



## Construction Sector Group

Meeting 23 - 11am on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2024

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

**Present:** David Moloney (Chair), John Conlon, Kevin Meaney, Colm Farrell, Conor Duffy, Declan Donoghue (all PENDR), PJ Rudden (Chair of Innovation and Digital Adoption Sub-Group), Patrick O'Brien (D/Finance), Hubert Fitzpatrick, Paul Sheridan (CIF), Kevin James, Shirley Coulter (SCSI), David O'Brien (OGP), Sean Armstrong (DHLGH), Eileen Hearne (D/Taoiseach), David Howard (BMF), Martin Searson (NSAI), Damien Owens, Cian O'Dowd (Engineers Ireland), Shane Dempsey (ACEI), Pranash Ramanundh, Seán Mahon (RIAI), Hubert Loftus, Mark Kelly (D/Education), Seán O'Leary (IPI), Eamonn Quinn (D/Health), Jonathan Patchell, Marc McEntegart (DETE), Sarah Miley (DFHERIS), Peter Smyth (HSE)

**Apologies:** John Coppinger (DTRANS), Emma Leonard (D/Education), Joe Conway (CIF), James Kavanagh (ACEI), Liam Berney (ICTU)

### Minutes

#### 1. Minutes of meeting of 24<sup>th</sup> October 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> October 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 in a positive way. The priority now is to fully mobilise the Build Digital Project to help build the NDP. The Guidance Towards The Circular Economy For The Irish Construction Sector is currently in the final stage of sign off and will be ready to publish by the end of the month. Another CSG Priority Action is to develop MMC and to improve productivity and sustainability. Building on three Reports by CIF on MMC, DETE has published a Roadmap for increased adoption of MMC in residential construction. The adoption of BIM will support the delivery of MMC and the Build Digital Project in conjunction with the OGP is currently working to support same. The Chair of the CSG Sub-Group noted concerns raised by the NSAI in terms of the quality of applications for NSAI MMC Agrément certificates. A discussion followed regarding the need to accelerate the use of MMC while at the same time ensuring that the resulting new buildings comply with our national standards of certification and building regulations. HfA Action 61 commits to the publication of information support material for Offsite Manufacturers to reference for NSAI Agrément certification.

Construct Innovate (CI) continues to grow with another 51 companies now fully on-boarded, and a further 30 companies approved on 14<sup>th</sup> December. The first ten research projects funded by CI have been completed and are due to be published shortly. On Action 6 (e-Planning) 24 LAs are using the National Portal with the remaining LAs to rollout by Q2 2024. Action 7 (Build Digital) is collaborating with OGP on the CWMF BIM Requirements, preparing supports for the BIM mandate. Acknowledging the progress made on the ongoing rollout of ePlanning across the 31 LAs, a discussion followed whereby the RIAI suggested that the planning process should adopt 3-D digital development plan models for all our main towns and cities. The RIAI agreed to engage further with the Chair of the CSG Sub-Group on this proposal.

#### 3. Procurement Reforms (OGP)

The OGP discussed the transition of measuring and evaluating public works projects from capital cost to total cost of ownership through the development of standardised metrics for life cycle costing and assessment. Reforms to the Capital Works Management Framework (CWMF) were noted including; professional indemnity insurance, price variation, introduction of liability caps and BIM mandate. The



Guidance on Project Brief is to be published in Q2 2024. This is in response to feedback from representative bodies as a Definitive Project Brief is rarely produced by clients, or where it is produced there is no uniformity of product, leading to certain parameters remaining unconsidered prior to engagement of the Construction Technical Professionals (CTPs). The re-drafting of the guidance, in conjunction with enhanced scope of service requirements, will set out clear roles, responsibilities and minimum standards for information produced by the CTPs in order to obtain a more comprehensive fee proposal reflective of the level of service required. Furthermore, new cost reporting templates were published in October 2023 which allow for the reporting of embodied carbon. Engagement with sectors ongoing in advance of any mandatory carbon reporting requirements being introduced. The development of BIM requirements for inclusion in the PWCs is ongoing with publication expected in Q3 2024. A discussion followed re. tenders for public works, noting the need to open up procurement opportunities to SMEs and to review the introduction of new initiatives to determine their effectiveness.

#### **4. Construction Skills and Apprentices (DFHERIS)**

DFHERIS stated that in Q3 2024 the shortened painting and decorating pilot will be launched. The programme will be 2.5 years in duration, remaining at level 6. This is in response to difficulties with uptake in wet trade apprentices. The Public Service Apprenticeship Plan was also noted, which is targeting 750 apprentice registrations per year by 2025 and includes key areas such as planning and architectural technician skills. The Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR), the DHLGH and several LAs have expressed interest in the plan. DFHERIS provided an update on the proposal for planning apprenticeship which would be a 4 year NFQ level 8 course. TU Dublin has expressed interest in the role as lead educational provider, meeting with DFHERIS at the end of January. Potential partners for the consortium steering group have been contacted and the aim is to have the first consortium meeting by the end of February. DFHERIS will also begin engagement with the Irish Planning Institute (IPI); a meeting is to take place shortly. A discussion followed regarding resources for apprenticeships including funding. The IPI sought further clarity on the definition of planning technicians and DFHERIS noted there is a dedicated advisor appointed to examine this area.

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

The NIO provided an update on a number of issues including the Infrastructure Guidelines published in December 2023, the ESRI report on the NDP published on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2024, and the ongoing process to set NDP capital ceilings to 2026. In addition, the NIO noted the sixth meeting of the Project Ireland 2040 Delivery Board held on 24<sup>th</sup> January which Minister Donohoe chaired, with a focus on An Bord Pleanála. The Delivery Board has three key areas of focus namely 1. Planning 2. Public Sector Capacity and 3. Skills. Finally, the NIO noted the CSG Work Programme for 2024, thanking representative bodies and departments for their engagement.

**Any Other Business:** D/Taoiseach pointed to the publication of the Housing for All [Q4 2023 Progress Report](#) and the 2023 housing output figure of just under 32,700.

**Action Points:** None

*The next meeting will be held on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2024 at 11am (in person only).*