



Theme for 2021:

'Build to Rent - 'Back to the Future' - 'Sustainable Living'

Tuesday 29th & Wednesday 30th June 2021

BTR Forum 2021 Day one wrap up

The biggest and only dedicated Build to Rent event of the year is in full swing, featuring some of the private and public sector's biggest BTR leaders and key stakeholders.

Day one kicked off with the topic on everyone's lips: COVID-19. Ben Page, Chief Executive of Ipsos Mori highlighted some interesting stats on the changing attitudes, driven by the pandemic, towards where we live and how we work. One thing has become clear over the past year - well-serviced, professionally managed rented homes present an enormous opportunity moving forward. This view was backed by Rory Cramer of Homeview who spoke of the general level of satisfaction towards operators being much better than tenants' opinions of their private landlords.

In the first panel session of the day, key BTR operators spoke of the sector's resilience in the wake of the pandemic, partly thanks to the quality of management and training teams as well as the effective use of technology. They also pondered the future of the sector; city centre living will remain popular and data capture will become ever more important as flexible living solutions grow in popularity.

After a quick coffee break, Adam Challis of JLL took to the screen to talk about the continued rise of multifamily. No longer viewed as an alternative asset class, multifamily has grown 15% annually making it the largest sector across Europe. He also touched on one of the key themes to emerge from day one: investors recognising the opportunities associated with putting multifamily under an ESG and sustainability lens.

The importance of sustainability was driven home by David Reid, Managing Director of Suburban Build to Rent at Legal & General Capital. In his session with Graham Sibley, Senior Sector Lead, Alternative Residential at NHBC, he talked about accelerating the use of MMC to ramp up housing delivery. "We want to build communities that are long-lasting, good quality and sustainable," Reid said.

Both Public & Private Sector collaboration sessions touched on the exponential growth of the ESG agenda for JVs moving forward. According to Catherine Raynsford, Director of Investment and Stakeholder Management at Hyde Group, their ESG framework not only allows them to present their values to stakeholders, but also helps them to select partners that align with their values. It was interesting to discover from these sessions, all panelists agreed successful JVs come down to collaboration, shared values and transparency and a partnership of equals.

To round out day one, Richard Donnell, Research and Insight Director at Zoopla touched on the macro trends impacting BTR investment, one of which is a shift in renter demographics. We're seeing an ageing profile of renters, with nearly six in every 10 renters aged over 35.