

# Construction Sector Group

Meeting 19

3pm on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023

Conference Call



Riailas na  
hÉireann  
Government  
of Ireland

Tionscadal Éireann  
Project Ireland  
**2040**

## Present

David Moloney (DPER) (Chair), PJ Rudden (Chair of Innovation and Digital Adoption Sub-Group), John Conlon (DPER), Sarah Ingle (ACEI), James Kavanagh (ACEI), Tom Parlon (CIF), Hubert Fitzpatrick (CIF), Paul Sheridan (CIF), Joe Conway (CIF), Patrick King (SCSI), David O'Brien (OGP), Sarah Neary (DHLGH), John Coppinger (DTRANS), Kevin Meaney (DPER), Colm Farrell (DPER), Rinku Phulphagar (DPER), Margaret O'Donnell (DPER), James Connolly (DPER), Declan Donoghue (DPER), Cillian Moran (DPER), Neil Kerrigan (EI), David Howard (BMF), Geraldine Larkin (NSAI), Damien Owens (Engineers Ireland), Kathryn Meghan (RIAI), Pranash Ramanundh (RIAI), Seán O'Leary (IPI), Mark Kelly (D/Education), Cassandra Hinchy (DFHERIS), Evan Walker (DECC), Declan McGee (Enterprise Ireland), Alan Power (DETE), Declan Hughes (DETE), Valerie Kirwan (D/Education), Oragh Lavelle (DPER), Deirdre Folan (DPER), Paul Cotter (D/Finance), Paul Hogan (DHLGH), Mary Jones (DHLGH), Owen Reidy (ICTU), Eoghan Ryan (Kildare CoCo)

## Apologies

Sean Armstrong (DHLGH),

## Minutes

### 1. Minutes of meeting of 27<sup>th</sup> October 2022

The minutes of the meeting were agreed. All Action Points from the previous meeting were addressed and completed.

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

The chair of the Innovation and Digital Adoption Sub-Group gave an update on priority actions of the Sub-Group. The achievements in 2022 from the CSG Sub-Group included the setting up of the DETE Leadership and Integration Group to make policy on the implementation of Modern Methods of Construction. In addition, PJ noted the establishment of the new Construction Technology Centre rebranded 'Construct Innovate' in University of Galway supported by UCD, TCD, UCC and the Irish Green Building Council. The progress of the Build Digital Project hosted by TU Dublin and the other Technological Universities was also covered.

There has been substantial progress on Actions within the CSG Sub-Group. Action 2, Sustainability have commenced on the Construction Sector Circular Economy Roadmap to be managed by RIAI in close collaboration with DECC who are funding the facilitation of this action over the course of this year. Action 3 MMC, there is substantial progress being made by the MMC Leadership and Integration Group led by DETE with representatives of most Government Departments and Agencies involved. Action 3 now requires closer consultation with a broad cohort of industry members. Action 4 Construct Innovate, is now set up by Enterprise Ireland. Action 6 ePlanning is now accelerating its reach across the rural counties in particular with 12 of them accepting digital planning applications and the remaining counties commencing roll out, with the exception of the two Cork local authorities who are procuring new business systems.

The Build Digital Project needs attention in terms of resources and more focussed consideration on the value proposition. TU Dublin need to urgently reboot this project to deliver what was promised in the DPER Grant Agreement. The Technical Oversight Group will work with them over the coming months to get back on programme. A key engagement on this front will be ongoing engagement with the OGP to ensure future procedure alignment. Discussion followed around the Technical Oversight Group. It was noted that the Build Digital Project is not a research project but rather a means to transform the digital adoption practices of the construction sector from the ground up. Therefore, Build Digital must re-orientate towards communicating effectively with SMEs.

### **3. Planning and Development Bill (DHLGH)**

DHLGH presented on this. DHLGH provided an overview of the planning review. It was stated that the draft Bill was approved by Government in December 2022. Benefits of the draft Bill were highlighted. Amongst these benefits is the clarity, removing duplication, ensuring alignment with European and environmental obligations and greater certainty of timelines. It was highlighted that there is input from OPR, professional planners, and an inter-departmental group. Ministerial guidelines and policy directives will be replaced with National Planning Statements, comprising National Planning Policies and Measures and National Planning Policy Guidance. The NPF will continue to have a 20-year cycle, with opportunity for periodic review every five years. Regional Assemblies will adopt RSES with a 10 – 20 year timeline, with the Strategy to commence reviewed within 6 months of any NPF review and update. Development Plans will be extended to a 10-year cycle, with a review after year 5 on Local Area Plans will be replaced by specific types of area based plans.

DHLGH outlined that there would be a clear distinction between different categories of consents and that there would be different and distinct timelines for types of projects, with statutory timelines. These timelines will be decided in the coming weeks, and will be introduced on a phased basis. As for judicial reviews, An Bord Pleanála or the local authority, will be able to correct an error of fact or law in its planning decision and can also apply for a stay on the determination of proceedings while doing so. Also, there is a provision for cost protection for judicial review cases. An Bord Pleanála will be re-named as An Coimisiún Pleanála with a new organisational structure. The presentation outlined the next steps which include pre-legislative scrutiny, and enactment by mid-year. It was also stated that the de novo (i.e. re-appeal) principle will be retained.

CIF called for extra resources to be committed to An Coimisiún Pleanála. The Chair stated that extra resources have been allocated in Budget 2023 and more will be provided accordingly. IPI outlined that specialists (training and recruitment) are required such as planners, engineers and architects across the public and private sector. CIF also stated that there are many appeals (2,300) currently and they should be dealt with appropriately and that recruitment of planners is key. DHLGH confirmed that there are competitions underway to recruit those with experience in planning and infrastructure. In addition, DHLGH stated that interim board members are in place. Finally, in relation to a query regarding population projections in the NPF, DHLGH noted the commencement of a review of the NPF, in light of census 2022.

### **4. NDP Delivery at Local Authority Level (Kildare County Council)**

Eoghan Ryan, Director of Planning and Strategic Development with Kildare County Council (KCC) gave a presentation on the practical delivery of the NDP at local authority level. This included an overview of the County Development Plan (CDP) process, urban and rural priorities, supporting infrastructure, and views on the Planning and Development Bill. Eoghan outlined how the national spatial planning framework in terms of the NPF and RSES feed into the CDP process, alongside other policies such as Our Rural Future, Housing for All, and the Climate Action Plan. Key stakeholders consulted for Kildare’s CDP included Irish Water, TII, NTA and Eirgrid. Key components of the CDP’s core strategy, including population and housing delivery targets under the Housing Needs Demand Assessment (HNDA) were outlined. The HNDA finds that 30 percent of new households to 2031 in Kildare will qualify for social

housing support. Examples of key supporting infrastructure in Kildare were discussed including the M7 widening and upgrade at Naas and Sallins By-Pass facilitating the development of Naas North West Quadrant, the Maynooth Eastern Relief Road, and the Barrow Blueway. Capacity issues in terms of water and wastewater services noted in north east of Kildare i.e., with larger towns such as Maynooth and Celbridge – with upgrade works planned for 2025.

Eoghan welcomed the forthcoming publication of the Planning and Development Bill and further engagement with DHLGH, while noting that decisions around statutory timelines for decision making by An Bord Pleanála would be important. In addition, it was stated that additional resources would be required by LAs as SHDs previously dealt with by An Bord Pleanála were again the responsibility of LAs under Large-Scale Residential Development (LSRD) provisions. A discussion followed with the CIF noting the need to deliver key supporting infrastructure to zoned land. The Chair pointed to the additional funding provided to Irish Water in recent years to increase the number of serviced sites.

#### **5. Draft CSG Work Programme 2023 (NIO)**

The NIO provided a brief update on discussions with CSG members in late 2022 which informed the draft CSG work programme document for 2023. It was acknowledged that as the CSG meetings for the rest of 2023 would occur in person, limits on the number of representatives for each organisation will need to be implemented due to space constraints. Further feedback on the draft work programme was welcomed.

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

The NIO gave a brief update on the work they will continue to do in 2023. The first item mentioned was the name change to the Department. Discussions are ongoing with Minister Donohoe in terms of the addition of NDP delivery to the Department's name. It is planned to have the PI 2040 tracker published in the coming weeks, as the information is nearly finalised. It was noted that there is a meeting between the Build Digital Project and the Technical Oversight Group planned for February. The Building Innovation tracker will be shared with the appropriate actions in the next 2-3 weeks once finalised.

#### **7. Any Other Business**

At the beginning of the meeting it was announced that there will be some replacements for certain members. Sarah Ingle introduced James Kavanagh, replacing David McHugh. James will be 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President of ACEI (President elect). Tom Parlon introduced Joe Conway as the new CIF president since the start of the year. In addition, Tom introduced the Director General Designate Hubert Fitzpatrick who will replace him in mid-2023. The new General Secretary of ICTU Owen Reidy also introduced himself, he replaces Patricia King. Mark Kelly (D/Education) and Paul Hogan (DHLGH) introduced themselves to the group also.

#### **Action Points**

No Action Points were recorded for this meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, 20<sup>th</sup> April 2023.