

# Construction Sector Group



Rialtas na  
hÉireann  
Government  
of Ireland

Tionscadal Éireann  
Project Ireland  
2040

Meeting 17

11am on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2022

Conference Call

## Present

David Moloney (DPER) (Chair), PJ Rudden (Chair of Innovation and Digital Adoption Sub-Group), Sarah Ingle (ACEI), Tom Parlon (CIF), Frank Kelly (CIF), Declan McGee (Enterprise Ireland), Patrick King (SCSI), David O'Brien (OGP), Sarah Neary (DHLGH), Owen Joyce (D/FINANCE), John Coppinger (DTRANS), Kevin Meaney (DPER), Colm Farrell (DPER), Rinku Phulphagar (DPER), Margaret O'Donnell (DPER), Struan Charters (DPER), Graham Rigney (DPER), Frank Newman (DPER), Mark Connolly (DPER), Declan Donoghue (DPER), Paul Sheridan (CIF), Shirley Coulter (SCSI), David McHugh (RPS Group), Neil Kerrigan (EI), David Howard (BMF), Geraldine Larkin (NSAI), Eileen Hearne (Department of Taoiseach), Patricia King (ICTU), Sean Armstrong (DHLGH), Paul Cotter (D/Finance), Cassandra Hinchy (DFHERIS), Manus O'Donnell (DETE), Feargal Ó Coigligh (DHLGH), Keelan Keogh (Engineers Ireland), Sean Balfe (NSAI), Gerard McGuinness (D/FINANCE), Maria Graham (DHLGH), Eamonn Quinn (DHEALTH), John Wickham (DHLGH), Damien Owens (Engineers Ireland), Sarah Campbell (RIAI), Charlotte Sheridan (RIAI)

## Apologies

Kathryn Meghan (RIAI), Pranash Ramanundh (RIAI), Brian Kavanagh (ACEI)

## Minutes

### 1. Minutes of meeting of 25<sup>th</sup> April 2022

The minutes of the meeting were agreed. The OGP had sought feedback on their revised guidelines for Professional Indemnity Insurance in Public Works Projects. This invitation remains open.

### 2. Standing Item: Update on the Innovation Sub-Group (Sub-Group Chair)

The Chair of the Innovation Subgroup provided updates on the priority actions: Construction Technology Centre has been awarded. Build Digital Project (BDP) is working on an annual survey to benchmark progress for next 5 years. They are communicating with relevant public bodies, including OGP. MMC is currently in its infancy in Ireland. Rollout of E-planning is delayed, however most of the rural local authorities are expected to initiate pilots this year (2022), with larger urban local authorities such as the four Dublin LAs and Cork City and Cork County Councils expected to be completed by H1 2023. As for the action related to Sustainability, a new circular economy roadmap is being developed. The aim is to maximise reuse of materials and eliminate waste. Organogram/ governance structure of the CSG Subgroup have not changed but as projects get more complex, the Chair will simplify the structure to make it more streamlined and reduce duplication. Overall, progress is good.

The Chair of the Construction Industry Council (CIC) stated that two construction projects which applied for funding under the Disruptive Technology Innovation Fund were not successful. The Chair

stated that some of the projects can be re-entered. Enterprise Ireland stated that there is an opportunity to seek redress, giving the consortia an opportunity to obtain further detailed feedback on their application. Also, they can get in touch with the development advisors in Enterprise Ireland to discuss opportunities for their proposals to be integrated into existing schemes. CIC asked if there is another route for these proposals, and Enterprise Ireland stated that they will be open to discussion on this.

### **3. Modern Methods of Construction, Demonstration Park and Construction Technology Centre (DETE and Enterprise Ireland)**

#### **Modern Methods of Construction (DETE)**

Housing for All (Action 23.9) calls for DETE to lead (with DHLGH) the development of MMC in residential construction. DETE is drafting a terms of reference for the MMC Leadership and Integration Group. The first meeting of the Group will take place on 12<sup>th</sup> July. Additionally, they will identify policies to promote MMC. The primary function of the group is to ensure that new and existing entities of MMC (including Construction Technology Centre, Build Digital Project, and Demonstration Park for MMC) are coordinated. Wider gaps will also be researched and solutions will be identified, building on work and reports undertaken by the CIF through the CSG Sub-Group. Group membership includes DETE, DHLGH, DPER, DFHERIS, DECC, CSG, Enterprise Ireland and SOLAS. Expected that report (on initial assessment of the range of issues and barriers to MMC adoption) is to be completed in Q3 2022.

#### **Demonstration Park for MMC (DFHERIS)**

The Draft Masterplan of the Demonstration Park for MMC in Mount Lucas, Co. Offaly was outlined by DFHERIS. Appointment process for the design team has commenced at end June. The Project Management Group has been established, with the first meeting having taken place. The indicative timelines were outlined, with commencement of construction in Q1 2023 and launch of Demonstration Park for MMC in Q3 2023.

#### **Construction Technology Centre (Enterprise Ireland)**

The CTC will have public sector and private sector involved. Detailed Description of Needs of CTC requirements were identified and explored. Focus of the CTC is on Productivity, Affordability and Cost, Sustainability, Quality and Safety, Skills and Training, and Collaboration. Funding will be through State funding, industry co-funding and from non-Enterprise Ireland sources such as Horizon Europe, EPA, SEAI, Climate Action Fund, etc. NUIG and partners won the contract to deliver CTC. Noteworthy, that IGBC will be part of this consortium. Operational structure, implementation plan and KPIs were shared. KPIs will be reviewed in year 3. CIC stated that it should be a priority to bring industry along by building awareness of research conducted which should be applicable to industry needs. On this, EI stated that IGBC has over 300 industry members, so the voice of industry and firms will be integrated into the CTC's work. ICTU stated that the work on the CTC should be integrated with the education system, particularly in the case of apprenticeships.

#### **4. Assessing Standards and Building Regulations (NSAI and DHLGH)**

DHLGH stated that Assessing Standards and Building regulation is a key priority of Housing for All (Section 5.5 'Drive High Standards and Quality in Construction'). Details related to the Pyrite Remediation Scheme and Defective Concrete Block Scheme was provided, as well as the working group to examine defects in housing established in March 2021. A report by this group is currently being finalised, this will be presented to the Minister for DHLGH. The CIRI Bill has been signed into law on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2022. A synopsis of recent and ongoing reviews was provided in areas such as fire safety (full review of Part B ongoing), timber construction, energy performance, conservation of fuel and energy etc. Applications for building control have been made digital.

Construction Products Regulation (CPR) is a vital area for DHLGH. The ongoing review of the CPR aims to repair and enhance the core of the CPR legal framework. In terms of Market Surveillance Regulation EU 2019/1020, DETE has overall responsibility for national market surveillance strategy for all products. Finally, Minister for DHLGH intends to establish an Independent Building Control Regulator and re-establish the Building Regulation Advisory Body to advise on matters relating to building regulations.

NSAI outlined its rules and principles, including openness and transparency. The standards worked on by NSAI are primarily voluntary, with some standards established by law, through European Directives and Irish legislation. NSAI outlined areas of research and work, such as SOLAR PV Panels, a review of I.S. 465 - Protocol for assessing damage, guidance on the use of aggregates for concrete, review of the impact of pumped cavity wall insulation etc. NSAI also working on assessing impacts of Brexit and actions arising from these impacts. They also stated that initial conversations with key stakeholders is completed regarding standards supporting MMC. Issues such as what does a MMC standard look like etc. are some of the areas that NSAI are focusing on in terms of BCAR certification. They are currently communicating with industry to design the standards.

CIC stated that they are willing to work with NSAI on standards for MMC. CIC queried building regulation exemptions to accommodate Ukrainian refugees. DHLGH stated that they are working on new housing supply, refurbishment of vacant buildings (in partnership with LAs) and volume trick accommodation. DHLGH stated that accommodation for Ukrainian refugee does conform to building regulations. The chair of the CSG Subgroup states that NSAI requires more support from Government and Industry. RIAI stated that some fire officers are unwilling to sign off on some timber frame construction. As a result some contractors are reverting to traditional construction methods in some instances. DHLGH stated that there is guidance available on timber frames and also that RIAI can follow up with DHLGH. D/Finance asked whether viability and the cost study that DHLGH is carrying out and other areas such as standards are being integrated. DHLGH confirmed this is the case and for every review of building regulation, a regulatory impact assessment is carried out.

#### **5. Reform of Planning – Housing and Infrastructure (DHLGH)**

#### **6. Legal Reforms in Support of Planning and Judicial Reviews (DHLGH)**

DHLGH presented on agenda items 5 and 6. Reform of planning is a key action under HfA. It was stated that there are many judicial reviews in the area of large scale housing. An overview of the review by the AG's Office of the Planning and Development Act was provided. There are 17 workstreams operating in parallel under this review. Key principles that underpin the reform of planning were outlined. An emerging theme from stakeholder engagement is support for longer development plan cycle and shorter, concise plans. Currently, DHLGH are awaiting report from working group on judicial review. Additionally, Environmental and Planning Court is being progressed by D/Justice in tandem

with the review of the Planning and Development Act by the AG's Office. Review to be completed by end 2022, followed by enactment of new legislation. Associated reforms were also outlined, one of which is a major examination of LA needs by CCMA looking at different functions, as well as resources allocated to An Bord Pleanála, and e-planning. Furthermore, in relation to resourcing and skills for the reforms, they are in communication with the Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR). Engagement with Planning Schools to commence in September 2022. DPER queried the rationale for the removal of outline planning permission. CIF stated that EU legislation might be subject to amendments and that DHLGH should be aware of these. On this, DHLGH stated that they have met with EU Commission and meeting again as more detail emerges. Additionally, DECC will also be attending these meetings with EU Commission.

## **7. Standing Item: Update on Project Ireland 2040 (NIO)**

DPER/NIO stated that MPAG is currently running, with MetroLink and BusConnect reviewed. The Clonburris URDF project has reached the MPAG review stage. In July, we will see publications of the Build 2022 report, Prospects 2022 report and the 2021 annual and regional reports for Project Ireland 2040. The updated PI 2040 tracker and map was published in May 2022.

### **Action Points**

1. RIAI stated that some fire officers are unwilling to sign off on some timber frame construction. As a result some contractors are reverting to traditional construction methods in some instances. DHLGH stated that there is guidance available on timber frames and also that RIAI can follow up with DHLGH.
2. CIC to get in touch with Enterprise Ireland to discuss the construction proposals for the Disruptive Technologies Innovation Fund.