September 2026

Edition no. 56

Bannon
Retail Pulse



Image taken from Business Post

Competitive Socialising
Continues to Gain Momentum in Ireland

Competitive socialising has now become a well-established leisure category across Ireland, with Dublin emerging as a key market for both domestic and international operators. Concepts such as **Flight Club, Pitch Dublin, Lane7, Super Social, The Back Page, Rainforest Adventure Golf, and Jump Zone** continue to demonstrate strong consumer demand for experience-led entertainment that combines activities, food and beverage, and the social interaction which gives the category name.

The sector has been a good alternative occupier for large-format units, typically ranging from 10,000 sq. ft. to 30,000 sq. ft., particularly within Dublin City Centre, major shopping centres, and suburban destination locations. Competitive socialising operators can occupy some of the non-retail accommodation, including basements, upper floors and other challenging spaces, helping owners to activate previously challenged areas while enhancing the overall draw of a scheme.

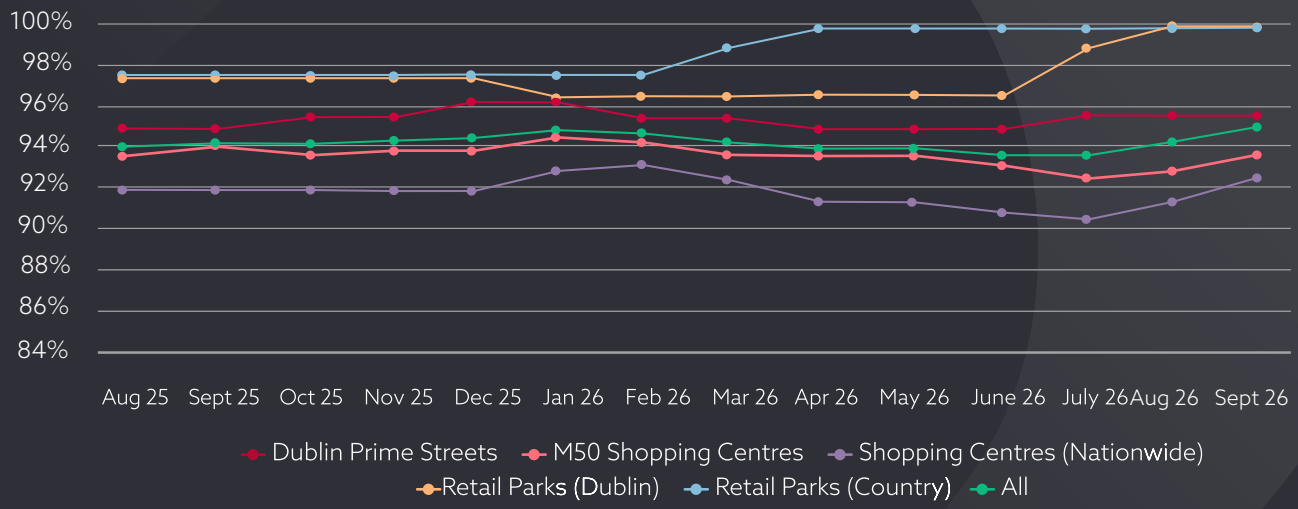
These concepts appeal to a broad demographic, including families, young professionals, tourists, corporate groups and students. Their ability to generate strong footfall throughout the day and into the evening extends trading hours within destinations and supports adjacent retail, food and beverage, and leisure occupiers.

Active Brands

LANE7 · SUPER SOCIAL · KINGPINS · hollywood bowl · ESCAPE HUNT · FLIGHT CLUB · ROXY BALL ROOM

Bannon Retail Occupancy Tracker

Tracked Representative Sample

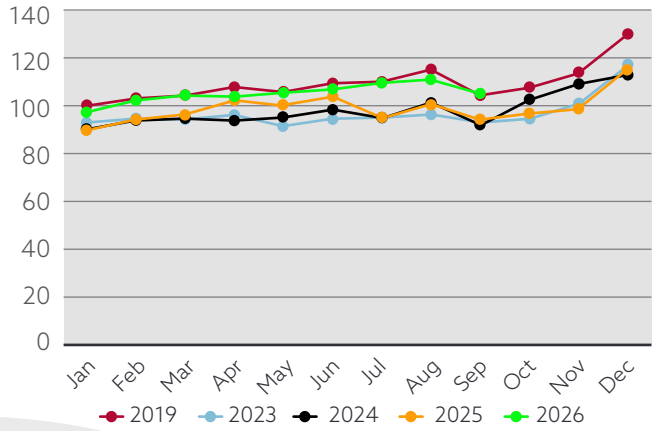


Bannon Trading Analysis

As at 30th September 2026

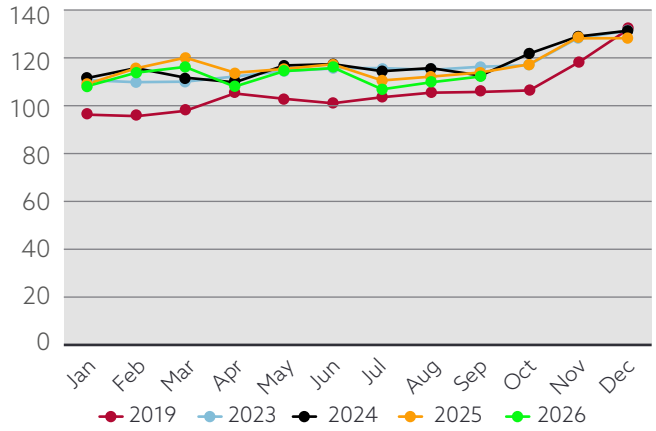
Shopping Centre Footfall

(Indexed: Based = Jan '19)



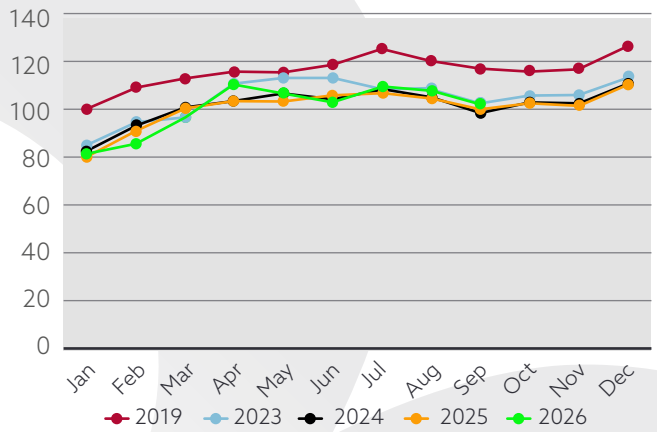
Retail Park Footfall

(Indexed: Based = Jan '19)



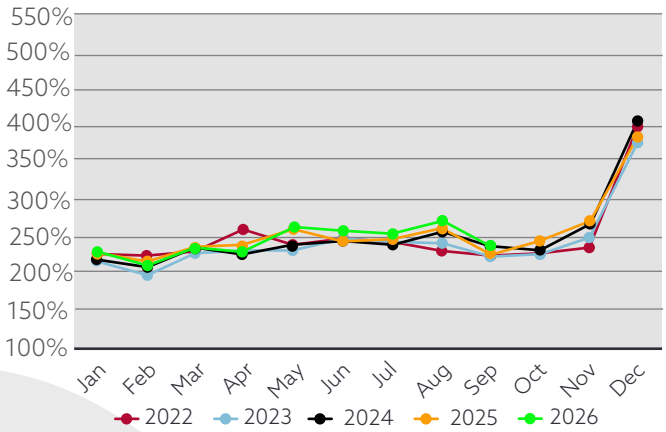
High Street Footfall

(Indexed: Based = Jan '19)



Ratio - Reported Sales : Footfall

(Indexed: Based = Jan '19)



Footfall across our shopping centre portfolio in September 2026 was 2.9% ahead of that of September 2025. Sales in September 2026 were 0.8% ahead of September 2025.

High street footfall in September 2026 was 3.1% ahead of that of September 2025 and 11.9% behind pre-COVID levels (September 2019).

Footfall across our retail park portfolio in September 2026 was 1.7% behind that of September 2025.

Data is preliminary in nature and subject to revision.

Expert Insight

By Neil Bannon

Ireland's €56bn Wage Boost Provides Powerful Tailwind for Retail Sector


Public sector pay deal: who comes out best?

Ireland's remarkable growth in employment and wages over the past six years is reshaping the domestic economy, with significant implications for the retail property market.

The recent public sector pay agreement has brought wage inflation back into focus. But behind the headlines lies a much bigger economic story — one that helps explain the strength of Ireland's retail sector and the continued demand for retail space.

Since the beginning of the decade, average Irish wages have increased by more than 30%, representing an additional €13,000 a year in gross earnings for the average worker.

At the same time, Ireland has experienced extraordinary employment growth. There are now 471,000 more people at work than at the start 2020, an increase of approximately 20%.

Individually, these are impressive figures. Taken together, however, they reveal something considerably more significant.

In the first quarter of 2020, multiplying the number of people employed by the average annual wage produced an aggregate wage figure of approximately €98 billion.

Apply the same calculation today and that figure rises to €154 billion.

That represents an additional **€56 billion in annualised wages flowing through the Irish economy — an increase of 57% in just six years.**

It is a striking illustration of the scale of growth in the earning power of Irish households and, by extension, the spending capacity of the domestic economy.

For the retail property sector, the implications are particularly significant.

While the amount of money earned across the economy has expanded dramatically, the supply of modern retail accommodation has remained relatively static as very little significant new retail space has been developed in recent years.

This combination of rising consumer purchasing power and constrained retail supply provides a compelling explanation for the low vacancy rates being experienced across our management and leasing portfolio of shopping centres and retail parks.

It also helps explain the renewed upward pressure on retail rents.

And there may be further momentum to come.

The recently agreed public sector pay increases, providing for rises of more than 10% for approximately 420,000 public sector employees over the coming years, will add further to the economy's aggregate wage pool.

Not all of that additional income will find its way into retail spending, of course. But the underlying direction is clear: a larger workforce, earning substantially higher wages, provides a powerful foundation for continued growth in consumer-facing businesses.

For retail investors and occupiers, these trends deserve close attention.

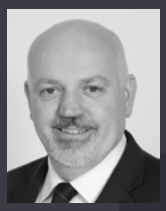
Much of the commentary surrounding the Irish retail sector focuses on changing shopping habits, online competition and consumer sentiment. Yet the fundamental economic drivers of demand are clearly positive.

Sometimes the most compelling investment story is simply in the numbers.

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