Minutes of the tenth Meeting of the Construction Sector Group

26th November 2020

Conference Call

Present

Robert Watt (Chair), Sarah Ingle (ACEI), Conor McCarthy (ACEI), David Duffy (BMF/IBEC), Tom Parlon (CIF), Pat Lucey (CIF), Caroline Spillane (Engineers Ireland), Maurice Buckley (Engineers Ireland), Richard Manton (Engineers Ireland), Patricia King (ICTU), Orla Purcell (IPI), Conor Norton (IPI), Kathryn Meghen (RIAI), Ciaran O'Connor (RIAI), Patrick King (SCSI), Micheál Mahon (SCSI), Shirley Coulter (SCSI), Kevin O Donoghue (DETE), Alan Power (DETE), Andrew Caldicott (DECC), Hubert Loftus (DES), Valerie Kirwan (DES), Phil O'Flaherty (DFHERIS), Jim Curran (HSE), Donn Maguire (DHEALTH), Maria Graham (DHLGH), John Wickham (DHLGH), Ray O'Leary (DTTS), Barry Vaughan (DoT), David O'Brien (OGP), Kevin Meaney (DPER), Margaret O'Donnell (DPER), Áine Griffin (DPER), Fionn Jenkinson (DPER), Justin Wallace (DPER), Struan Charters (DPER), Eoin Dignam (DPER), Christina Mohan (DPER), Owen Joyce (DFINANCE), Declan McGee (Enterprise Ireland), Neil Kerrigan (Enterprise Ireland), PJ Rudden (Agenda Item 2 - Chair Innovation and Digital Adoption for CSG).

1. Minutes of meeting held on 3rd September 2020

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed. As a follow on from last meeting, the OGP noted that industry and insurance representatives have met to discuss the professional indemnity issue but that further engagement with the State Claims Agency is required. Investigations are currently underway on the different insurance policies available that could placate issues but no timelines has been established as of yet and the OGP hope to be able to share findings shortly.

2. Update from Innovation Sub-Group (Chair of Group)

The Chair of the CSG Innovation and Adoption Subgroup provided a comprehensive update on project commencement; organisation structure and governance; progress to date; sustainability and climate action; and strategic communication.

The Subgroup Chair noted that there has been good early progress on the seven actions with the first draft reports on the Construction Research Forum (Action 1) and Modern Methods of Construction (Action 3) completed this month.

In reference to the Construction Technology Centre process, it was noted that there has been engagement with the Construction Scotland Innovation Centre. Further research is required to ascertain whether the three main deliverables (Build Digital, Modern Methods of Construction and the Tech Centre) will end up in one building or three separate buildings. It was noted that the Detailed Description of Needs (DDN) for the Construction Technology Centre will inform the overall decision next summer.

On the issue of sustainability and climate action, the Subgroup Chair noted that this would need to inform all the innovation actions being undertaken.

The Subgroup Chair also referred to the importance of strategic communicates and referenced the importance of bringing a wider stakeholder audience into this construction innovation and digital adoption conversation.

Action Points

- Update on progress of CSG Innovation and Subgroup to be a standing agenda item.
- Subgroup Chair to guide development of a strategic communications plan to be implemented by group members.

3. Promoting Careers and Skills

Report of Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (DETE)
DETE gave a presentation on the Building Future Skills: The Demand for Skills in Ireland's Built Environment Sector to 2030 report. A detailed forecast of the skills demand to 2030 were outlined as well as the key findings of the study which included a suite of recommendations to be delivered and progressed by targeted implementation group within a two year timeframe.

ICTU viewed the presentation to be comprehensive in terms of outlining where we need to get to and in view of that considered that thought needs to be given to the review of apprenticeships. RIAI agreed that structural change is required and referenced other countries which have better models. DFHERIS noted the comments in relation to apprenticeships and explained that the Department are moving into stakeholder engagement on the issue. In addition, DFHERIS explained that numbers of apprenticeships have held up well and have recovered to pre-Covid levels. The Chair suggested further engagement on the issue of apprenticeship capacity in order to consider what further steps can be taken.

Update on Careers Promotion Campaign (CIF)
CIF have been charged with developing an inclusive promotional careers campaigns that highlights the broad range of opportunities available from the Project Ireland 2040 pipeline within the built environment. In particular, CIF discussed their recently launched national competition for senior cycle students called 'A Home for Everyone,' which is a team-based project where students work together to design a home that helps 'solve' climate change, the housing crisis and addresses inclusivity. Winning students will be offered CIF scholarships or access to the CIF apprenticeship programme.

In terms of funding for the careers campaign, the CIF explained that their target was to reach €1million in funding over three years. To date, CIF members have committed financially to the tune of €230,000 and CIF hopes that this sum can be matched with Government funding. The Chair advised that DES and DFHERIS liaise directly with CIF on the matter.

Action Points

- D/FHERIS to engage with stakeholders, such as ICTU and the CIF, through the existing Apprenticeship governance structure.
- Apprenticeships to be an agenda item for the next meeting of the CSG.
- CIF to liaise with DES and DFHERIS on matter of funding for careers campaign.

4. The State of Ireland 2020 (Engineers Ireland)

Engineers Ireland provided an overview of The State of Ireland 2020 report which examines the state of critical sectors of the country's built environment. Informed by a dedicated advisory group of

engineers and other professionals, Engineers Ireland detailed the findings and recommendations the report which advocate for Ireland's recovery to be green and digital, driven by investments in infrastructure, technology and education.

The Chair took the opportunity to point to the fact that the State is challenged by the fact that it is unable to fund everything and also that the public sector don't have capacity to do everything and so urged that we all need to be realistic in what can be achieved.

5. Brexit impact on Building Materials (DHLGH)

DHLPG provided an overview of the Construction Products Regulation, the roles and responsibilities of various authorities and bodies, impacts of Brexit and Brexit Readiness. Of note, DHLGH explained that they are working with Dublin City Council who will take lead role in market surveillance for entire country which replaces the existing structure whereby thirty one Local Authorities have responsibility. In terms of the impacts of Brexit and Brexit readiness, DHLGH referenced the EU Notice to Stakeholders (March 2020) which reiterated the general principles that manufactures, distributors, importers and authorised representatives must comply with after the 31 December 2020. DHLGH also shared concerns that the take up of EORI numbers has been relatively slow to date.

6. AOB

DPER referenced the Building Innovation monitoring template circulated in advance of the meeting. CIF raised concerns around planning issues as they relate to infrastructure. DHLGH outlined the ongoing reform of the planning system which includes a four-tranche approach, namely legislation which is in progress, court case management and planning and environment court, policy frameworks and guidance, and the training and digital agenda.

Action Points

- Industry members to provide updates on delivery of their actions from the Building Innovation and productivity work at next CSG meeting.
- DHLGH to provide update at next meeting on progress to reform planning, including issue with CPOs and arbitration processes.
- DPER to circulate meeting dates for next year along with minutes from meeting.