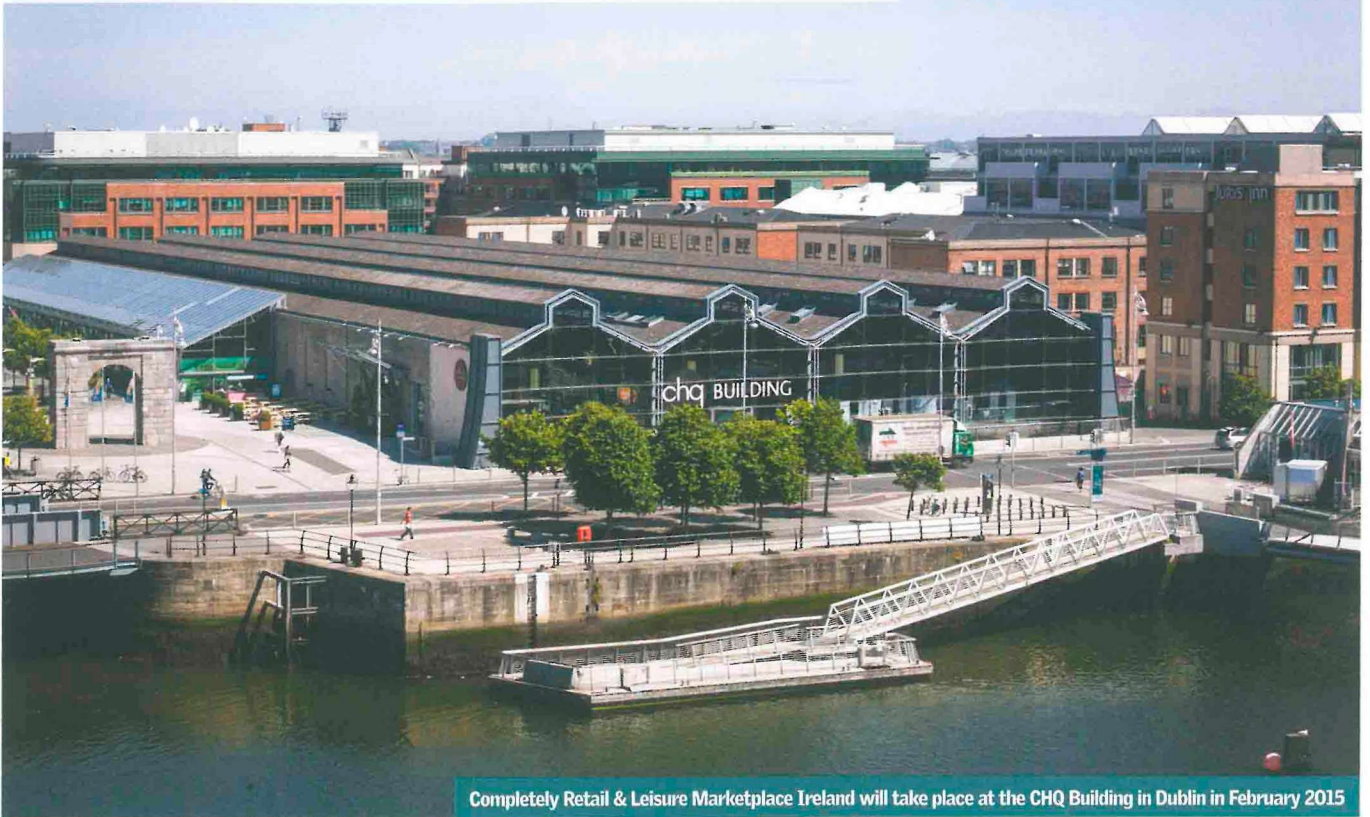


Completely Retail & Leisure Marketplace is set to launch in Ireland in 2015 on the back of improving consumer sentiment and the success of similar events in the UK. By **Katie Barker**



Completely Retail & Leisure Marketplace Ireland will take place at the CHQ Building in Dublin in February 2015

Retail event launches in resurgent Ireland

Completely Retail & Leisure Marketplace is set to launch in Ireland next year, following on from the success of its London events. The new event, which will be held in February 2015 in Dublin, is a response to the improving retail market conditions in Ireland, and calls from major retail property names to host an event focused on the Irish market.

Bringing occupiers, landlords and agents together to do business, Completely Retail & Leisure Marketplace Ireland will provide an environment to enable retail deals. The event will be similar to its London counterpart, and will work with important names in the industry.

As the Irish economy strengthens post-recession, retailer interest is running high.

Savills Ireland chairman and head of commercial Larry Brennan says: "Ireland's economic recovery is having a positive knock-on effect on the retail sector.

"Strong employment growth is positively

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Retailers have started to come out of their trenches and there is now a strong demand for space

Larry Brennan, Savills

influencing consumer sentiment – which is at its highest level in seven years; retail sales are continuing on an upward trajectory, and the rate of tenant failures has fallen dramatically."

This has all led to improving sentiment in the market. "Consequently, retailers have started to come out of their trenches and there is now a strong demand for space on prime high streets and shopping centres – both in Dublin and the main regional cities.

"In short, it's a very exciting time for Ireland's retail sector," adds Brennan.

Improving sentiment

This positive sentiment is reflected in the statistics.

The Central Statistics Office for Ireland's Retail Sales Index showed the value of sales ↘

rose by 5.3% year on year in August, which was the eighth consecutive month of growth for 2014.

Chairperson for Retail Ireland Frank Gleeson says: "The latest figures show that the recovery in the domestic economy is gaining momentum.

"This growth in sales is led by furniture, lighting and products for the home, with an impressive 14.5% increase in the value of such sales over the same month last year.

"Additionally, the value of sales in electrical outlets rose by 5.1%, those in supermarkets by 2.9% and those in department stores by 2.2%."

Savills' research on the retail market in Ireland looks further into this recovery, and shows sales in the country are now being propelled by larger items, particularly cars and furniture. Market activity in the second quarter of this year was focused on prime high streets and shopping centres in Dublin and the main regional cities.

The research also shows improving sentiments are driving up rents in these prime locations, while demand for restaurants and coffee shops remains strong, and the pubs market shows signs of improvement.

The Savills research also predicts employment growth of 2.1% for 2014, which would lead to a continued improvement in the consumer economy.

Future opportunities

For Completely Group managing director Dom Millar, launching the event was a vital way to acknowledge the opportunities Ireland offers property agents, landlords and occupiers alike.

"Ireland has a mature and dynamic retail sector which offers tremendous opportunities for retailers and property providers. We want to create an event that brings the same vitality and market coverage to the Irish retail scene as Completely Retail & Leisure Marketplace has



In focus: the Irish market

- There are 44,000 retail and wholesale businesses in Ireland
- 90% of retail businesses in Ireland are Irish-owned and operated
- 77% of Irish retail businesses are family owned enterprises
- Irish retailers employ more than 275,000 people – more than any other sector
- The Irish food and drink industry is the biggest consumer of Irish food and drink products, purchasing about €5bn (£4bn) worth each year
- The Irish retail and wholesale sector pays more than €8.2bn (£6.6bn) in wages each year



Ireland has a dynamic retail sector which offers tremendous opportunities for retailers and property providers

Dom Millar, Completely Group

achieved with our London events," he says.

The group has big plans for the event, according to Millar, and hopes to extend its reach. "We want the Dublin event to encompass the investment market and are speaking to various potential exhibitors and sponsors in this respect." One of the companies that has already signed up as a core sponsor is CBRE, which also called for the event to be launched in the first place.

"We are delighted to be supporting Completely Retail's inaugural Irish event next year," says CBRE Ireland deputy managing director Florence Stanley.

"A marketplace format event is exactly what we need to introduce new and expanding retail and leisure brands into the Irish property market at this particular point in the cycle when the Irish retail sector is beginning to show clear signs of recovery and consumer confidence is improving."

The Ireland 2015 Completely Retail & Leisure Marketplace event will take place at the CHQ Building in Dublin on Tuesday February 24.

The Completely Group has also agreed a partnership with Aer Lingus that will allow 100 retailers to fly to Dublin and back for the event for free.

"As with our events in the UK, our primary focus will be to bring retailers into the event," says Millar. "So we've teamed up with Aer Lingus and will be offering up to 100 key retail and leisure brands free return travel from the UK to Dublin.

"We've sounded out many key brands and there has been a high level of interest in attending."

With Savills' research showing Ireland's economy has expanded in six of the last seven quarters, and GNP growing by 3.4% in the year to March, the economic indicators certainly support the event's expansion into the Irish market. ■

What do you need to know?

Where?

The CHQ Building, Dublin, Ireland

When?

Tuesday February 24, 2015

Who should attend?

- Irish businesses seeking to expand within the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland and overseas
- UK and international occupiers looking to expand or establish themselves within Ireland

- Landlords, investors and agents of Irish retail and leisure property
- International investors and investment agents
- International agents and landlords looking to attract Irish occupiers

Format?

A deals-focused, back-to-basics networking event with everything provided for exhibitors: dedicated meeting areas, furniture, literature stand, branding, wi-fi, power and refreshments

Prices

Stands

€5,000 plus VAT

(20% introductory discount available until January 5, 2015)

Delegate passes

Early bird rate: €395

Delegate rate after January 5: €495