



## Construction Sector Group

Meeting 22 - 10am on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2023

TK Whitaker Room, Government Buildings, Upper Merrion Street, D02 R583

**Present:** David Moloney (Chair), John Conlon, Kevin Meaney, Colm Farrell, Declan Donoghue (all PENDR), PJ Rudden (Chair of Innovation and Digital Adoption Sub-Group), Paul Cotter (D/Finance), Paul Sheridan (CIF), Shirley Coulter, Patrick King (SCSI), David O'Brien (OGP), Sean Armstrong (DHLGH), Eileen Hearne (D/Taoiseach), David Howard (BMF), Geraldine Larkin, Martin Searson (NSAI), Damien Owens (Engineers Ireland), James Kavanagh (ACEI), Shane Dempsey (CIC/ACEI), Kathryn Meghen, Pranash Ramanundh (RIAI), Hubert Loftus (D/Education), Liam Berney (ICTU), Seán O'Leary (IPI), Maria O'Brien, Eamonn Quinn (D/Health), Manus O'Donnell, Marc McEntegart (DETE), Amy Gargan, Damien Henehan (DFHERIS), David Browne (RIAI)

**Apologies:** John Coppinger (DTRANS), Sarah Miley (DFHERIS), Emma Leonard (D/Education), Jonathan Patchell (DETE), Hubert Fitzpatrick, Joe Conway (CIF)

### Minutes

#### 1. Minutes of meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> July 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2023 were agreed.

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

The work of the CSG Sub-Group continues. The Sub-Group Chair reiterated the importance of the recent announcement of the timeline for Public Sector Building Information Modelling (BIM) Adoption from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024. Action 2 of the Sub-Group and work by the RIAI on the Circular Economy Guidance for the Irish Construction Sector was commended. The draft guidance report has issued to more than 50 different organisations for review. Final sign off by DECC required, with intention to publish in Q4 2023. Action 3 (MMC) saw the publication of the 'Roadmap for increased adoption of MMC in Public Housing delivery' by DETE and DHLGH on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2023. Work ongoing on implementing recommendations. Action 4 (Construct Innovate) has on-boarded 44 associate members to date. Seven projects under the Accelerated Housing Applied Research, Dissemination and Demonstration (AHARDD) Programme Fund 2023 and 3 projects under Construct Innovate core funding ongoing (Timeline: April – November 2023). Academic Industry Meeting (AIM) day on 24<sup>th</sup> October. DETE Cement Decarbonisation Report now in draft.

Action 5 (Skillnet) – Level 8 Microcredential in Strategic Supply Management commenced on October 6<sup>th</sup> 2023. Expecting to start delivery of pilot digital projects for SMEs in Autumn 2023. Action 6 (ePlanning) has rolled out Online Planning Portal to 23 LAs. DLRC is leading on testing in Dublin LAs. South Dublin doing 'soft launch' testing with local agents in November and going live in Q4 2023. Wexford and Dublin City Council will go live in Q1 2024. Both Cork LAs procured new planning systems and are not expected to integrate with the national portal until Q2 2024. Action 7 (Build Digital Project) - New project partner identified with work ongoing between PENDR, DFHERIS and TU Dublin.

#### 3. Construction Industry Council (CIC)

Shane Dempsey (ACEI/CIC) and Paul Sheridan (CIF) presented. The presentation made a number of recommendations on accelerating the NDP including bringing priority projects through design phase as soon as possible, increase investment in CSG initiatives such as Build Digital Project, introduce Net Contribution Clauses, and invest in promoting construction as a career. In addition, the CIF policy on reform of the CWMF was outlined covering the procurement process and forms of contract, including



the need for performance evaluation for all through KPIs in contracts. RIAI recommendations included identifying and addressing capacity/skills (architects) deficits within Contracting Authorities, and support successful BIM and MMC adoption by SME's by ensuring robust programme of supports in place that is inclusive and does not diminish participant tenderers pool. Some members sought clarity on the pipeline of public projects, noting the need for the public sector to plan tender releases so that a glut of projects do not go to market at the same time in a capacity constrained environment.

A discussion followed related to planning and reforms to the PWC. Concern among professional practices (architecture, engineering and surveyors) that delays in planning are impacting funding and viability of projects. The OGP noted recent and ongoing reforms to the PWC. It was also pointed out that TII uses NEC contracts on the majority of its projects rather than PWC.

#### **4. Circular Economy Guidance for the Irish Construction Sector (RIAI)**

The RIAI discussed progress on the Circular Economy Guidance for the Construction Sector, which will be published in Q4 2023. The various elements of the Guidance were outlined. It is estimated that approximately 37% of our carbon emissions stem from the construction and built environment sector. In 2021, 82% of C&D resources and waste were backfilled, 10% was sent for disposal, with only 8% being recycled. With these critical environmental concerns, the construction industry faces urgent pressure to transition from the prevailing linear model to a circular economy approach. Circular economy in the built environment is about: take, make, use and dispose. The ambition of the Guidance is to narrow and close resource loops - efficient manufacturing, reuse, repair, remanufacturing, and energy capture. This will be achieved by substitution where applicable including bio based, renewable materials instead of primary abiotic materials. Discussion followed around the ecosystem that underpins the liability, the standards of materials and the testing and certification process. DHLGH noted that adoption of MMC will contribute towards better circularity in the construction industry.

#### **5. Roadmap for Increased adoption of MMC in Public Housing Delivery (DETE)**

DETE provided an update presentation which discussed DETE's MMC Leadership & Integration Group as well as other Housing for All focused Groups and initiatives such as Construct Innovate (Construction Technology Centre). Working on expansion of NSAI Agrément services to include onsite inspection of MMC installations. Based on internal research and industry feedback, one of the key needs to support MMC adoption was the consistency of demand and the pipelines for MMC projects. Public Procurement and opportunities for economies of scale with MMC not yet realised was also discussed. The Roadmap for MMC Adoption in Public Housing (July 2023) and the Actions delivered as of Q3 2023 were outlined. This included the publication of an information booklet on MMC that will provide plain English guidance on MMC definitions and benefits. Discussion followed from DHLGH regarding the RIAI Guidance and CPD training being crucial for MMC adoption. The RIAI noted its forthcoming CPD training on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2023, which will cover the DfMA guidance by the RIAI.

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

The NIO provided an update on Budget 2024 including the new Infrastructure, Climate and Nature Fund which will protect capital expenditure in the event of an economic downturn, enabling continued investment in large scale economic projects. Additional capital expenditure of €250 million is being made available for 2024 from windfall exchequer receipts, to be allocated to critical infrastructure projects that are at an advanced stage. Infrastructure Guidelines will be published in Q4 2023. The fourth meeting of the Project Ireland 2040 Delivery Board is on 16<sup>th</sup> Nov 2023. The Delivery Board has three key areas of focus namely 1. Planning 2. Public Sector Capacity and 3. Skills. Prospects 2023/2024 and the 2023 Annual report have both been published since the last meeting in July. 2024 CSG Work Programme engagement with bodies being planned for Q4 2023.



**Any Other Business – None**

**Action Points:**

1. Draft 2024 Work Programme of OGP to be shared at next meeting, focusing on changes to Public Works Contract.
2. The next meeting will include an agenda item related to Construction Skills and Apprentices.

*The next meeting will be held on January 25<sup>th</sup> 2024.*