



ACEI team meeting w/Minister Chambers ahead of the enactment of the 2026 Accelerating Infrastructure Act

## Political Affairs Update:

The ACEI continued to push the political system in June to improve the environment for consulting engineers.

### Overview:

#### Accelerating Infrastructure

- The Secretariat submitted a report on delays and issues on the ground to Sean O'Driscoll and Imelda Mannion of the Accelerating Infrastructure Taskforce including key topics of concern around NCCs and median-priced tendering.
- The ACEI, through the CIC, submitted information relating to delays on the ground when dealing with contracting authorities to the Dept of Public Expenditure.
- DG, Shane Dempsey met with Assistant Secretary, Jasmina Behan to outline delays and challenges around contractual and procurement practices (listed above).
- The ACEI attended the Construction Sector Group, led by the Department of Public Expenditure and involving all Government Departments engaged in capital investment. When there, the ACEI made the case for proportionate liability and the need for better contractual conditions for those engaged in HFA projects.
- DG Shane Dempsey will participate in the Department's 'Accelerating Infrastructure Productivity' working group (7<sup>th</sup> July).
- ACEI Secretariat attended the DPER Infrastructure Conference on 8<sup>th</sup> July to hear from Minister Chambers on the work being done at department level to allocate risk more fairly and increase the risk appetite for project delivery.

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## Political Affairs Continued...:

### DOEY Clearing House

- Following feedback from members, ongoing negotiations with the DoEY relating to late payments and legacy projects remain productive with weekly meetings now occurring between the Department and the ACEI.
- This has been a particularly important issue for many of our SME firms where the payment structure of DoEY has a more significant impact.
- In this light, there was a webinar on 30<sup>th</sup> June with DoEY on its plans for changes to ways of working and we'll be sending round key highlights to member firms in the coming weeks.
- The ACEI is seeking to establish similar clearing houses with the OPW.

### Contractual issues - NCCs / HFA collateral warranties

- The ACEI has written to the Law Society to address issues where legal firms are advising their clients to disregard ACEI's Conditions of Engagement documents.
- The ACEI has also submitted a query to the Construction Sector Capacity and Procurement Unit in relation to the use of unfair contractual terms by the HFA.
- The ACEI has also requested a follow up meeting with the Department of Housing and Minister for Housing on the HFA's unfair contractual terms. This follows a meeting in Leinster House in January this year.
- The ACEI and other professional bodies will soon be launching a joint communique on the need for NCCs in public sector contracts.

### Queries

- The ACEI addressed procurement issues on behalf of members with the National Transport Authority, TII, HFA and LDA in the past month.

### Upcoming meetings:

- The ACEI will meet with the Department of Transport on July 16th following a request by Minister Darragh O' Brien.
- DG Shane Dempsey will attend a forum in the Department of An Taoiseach's 'Industry Capability Working Group'.
- If you need support or guidance on any issue affecting your firm, please contact DG, Shane Dempsey or Senior Policy Advisor, Dónal O'Neill. We're here to help.



Association of **Consulting Engineers** of Ireland

## 14th July: Upcoming Webinar...



We are pleased to announce our upcoming webinar on 14<sup>th</sup> July (1pm) hosted by Charles Mitchell, Senior Quantity Surveying Technical Advisor to the Office of Government Procurement.

This is free to attend. To secure your ticket simply click on the tickets [here](#).

Charles will discuss publicly funded projects and how they are moving towards a Total Cost of Ownership approach. This requires clients and design team members making considerations early in relation to capital cost, operational cost, and sustainability considerations such as global warming potential. A range of changes have and are occurring in the built environment which will impact how we work and collaborate. This webinar will identify key changes and look at how these changes will be accommodated in modern working arrangements under the Capital Works Management Framework.

### Key Topics:

- Total Cost of Ownership
- Cost and Carbon reporting (budgeting and management)
- Energy Performance of Buildings Directive

## Golf Classic now open for teams...

Following a successful inaugural competition in 2025, the Golf Classic returns for 2026. This year's event will take place in Grange Golf Club, Dublin on October 1st and is now open for teams to register.

Join us for a day of friendly competition and networking with ACEI members and guests at Grange Golf Club. This is the perfect opportunity to connect with colleagues and clients outside the office environment.

**Date:** Thursday, 1 October 2026

**Time:** From 11am

**Format:** Scramble, shotgun start

**Location:** Grange Golf Club, Rathfarnham, Dublin 16

**Cost:** €850 per team (4 players per team)

\*This includes green fees, breakfast on arrival, and a post-game meal and prizegiving.



## New DSC and PSDP Courses go live!

### DSC Course Dates and Times:

Day 1 – 3rd September – 9.30am-4.30pm

Day 2 – 10th September – 9.30am-4.30pm

Places can be booked online [here](#).

### PSDP Course Dates and Times:

Day 1 – 14 October – 9.30am-4.30pm

Day 2 – 21 October – 9.30am-4.30pm

Places available [here](#).



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## Accelerating Infrastructure Act

On 25 June, the Critical Infrastructure Bill 2026 was enacted. The Act creates fast-track approval processes for critical infrastructure projects that have been designated as strategically important and follows work done by the Accelerating Infrastructure Taskforce who the ACEI have been in constant communication.

It is a widely held view in industry circles that this now places the Government's commitment to progressing critical infrastructure delivery in the State on a solid statutory footing.

Under the legislation, the Government may designate a project as a critical infrastructure project or programme with focus on transport, energy and water projects: those sectors having been identified as necessary to underpin all other development in the State.

Once a project is designated as critical infrastructure, all relevant public bodies must do everything in their power to prioritise the rapid approval of such projects, including by:

- Taking all necessary steps to act expeditiously and avoid undue delays in the delivery of critical infrastructure
- Prioritising its function relating to critical infrastructure delivery over performance of its other statutory functions
- Co-operating with other public bodies to prioritise delivery
- Allocating resources as necessary

One area of note which has caught attention is that the Act disapplies s.15 of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 to relevant public bodies in the performance of their functions and duties under the legislation. s.15 of the 2015 Act requires relevant bodies to have regard to the most recent national plans relating to climate change. This disapplication operates to prioritise the delivery of critically needed infrastructure projects over compliance with national environmental measures, which should operate as a barrier to judicial review.

## On-site safety module

Reminder to all readers that the ACEI and Engineers Ireland operate a Site Visitor Safety Course intended for consultant engineers and other professionals who are required to visit sites on an occasional basis, but not to undertake construction work. The aim of the course is to provide a general awareness of health & safety on sites. It is intended to provide industry recognised training that will support the duty of the employer under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 regarding the provision of information, instruction and training to enable employees to carry out their work safely.

To book a place please [click here](#)  
Please note the remaining enrolment dates for 2026:

August – Wednesday 5th  
September – Wednesday 2nd  
October – Thursday 1st  
November – Wednesday 4th  
December – Wednesday 2nd

All those who place a booking after the last enrolment date, will be given access to the course at the next enrolment date per list above. From your date of enrolment, you will have 28 days of access to complete the course and download your certificate.

### Course delivery

This e-learning course is delivered online via the Moodle platform. Once enrolment has commenced, students have access to interactive videos and knowledge check quizzes. This is followed by a short assessment. All modules must be completed in order to access the assessment, of which you must achieve 70% to pass. You will have 2 attempts at the assessment. Once the course has been successfully completed, you can download the certificate directly.

### Fees

Enrolment is €95.00 (includes 2 attempts at the assessment).



# Minister set to fast-track MetroLink legislation

Bill will allow for State agency to deliver planned Dublin rail project

**MARTIN WALL**  
Public Policy Correspondent

The Government is seeking to fast-track legislation that will allow for the establishment of a State agency to deliver the planned Dublin metro project.

Minister for Transport Darragh O'Brien wants the Oireachtas committee overseeing the area to waive pre-legislative scrutiny of his new MetroLink Bill to speed up the process.

In a letter, O'Brien told the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Transport that he hoped to see the new MetroLink legislation published and enacted by the first quarter of next year.

MetroLink will be the largest

**“The bill for MetroLink could be €15 billion-€18 billion**

and most expensive public project in the history of the State. O'Brien is expected to bring proposals to the Cabinet in the middle of this month to allow for it to go to tender.

The Cabinet would at a later date have to give final approval to go ahead with the project when tenders have been received.

Updated costings for the project are also likely to be given to the Government over the next couple of weeks, with speculation in the transport world that the bill for MetroLink could be €15 billion-€18 billion.

The high-frequency 19km rail line would run from Swords in north Co Dublin to Charlemont on the southside of the city, serving Dublin Airport and the city centre.

O'Brien told the transport committee the Cabinet had given approval on June 16th for the legislation to be drafted and work was under way on it.

In line with the Government's Accelerating Infrastructure Report and Action Plan, and to maintain the project timelines, he said he was requesting the committee waive the normal pre-legislative scrutiny process "to expedite the enactment of the legislation as soon as possible". He said the "general scheme for

the Bill is structured to be facilitative in nature (ie not overly prescriptive), to enable the legal form, functions, governance, resourcing/financial and transitional arrangements for the new MetroLink delivery body, to be known as the MetroLink Agency".

O'Brien said that under the legislation the agency would be financed by a dedicated statutory fund to be known as "Ciste Forbartha Meitreo".

The Minister said this was to provide for a multi-annual funding facility for MetroLink from within "the project's agreed overall funding envelope, thereby addressing concerns about the impact of the existing annual funding mechanisms on value for money and overall costs".

The secretary general of the Department of Transport is to be the accounting officer for the agency, which will also have its own board, the Minister said. The board would, he said, have responsibility for leading and directing the agency's activities, including programme scope, budget and schedule.

### Transition strategy

At present, responsibility for MetroLink is based in a division of Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII). O'Brien said a transition strategy was being developed in conjunction with TII and the National Transport Authority and this will set out how MetroLink will move to the agency "with the autonomy, commercial capability and specialist expertise required for a project of this scale".

The Department of Transport said the new agency would be established "in line with the principles outlined in the code of practice for the governance of State bodies, including through the appointment of a chief executive officer who will be accountable to the Public Accounts Committee of the Oireachtas, and will be subject to audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General".

➔ **Hints of two-phase MetroLink should ring alarm bells: Michael McDowell, Opinion page 12**

## Worth a read

With busy diaries, it can be a challenge to stay abreast of industry news and opinion pieces setting the national tone for debate in the sector. Below are a several recommendations for your consideration:

- Seán O' Driscoll in the [Irish Times](#): "Infrastructure chief criticises historic State approach to big projects"
- Cabinet Briefing in the [Business Post](#): Cabinet Briefing: Extending excise cuts; selling infrastructure benefits; AI summit's heavy hitters
- Lead story in [Irish Times](#): Number of people in emergency accommodation falls for first time since Covid
- Lead business story in [Irish Times](#): National Transport Authority rebuked for 'wasted' €50m on rail traffic system
- Lead politics story in the [Business Post](#): Public sector pay increases will reduce Budget 2027 funding Chambers warns

## New members continue to join

As we grow ACEI's strength and influence, it was great to welcome new members in June. Not only did we welcome Michael Hurst (FCons) and Kennedy Redford as a new member but we had preliminary discussions with four more firms which we hope to have updates on in the coming weeks.

*Thanks for reading*



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