING

Location: CIF Offices, 4 Eastgate Avenue, Little Island, Cork

Contact: Brid Cody

Tel: 021 435 1410, Email: bcody@cif.ie

Wednesday 9th, 3:00pm-5:00pm MCBA EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING

Location: CIF, Construction House, Canal Road, Dublin 6

Contact: Denise Tuffy

Tel: 01 406 6000, Email: dtuffy@cif.ie

Thursday, 10th, 10am JOINT ACEI AND M&ECA CONFERENCE PRECEDED BY M&ECA MEETING

Location: Killarney Plaza Hotel, Killarney, Co Kerry

Contact: Jennifer Nisbet-Daly

Tel: 01 406 6048, Email: jnisbetdaly@cif.ie

Tuesday 15th, 11:00am-1:00pm EXECUTIVE BODY MEETING

Location: CIF, Construction House, Canal Road, Dublin 6

Contact: Gillian Heffernan

Tel: 01 406 6016, Email: gillian@cif.ie

Thursday 17th, 9:30am-4:30pm TENDERING WORKSHOP WITH INTERTRADE IRELAND

Location: CIF Offices, 4 Eastgate Avenue, Little Island, Cork

Contact: Ronan O'Brien

Tel: 021 4351410, Email: robrien@cif.ie

Monday, 21st to Friday 25th CONSTRUCTION SAFETY WEEK 2019

Details: www.cif.ie/safety-week

Wednesday 23rd, 1:00pm-3:00pm PROCUREMENT, TENDERING AND CONTRACTUAL MATTERS COMMITTEE MEETING

Location: CIF, Construction House, Canal Road, Dublin 6

Contact: Denise Tuffy

Tel: 01 406 6000, Email: dtuffy@cif.ie

Tuesday 29th, 10:00am-1:00pm IHBA NATIONAL SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING

Location: The Midlands Park Hotel, Portlaoise, Co Laois

Contact: Cathy Gurry

Tel: 01 406 6008, Email: cgurry@cif.ie

NOVEMBER

Monday 4th, 6:00pm-8:00pm GALWAY BRANCH MEETING

Location: Ardilaun Hotel, Galway

Contact: Justin Molloy

Tel: 091 502680, Email: jmolloy@cif.ie

Tuesday 5th, 4:00pm-6:00pm MID WEST BRANCH MEETING

Location: Castletroy Park Hotel, Limerick

Contact: Brid Cody

Tel: 021 435 1410, Email: bcody@cif.ie

Wednesday 6th, 7:00pm-9:00pm SOUTH EAST BRANCH MEETING

Location: Brandon Hotel, New Ross, Co Wexford

Contact: Brid Cody

Tel: 021 435 1410, Email: bcody@cif.ie

Friday, 8th, 8.30am-12.30pm SUSTAINING SUCCESS IN SPECIALIST CONTRACTING SEMINAR

Location: Castleknock Hotel, Porterstown, Dublin 15

Contact: Jennifer Nisbet-Daly

Tel: 01 40666048, Email: jnisbetdaly@cif.ie

Monday 11th, 4:00pm-6:00pm CECA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Location: CIF, Construction House, Canal Road, Dublin 6

Contact: Denise Tuffy

Tel: 01 406 6000, Email: dtuffy@cif.ie

Tuesday 12th, 8:00am CIF HEALTH AND SAFETY SUMMIT 2019

Location: Croke Park Conference Centre, Dublin

Contact: John Egan

Tel: 01 406 6097, Email: jegan@cif.ie

Web: www.cifsafety.ie

Tuesday 12th, 8:00pm-10:00pm MIDLAND BRANCH MEETING

Location: Belvedere House, Mullingar, Co Westmeath

Contact: Justin Molloy

Tel: 091 502680, Email: jmolloy@cif.ie

Friday 15th, 8:00pm-12:00pm MBCA ANNUAL DINNER

Location: Clayton Burlington Road, Dublin 4

Contact: Denise Tuffy

Tel: 01 406 6000, Email: tuffy@cif.ie

Thursday 17th, 9:30am-4:30pm TENDERING WORKSHOP WITH INTERTRADE IRELAND

Location: CIF Offices, 4 Eastgate Avenue, Little Island, Cork

Contact: Ronan O'Brien

Tel: 021 4351410, Email: robrien@cif.ie

Monday 18th, 1:00pm-3:00pm CORK HOUSE BUILDERS MEETING

Location: CIF Offices, 4 Eastgate Avenue, Little Island, Cork

Contact: Brid Cody

Tel: 021 435 1410, Email: bcody@cif.ie

Wednesday 20th, 3:00pm-6:00pm MBCA EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING (FOLLOWED BY AGM)

Location: CIF, Construction House, Canal Road, Dublin 6

Contact: Denise Tuffy

Tel: 01 406 6000, Email: dtuffy@cif.ie

Thursday 21st, 8:30am-10:00am KILDARE BRANCH MEETING

Location: Osprey Hotel, Kildare

Contact: James Benson

Tel: 01 406 6061, Email: jbenson@cif.ie

Thursday 21st, 4:00pm-6:00pm KILKENNY BRANCH MEETING

Location: Lyrath Estate Hotel, Kilkenny

Contact: James Benson

Tel: 01 406 6061, Email: jbenson@cif.ie

Tuesday 26th, 11:00am-1:00pm 2019 EXECUTIVE BODY MEETING, FOLLOWED BY CIF AGM

Location: CIF, Construction House, Canal Road, Dublin 6

Contact: Gillian Heffernan

Tel: 01 406 6016, Email: gillian@cif.ie

CIF TRAINING COURSES

CIF training and education programmes for September-November 2019

SEPTEMBER COURSES	CODE	DATE	DURATION	LOCATION
CIF Site Supervisor Safety Programme	SSSP 3607	23rd September	2 Days	Dublin 6
Project Supervisor Construction Stage	PSCS 3784	24th September	3 Days	Dublin 6
CIF QQI Project Supervisor Construction Stage	PSCS 3783	25th September	3 Days	Limerick
CIF QQI Building Control Course – Part B & Part J - Fire Safety [1] CSE 1	BCC 35575	26th September	1 Day	Dublin 6
CIF QQI Building Control Course – Part B & Part J - Fire Safety [2] CSE 1	BCC 35576	27th September	1 Day	Dublin 6
IOSH Project Supervisor Design Process	PSDP 3785	26th September	2 Days	Dublin 6
CIF Core Safety Management Programme Renewal/CPD Working with the Assigned Certifier	CSMP 3612	26th September	Half-Day	Co Dublin
– A Site Manager's Approach	AC 3771	27th September	1 Day	Cork
Airtightness Programme	AT 3616	27th September	1 Day	Dublin 10
CIF Management and Inspection of Scaffold	SI 3610	30th September	1 Day	Dublin 6
OCTOBER COURSES	CODE	DATE	DURATION	LOCATION
CIF IOSH Managing Safety in Construction	MSIC 3615	1st October	5 Days	Limerick
CIF IOSH Managing Safety in Construction	MSIC 3616	3rd October	5 Days	Dublin 6
IOSH Project Supervisor Design Process	PSDP 3774	2nd October	2 Days	Athlone
Appointed Persons Course	AP 3618	4th October	3 Days	Galway
Payment Process Under the Construction Contracts Act 2013	PPCC 3761	4th October	Half-Day	Dublin 6
Payment Process Under the Construction Contracts Act 2013	PPCC 3762	9th October	Half-Day	Cork
Payment Process Under the Construction Contracts Act 2013	PPCC 3763	18th October	Half-Day	Galway
CIF Site Supervisor Safety Programme	SSSP 3613	7th October	2 Days	Limerick
CIF Site Supervisor Safety Programme	SSSP 3614	21st October	2 Days	Galway
CIF Site Supervisor Safety Programme	SSSP 3672	29th October	2 Days	Dublin 6
Project Supervisor Construction Stage	PSCS 3620	16th October	3 Days	Portlaoise
Project Supervisor Construction Stage	PSCS 3621	18th October	3 Days	Dublin 6
Temporary Work 2-Day Coordinator	TWC 3764	10th October	2 Days	Dublin 6
Working with the Assigned Certifier – A Site Manager's Approach	AC 3772	11th October	1 Day	Galway
Site Managers – A Practical Approach to Building Regulations	SMBR 3780	15th October	2 Days	Cork
Site Managers – A Practical Approach to Building Regulations	SMBR 3656	23rd October	2 Days	Dublin 6
Environmental Management for Construction Focusing on Land/Waste/Water	EMC 3626	16th October	2 Days	Dublin 6
CIF Management and Inspection of Scaffold	SI 3623	25th October	1 Day	Limerick
CIF Core Safety Management Programme Renewal/CPD	CSMP 3628	24th October	Half-Day	Dublin 6
CIF Core Safety Management Programme Renewal/CPD	CSMP 3627	31st October	Half-Day	Cork
CIF Core Safety Management Programme Renewal/CPD	CSMP 3629	31st October	Half-Day	Athlone
NOVEMBER COURSES	CODE	DATE	DURATION	LOCATION
CIF IOSH Managing Safety in Construction	MSIC 3632	1st November	5 Days	Dublin 6
CIF IOSH Managing Safety in Construction	MSIC 3633	7th November	5 Days	Portlaoise
CIF IOSH Managing Safety in Construction	MSIC 3634	13th November	5 Days	Cork
CIF Site Supervisor Safety Programme	SSSP 3630	4th November	2 Days	Dublin 6
CIF Site Supervisor Safety Programme	SSSP 3631	25th November	2 Days	Cork
Appointed Persons Course	AP 3636	4th November	3 Days	Dublin 6
Building Control Course – Part E – Sound CSE 1	BCC 35577	6th November	1 Day	Dublin 6
Building Control Course – Part G & Part H – Hygiene and Drainage CSE 1	BCC 35577	6th November	1 Day	Dublin 6



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