

Minutes of the fourth Meeting of the Construction Sector Group



14th May 2019

Present

Robert Watt (Chair, DPER), David Howard (BMF), Tom Parlon (CIF), Pat Lucey (CIF), Caroline Spillane (Engineers Ireland), Patricia King (ICTU), Kathryn Meghen (RIAI), Áine Myler (SCSI), Kevin Daly (DBEI), Maurice Nagle (DBEI), Loughlin Quinn (DBEI), Matt Collins (DCCA), Hubert Loftus (DES), Sarah Neary (DHPLG), John Shaw (DTAOISEACH), Dominic Mullaney (DTTS), Jim Curran (HSE), David O'Brien (OGP), Ciaran O'Connor (OPW), Paul Cotter (D/Finance), Ed Hearne (DPER), Fionn Jenkinson (DPER), Gearoid O'Keeffe (DPER), Paddy Howard (DPER), Christina Mohan (DPER), Struan Charters (DPER).

1. Minutes of Meeting held on February 6th

- The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

2. Industry coordination on the promotion of construction sector careers

CIF discussed the findings of their survey on Careers in Construction, which measured attitudes towards the construction industry amongst parents, school children and teachers. In this context, reference was made to the success of Skillnet Ireland. CIF was of the view that collaboration is required and proposed the establishment of a separate group to address this. Such a group could include industry representatives along with the likes of Solas, the Higher Education Authority, departmental representation and trade unions. The suggestion was widely welcomed by the group.

CIF and industry representatives proposed developing a marketing campaign to encourage young people into the sector and change perceptions, with the intention that it would be rolled out later in 2019. It was widely agreed that there is a need for a coordinated message to be developed and consideration also given to how Project Ireland 2040 branding can be effectively leveraged.

Action Points

- CIF to report back on progress relating to this topic at the next meeting.

3. Productivity and Growth (DPER, all)

DPER provided an overview of ongoing work related to the productivity research and a Centre of Excellence. Participants are keen to reach an agreement and make a decision on the Centre of Excellence. In relation to the productivity research, DPER anticipate that they will appoint the successful bidder shortly. In terms of the study on Public Service Capacity, DPER will shortly convene a steering group and plan to have the review completed by November.

Action Points

- Outstanding issues regarding the Centre of Excellence to be discussed at next meeting of Sub-Group on June 7th.
- DPER to provide an interim updated of progress on the productivity research at the next meeting of the CSG.

4. Work permits, EGFSN, and the Construction Contracts Act (DBEI)

Changes to Employment Permit eligible occupations lists / EGFSN Construction Skills analysis

DBEI presented on the recent changes made to employment permits which were welcomed by the group.

DBEI also provided an update on the ongoing work of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) in relation to the analysis of 'Skills for the Construction Industry.' The initial strand of the analysis involves identifying the common themes in skills recommendations and assessing their progress and effectiveness. DBEI plan to have this work completed over the coming weeks and will report to the EGFSN in June.

Construction Contracts Act 2013

DBEI provided an overview of the Construction Contracts Act 2013 and what it entails. Discussion arose around the continuing issue of uncertainty of payments for sub-contractors and on the adjudication process for resolving payment disputes. Industry members proposed asking their own members who have undertaken an adjudication under the Act to provide details. Engineers Ireland and RIAI also considered this to be possible. DBEI welcomed this suggestion.

Action Points

- DBEI to draft a note on the assessment process (for the purposes of issuing Employment Permits) of building trades such as bricklaying, carpentry etc.
- DBEI to report on the analysis of 'Skills for the Construction Industry' at future CSG meeting.
- Industry bodies to provide the relevant data to DBEI on adjudications under the Construction Contracts Act.

5. Reforms of Judicial Review and Planning for Strategic Infrastructure Projects (DHPLG)

DHPLG provided an update of the new Planning and Development Bill dealing with revisions to the judicial review and strategic infrastructure development provisions. DHPLG intend to submit the general scheme for the Bill to Government in September 2019, with a view to publication in October and enactment in December. The importance of the legislation was widely recognised.

Action Points

- DHPLG to progress work on bill as quickly as possible given other relevant considerations.

6. AOB

- DCCAE highlighted that there was an active group in place to deal with waste management issues and that engagement was ongoing between the industry stakeholders and regulatory authorities in relation to this. (DCCAE established the Construction Waste Resource Group in 2018, which is examining regulatory processes, enforcement and waste flows, best practices on site, and waste capacity and projections).
- DTTAS highlighted construction capacity constraints being faced by Local Authorities.
- The next meeting is scheduled for July 16th 2019 at 10am.