

ConsultA

ACEI Newsletter - 5 November 2020

Information and Advice for ACEI Members

ACEI Work Arrangements

The ACEI office is temporarily closed. Email info@acei.ie with queries or contact sarah.ingle@acei.ie.

Covid-19 Updates

- [ACEI](#)
- [EFCA](#)
- [FIDIC](#)

Online Resources

- [HSE](#)
- [Revenue](#)
- [Institute of Public Health](#)
- [Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection](#)
- [Health & Safety Authority](#)
- [World Health Organisation](#)
- [Centre for Disease Control](#)
- [Health Protection Surveillance Centre](#)
- [Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade](#)

ACEI Commentary: Budget 2021 Impact on the Built Environment

By **Conor McCarthy, ACEI President**

ACEI is pleased that Budget 2021 provides €10.1 billion for capital expenditure, the largest amount in the history of the state. To meet the needs of our population projected to increase by one million people by 2040, ACEI had advocated in its Budget 2021 submission to Government on the following key items:

- The importance of reactivating the economy through investment in public infrastructure, including housing, healthcare, education, transport, utilities including water and wastewater, as well as renewable energy infrastructure.
- Urgent roll out of "Shovel Ready" public infrastructure and investment projects.
- Necessity to address regional imbalance and promote long term growth of regions.
- The transition to a low-carbon economy and enabling the development of renewables is critical to addressing climate change action and adaptation.
- The improved health and well-being of all employees in Ireland has never been as important as we continue our emergence from the Covid-19 pandemic.

In relation to infrastructure, ACEI recommended that expenditure be increased for all capital programmes by accelerating design, planning, procurement and project management so that projects in capital programmes would be ready for construction early in 2021. By investing in infrastructure now, ACEI noted that Government would benefit from maintaining employment in the built environment sector, as well as generating optimum value given the current economic conditions due to the pandemic.

The Government commitment to a capital expenditure of €10.1 billion will greatly assist in realising the ambition of ACEI members. Specifically, ACEI notes the following provisions of Budget 2021, all of which were included in the ACEI submission:

- In education, €276 million will be invested to support 20 higher education building projects along with supports for 145 additional school projects in 2021.
- An additional €132 million has been allocated to the National Broadband Plan in 2021 to improve digital connectivity, facilitating balanced regional development.
- €131 million in supports to retrofit homes and properties; making them warmer, more comfortable and more efficient.
- In housing, €2.031 billion in capital funding will be made available to deliver 10,300 new social homes and construction is due to start on nine Land Development Agency (LDA) sites with potential for 4,000 homes.
- In water services, over €1.3 billion is being provided to Irish Water, which is vital investment to support housing delivery and environmental compliance.
- €221 million has been allocated to the OPW to begin up to seven new flood relief schemes in 2021 and to complete five ongoing flood relief schemes.

What is really important now is for Government agencies and departments to translate this funding commitment into actual project delivery. "Shovel Ready" projects need to be urgently provided, and the €10.1 billion capital expenditure channelled into projects in the built environment, efficiently, transparently and without delay. ACEI will continually monitor the capital spend over the course of 2021 on behalf of its member firms to ensure that the Government's commitments materialise as planned.

DPER Announces Review of NDP and Consultation

This week, the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform launched [Review to Renew](#) - the review of the National Development Plan (NDP). It is noted that: *"The review will consider the most important challenges facing us as a nation including climate action, housing, balanced regional development, healthcare, social welfare policy, transport and education"*.

The review also includes a public consultation which will be open until the end of January 2021 and forms a key element of the review process. Stakeholders and interested parties have the opportunity to contribute views, experiences and expertise to shape the next ten years of infrastructure development in Ireland. Feedback can be provided on the [gov.ie](#) website.

OGP Skills Academy Supports NDP Delivery

In partnership with the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI) and the Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland (SCSI), the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) has announced the development of an innovative programme to provide [training to public servants](#) engaged in the delivery of the National Development Plan (NDP). The programme will address areas including contract management, governance, dispute resolution and procurement and will start its online delivery in 2020.

ACE Emerging Professionals Report Launch: Future of the Workplace

Next week the UK Association of Consultancy & Engineering (ACE) will launch ACE Emerging Professionals' latest report, *Future of the Workplace*. The report explores major issues facing traditional workplaces and examines the changing expectations of future consulting engineering professionals. ACEI members can register to attend the [report launch](#).

How to Find your Bearings in a Crisis

At the moment we are all being forced to rethink how we address challenges at work and home. However, we still have choices in relation to how we deal with threats and losses; instead of raging we can 'recalculate'. Interviewed recently, [Sylvia Boorstein](#) provides several methods of shifting mindsets to help people find their bearings when thrown off by a crisis. She notes that the need to recalculate isn't a weakness. *"Rather, it's a strength, one that can help us come out of a crisis more resilient than we came into it. And perhaps, headed in a better direction than we were before."*

Recent Good News

- ACEI member firm RPS, has launched a [Net Zero Carbon Progress Check](#) to help businesses determine how likely they are to achieve their carbon reduction targets before the 2050 deadline.
- [Brave Blue World: Racing to Solve Our Water Crisis](#) has been released on Netflix. Innovations from across the world, including those on energy generation and re-use, are explored in this documentary which outlines the future of sustainable water provision.
- When comparing August 2020 with July 2020, [production in construction](#) is up by 2.6% in Euro area and by 2.4% in EU. It is down by only 0.9% and 1.5% compared with August 2019.
- A new Lidl shop in Aungier St, Dublin 2 is providing a unique insight into the city's medieval past. The remains of an [11th century house](#), discovered during excavations of the site close to Dublin Castle, are visible beneath a glass section of the store floor.
- A successful pilot project to provide Dublin teenagers with hairdressing and barbering skills has been recently completed. The *'Hair Together'* initiative was set up by Setanta GAA Club's 'Bringing Education and Sport Together' (BEST) programme, which aims to keep teens learning in restrictive times.
- The Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science has announced 71 grants valued at €53 million to support frontiers research across 12 Higher Education Institutions through [Science Foundation Ireland](#).
- A recent article from Ted's "How to Be a Better Human" series, outlines some thoughts on how to have [better online meetings](#) over Teams or Zoom. Fifteen ways to improve virtual meetings and make them more inclusive are outlined including: providing a facilitator, asking about accessibility needs and practicing reading non-verbal communication.

New Data Centre Investment Planned in Ireland

Knight Frank, a UK-based estate agency, is forecasting that there will be a further €5.75 bn invested in data centre development across Ireland in the coming years to 2025. A [recent report](#) indicates that Dublin is now among the top four data centre markets across Europe, replacing Paris and joining Frankfurt, London and Amsterdam.