



The Centre for
Cross Border Studies

MEDIA WATCH

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House-hunters look North for cheaper homes; Dublin workers make big savings by renting in Newry but it means a daily two-hour commute

THOUSANDS of Dublin workers have moved north of the Border to get affordable accommodation.

The influx of southern workers to towns in the North has been so large that it has led to a shortage of houses and apartments in some areas.

The lack of supply of private rental accommodation in and around Dublin and corresponding rent increases - which rose by 9.3pc nationally this year to an average of (EURO)964 per month - have led to the stampede of workers from the Republic seeking cheaper digs north of the Border over the past year.

According to the Northern Irish property website www.Propertypal.com, based in Belfast, the number of people living in the Republic seeking or inquiring about accommodation in towns like Newry, Co Down and the surrounding area has increased by almost 500pc over the past year alone.

The number of online searches for property in the Newry/Mourne area just north of the Border accounted for just 0.68pc of online traffic by people in the Republic between January and November 25, 2014 but jumped to 2.83pc for the same period this year, said www.Propertypal.com owner, Paul Anthony.

"For one region alone that's extraordinary and it's actually made me think we should change our marketing strategy," he told the Sunday Independent.

Cormac Gough, a property letting agent with Collins & Collins estate agents in Newry, estimates about 2,000 workers from the Republic are now renting accommodation in the Newry area alone based on estimates that up to 20pc of local renters are now from south of the Border.

The lack of supply in the south is one reason, but so are the sky-high rents being charged little more than an hours' drive away.

"The Dublin prices are extortionate. It's just not sustainable for anyone," he said. Mr Gough now pays (EURO)1,800 a month for a modern two-bed apartment in the highly sought-after IFSC complex adjacent to Dublin's Connolly station.

But an apartment of similar size and specifications in Newry is going for less than half that at (EURO)850 per month (stg£600), he said.

A four-bed semi-detached house located in a "nice" housing estate in Newry with an asking rent of (EURO)780 (stg£550), was rented out within hours of being advertised in Wednesday's Newry Reporter newspaper, according to the rental agent. "It's outrageous. The minute the paper went out, it went right away," he said.

As a result of unprecedented demand, apartments and other rental accommodation in the town - especially in the much sought-after Dublin Road area near the exit to the A1/M1 motorway - are being snapped up within days of being advertised, Mr Gough said, adding there's currently a two to three month waiting list for vacancies in that area alone.

During the downturn, there was very little traffic heading south, he said.

But now that the economy has turned around, the Dublin Road is jammed at 6am with commuters from the south as well as Northern residents working south of the border.

The recent influx of foreign workers from Europe working in the border counties is also adding to low vacancy rate, he added.

Meanwhile, a ticket agent at Newry train station said he also noticed a surge in the number of daily commuters taking the Belfast Enterprise train which stops in Newry, Dundalk, Drogheda and Dublin over the past year, noting many of about 70 "regulars" have southern accents.

Irish Rail, Bus Eireann and Translink, which runs both the Northern Ireland rail and commuter bus service, have all also reported increases in **cross-border** commuter traffic.

Source: <http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/househunters-look-north-for-cheaper-homes-34243092.html>

2 December 2015

First **North-South** retail presentation to ministerial council

Retail Excellence Ireland (REI) and the Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association (NIIRTA) have for the first time today made a joint presentation to a **North-South** Ministerial Council sectoral meeting on the economy.

Enterprise Minister Jonathan Bell MLA and Irish Enterprise Minister Richard Bruton TD met with NIIRTA Chief Executive Glyn Roberts and REI Chief Executive David Fitzsimons in Armaght to discuss a joint report on growing the retail industry.

Earlier this year Retail Excellence Ireland (REI) and the Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association (NIIRTA) with Minister Sean Sherlock launched the first-ever report on building retail in Ireland, **North and South**.

The report is based on a detailed analysis of 500 responses from international visitors to Belfast and Dublin along with a qualitative survey of 40 retail businesses based **North and South** of the Border. The research was funded through the Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade's Reconciliation Fund. In joint statement Glyn Roberts and David Fitzsimons said: "This was a productive joint meeting with Ministers Bell and Bruton at which we outlined the growth potential of Retail, **North and South** in growing the economy of the island. "Our joint research indicates that there is a major prize for the retail industry on the island of Ireland if we can ensure that the broad choice of retail options is correctly profiled to incoming international visitors. Both our organisations are working in partnership to ensure that policies are put in place to support what is the Island's largest industry by employment. "From a Northern Ireland perspective, more can be done to attract Republic of Ireland-only tourists to the North. A vibrant retail industry with thriving town centres can play a key role in doing this. Crucial also will be further promoting the new British-Irish tourism visa to attract visitors from outside the EU to the island. With Dail and Assembly Elections next year, this is a crucial time for both our organisations to be influencing the broader policy agenda to ensure a positive platform to grow our retail industry".

Source: www.businessworld.ie

2 December 2015

Derry science park wins prestigious EU award for **cross-border** efforts

The North West Regional Science Park has won a European award for **cross-border** co-operation.

The centre in Londonderry is home to a number of technology and software firms and operates by working with academia and in partnership with the private and public sectors.

It won the annual Sail of Papenburg **Cross-Border** Regions Award for 2015, which has been given out by the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) since 2002 in recognition of **cross-border** co-operation.

Congratulating the science park's achievement, Martin Guillermo-Ramirez of the AEBR said: "The Sail of Papenburg is awarded to border and **cross-border** regions showing outstanding programmes and projects that are an exemplar of **cross-border** co-operation and a motivation to contribute actively to a better understanding and better relations at the borders between the nations throughout Europe.

"This is the type of initiative that can be a perfect inspiration for border and **cross-border** regions in Europe as they overcome differences by implementing joint initiatives for a common future."

The science park is a partnership between the North West **Cross-Border** Group, the NI Science Park and the Letterkenny Institute of Technology.

Source: <http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/business/news/derry-science-park-wins-prestigious-eu-award-for-crossborder-efforts-34251264.html>

3 December 2015

Interconnector 'vital for security of energy supply'

The **North-South** Interconnector is necessary to guarantee the security of the electricity supply in the province, the System Operator Northern Ireland (SONI) has said.

SONI representatives last night addressed Belfast City Council on the importance of the electricity-sharing connector to the area.

A controversial planning application - which is opposed by some parties on both sides of the border - is currently with the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC). The PAC and Environment Minister will make the decision on the proposal.

SONI general manager Robin McCormick said the interconnector was "needed to underpin security of electricity supply for Northern Ireland".

"It will also improve the efficiency of the electricity market in Northern Ireland resulting in lower bills for customers," he added.

Mr McCormick said the project was expected to reduce electricity prices for consumers across the island by at least £14m a year and would "enable more renewable generation to be connected to the electricity network, helping to reduce our dependency on imported fossil fuels".

Source: <http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/business/news/interconnector-vital-for-security-of-energy-supply-34254520.html>