'FAIRSELECT'
SOFTWARE ACCOMMODATES
Transparent Affordable Housing Application Process

A new property management software solution, which aims to make the application process for rental accommodation and the selection and management of tenants both fair and unbiased, is already being used by local authorities, including Meath County Council, and approved housing bodies such as Tuath Housing and Respond. Report by Grace Heneghan.

The 'FairSelect' property tech software platform, which has been developed by Irish technology company Bynaric for fair and unbiased tenant and applicant onboarding in the property sector, was officially launched on the market in May.

The launch took place uniquely at the same location from where the company first started out in October 2019 – at Dogpatch Labs in Dublin's CHQ Centre. In his keynote address, Bynaric founder and CEO Aria Pour said that the property management software solution has been designed to automate and streamline the affordable housing application process whether renting or buying.

The new FairSelect platform is aimed at local authorities and other organisations in the public sector, including affordable housing bodies, as well as private rental providers. Users of the software can process and select tenant applications based either on a randomised, lottery-style system, or on a first-come-first-served basis, to ensure fairness and impartiality in the selection of applicants, while compliance with GDPR regulations ensures the selection process and results are fully auditable.

"The Irish housing market's growth over the next eight years has been forecasted to build 265,000 properties under the Government's 'Housing for All' plan; and Fair Select will assist families

and individuals to access affordable and straightforward housing," he noted.

"We believe that access to safe, secure and affordable housing is the one fundamental right that everyone deserves; therefore, we aim to make the housing process more efficient and streamlined, empowering developers, management companies and state agents to serve their customers. The challenges facing the housing market are complex, yet we see this as an appropriate opportunity to create sustainable and long-lasting solutions to benefit everyone."

CHALLENGES AND REALITIES

A panel discussion explored the FairSelect model, moderated by business advisor Colin Chapman, and included Aria Pour along with Conn Murray, Chair of Public Sector at BDO Ireland, Johnny Horgan, MD of BidX1, and Eoghan Ó'Muiris, Head of Product for Bynaric.

Aria Pour, founder and CEO of Bynaric (centre) pictured with (l-r): Conn Murray, Chair of Public Sector at BDO Ireland; Johnny Horgan, MD of BidX1; Eoghan Ó'Muiris, Head of Product at Bynaric and Colin Champman, MC and business advisor, at the launch in Dogpatch Labs in Dublin's CHQ Centre (the same location from where the Bynaric first started out in October 2019).

Aria Pour, founder and CEO of Bynaric, and Conn Murray, Chair of Public Sector at BDO Ireland, pictured following the launch at Dogpatch Labs at the CHQ in May.

Conn Murray, the former Chief Executive of Limerick City & County Council, said that there have been many changes across Ireland's housing industry over the last 30 years. "On a personal level when I bought my first house, interest rates were 21% and today we're now talking about a major increase to 5%! During the 1980s, an interest rate decrease was worth so much more than a pay increase – that was just the reality of life."

During the mid-90s he said that the allocation of housing was "ebullient" adding that with challenges came the other realities. "What has grown since then is Ireland's population and our social challenges and the complexity around our planning programmes with the changes in the 60s and 70s, and the noughties with the introduction of the courts and their influence in terms of planning," noted the Chair of Public Sector at BDO Ireland.

"The quality of housing has improved enormously, and within the private and public sectors, we have seen both an increase and decrease. During the noughties we saw the private sector move forward in a huge way, and at one stage about 77,000 planning commissions were granted. From a policy perspective, it was always an acceptance that this would provide the solutions. However, when the system crashed, we had to rethink and replan our way out and we're only at the beginning of planning our way out of the housing problem."

HOUSING POLICY CHANGES

Murray noted the pendulum has swung a little too far, adding that the growth was coupled with an increase in house prices, while greed was taking over within the context of the construction industry.

"The change in policy came with a move towards Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) as the primary deliverer as distinct from local authorities. This has been followed by the centralisation of decision making in recent years, which has added to the challenges to deliver housing on the ground and the diverse and disparate population now looking for a foundation. This has created different challenges within the local communities."

SOME SOLUTIONS TO TENANT SELECTION CHALLENGES
FairSelect provides solutions to the challenges of tenant selection, onboarding and management for landlords and property managers, including problems that can lead to issues under the Equal Status Acts 2000-2015 and GDPR. It can help address issues by:

- **Improved tenant management:** The system provides a centralised platform for managing tenant data, communications, and maintenance requests, allowing businesses to better track and manage their properties.
- **Tenant self-service:** FairSelect's tenant self-service feature can enable tenants to manage their accounts, report issues, and pay rent online, freeing up time for property managers to focus on other aspects of their business.
- **Secure data management:** FairSelect uses best practices to keep data safe and secure, reducing the risk of data breaches and ensuring compliance with industry regulations.
- **Compliance with regulations:** FairSelect is designed to comply with relevant regulations and legislation, ensuring that local authorities and approved housing bodies are operating in accordance with legal requirements.
- **Streamlined tenant selection process:** FairSelect can simplify and automate the tenant selection process, saving businesses time and reducing errors.
- **Fair and unbiased tenant selection:** FairSelect is designed to eliminate potential biases in the tenant selection process, ensuring that every applicant is assessed on equal footing. This is particularly important for the public sector, where there is a need to demonstrate fairness and transparency in decision-making.
- **Customisation:** FairSelect can be tailored to meet the specific needs of each organisation or business, ensuring a personalised and effective solution.

*For more information visit **www.FairSelect.com**. Follow FairSelect on Twitter **@BynaricDublin**, Instagram @ **BynaricDublin** and LinkedIn **@Bynaric**.*

From a pragmatic perspective, as the growth of the stock increases, Conn Murray pointed out that there needs to be a more efficient use of technology and decision making at local level. "The FairSelect scheme could offer a very significant value to operational matters concerning the housing stock itself," he noted.

dealt with by both public and private sectors."

Due to the litter of compliance risks on GDPR to be considered, and in dealing with complex communications and inefficiencies in public and private sectors, Horgan said that FairSelect provided "a structured and efficient online way for tenants to apply for housing".

A SOCIAL INVESTMENT

Johnny Horgan said that one of the biggest investments an individual will make will be in property, describing renting or buying a place as "a whole social investment because people are emotional since they've invested in a lot of ways".

He noted that the level of transparency brought to the market by the team at Bynaric was key and important for both landlords and tenants. "Unless you have dual benefits on anything it will not be a success. Bringing transparency and confidence for tenants and occupiers means they will engage more and for landlords it will be a simplified process. Within our private sector this transparency of the transaction will be key for the future."

With the growth in the rate of online trading and transactions across all industry sectors, Horgan said that the shopfront is no longer needed to lease or sell the property. "In terms of leasing or selling property, most of the work processes had not moved forward in 20 to 30 years, then Daft.ie came online which really transformed people's views. So, you just need to be digitally enabled and this will be first part of the property journey, particularly in the volume of transactions