



## **ARCHITECTS CALL FOR NATIONAL DELIVERY AGENCY**

Royal **Institute of the Architects** of Ireland (RIAI) president Carole Pollard has called for the creation of a national infrastructure delivery agency to undertake oversight of the planning, procuring, design and delivery of projects on a sequenced basis and to “ensure that mistakes of the past will not be repeated”.

Addressing the RIAI annual conference last month, Pollard said: “When the scale of demographic changes on the horizon are so obvious for all to see such as a near 200 per cent increase in the population of over 65s within the next 30 years, it should serve as a stark reminder that unless we plan now for the needs of Ireland’s changing population we

will merely replicate ill-informed and poor decisions of the past. We face a choice of being in control of our own destiny or at the mercy of boom-and-bust cycles that have been so damaging to creating sustained progress in this country. There is an imperative to act, and to act now. We have experience of lessons from misadventures in planning and we have the data to inform our future needs. We owe it to ourselves and future generations to do so.”

The proposed national infrastructure delivery agency would monitor data in relation to changes in population density, economic growth and the stock of existing infrastructure and thereby provide an optimal level of investment that is efficiently delivered in key areas such as transport infrastructure, educational buildings, healthcare, housing, and the rollout of public projects.

According to the RIAI, it is now known that by 2025 second-level enrolments are expected to be in excess of 400,000 pupils for the first time in the history of the State. This will trigger a greater need for third-level education facilities from 2030 and resultant accommodation needs as this population cohort enters the house formation stage. Looking beyond that, in the context of healthcare and housing delivery, those over 65 years of age are expected to number 1.4 million by 2046, almost three times the current 530,000 in that age bracket.

By utilising this data, the right type of infrastructure and facilities can be built in the right locations, for the communities that need them ahead of time.