

Project Ireland 2040 Delivery Board

11th December 2023

Online meeting on Microsoft Teams



Tionscadal Éireann
Project Ireland
2040

Minutes

Participants

Chair: Minister Paschal Donohoe TD

External Board Members: Thomas Barrett, Mary Hughes, Sean O'Driscoll, Terry Prendergast, PJ Rudden.

In attendance: Paul Hogan (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, DHLGH), John Conlon (Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform (DPENDR), Claragh Mulhern (DHLGH), William Beausang (Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS), Matthew Lynch (Special Adviser to An Taoiseach), Deborah Sweeney (Press Advisor to Minister Donohoe) and Fiona O'Connor (Special Adviser to Minister Donohoe).

Secretariat: Kevin Meaney, Margaret O'Donnell, Tom Fleming (DPENDR).

Apologies: Graham Doyle (Secretary General (DHLGH), Colm O'Reardon (Secretary General (DFHERIS)

1. Progress on Actions to address NDP delivery constraints

The Minister opened the meeting and noted that this was a follow-up to the Board meeting held on November 22 where the item on progress on actions to address NDP delivery constraints was not dealt with due to time constraints. The Minister also noted that the work of the Board in 2024 would focus on those specific actions using a tracker as a means to document progress delivery. The first iteration of the tracker setting out updates on the actions has been circulated to the Board. DPENDR outlined updates from the tracker on the three action areas of planning, public sector capacity and wider skills capacity which would form the basis of the work programme for the coming year. The actions set out timelines for DPENDR, DHLGH and DFHERIS to achieve these objectives. The Minister proposed a change to the format of the tracker to include specific completion dates and/or a breakdown of initiatives into specific stages. It is hoped this change will help to better highlight progress and to also identify areas in which more supports are needed. The Chair invited comments on the tracker. DHLGH endorsed the idea of having a better breakdown on some major initiatives. DFHERIS suggested the need to have both a higher and lower level review of some of the initiatives set out in the tracker as it would be more impactful overall.

2. Works Programme for 2024

DPENDR outlined the proposed work programme for the Delivery Board in 2024. It is planned to have six meetings in 2024, the first in-person meeting will take place on January 24th with an off-site meeting planned for later in the year. The standing agenda for each meeting will focus on the three actions areas discussed under item 1 and to see what steps the Board can take to influence progress

on those actions. Departments will be required to give progress updates on their actions. It is also proposed to invite external speakers to meetings throughout the year Board members were invited to submit for suggestions for inclusion in the work programme to the Secretariat by the end of December.

Board members commented on the considerable progress being made at An Bord Pléanala (ABP), specific reference was made to the appointment of a Director of Legal Affairs. There is now a need to focus on the development of new policy guidelines, many of which are out of date as it will be critical to the future success of the organisation. They also spoke of the need for prioritisation on issues of rural guidelines and on the planning of medium sized towns. The possibility of greater staff mobility between ABP and Local Authorities in future years was also highlighted by the Board members.

Others Board members spoke of the possibility of making minor changes that could deliver some quick wins through the issue of circulars rather than the waiting for major reforms. Members were impressed with the National Development Finance Agency presentation made at the November meeting and suggested that a number of key agencies from the Water and the Energy sectors along with the IDA and the Construction Industry Federation could be considered as guest speakers in 2024 Speakers should be given a clear mandate to focus in their presentation on 3 or 4 area where there can be an immediate impact on improving NDP delivery.

The Minister welcomed the contributions from members and he requested a presentation from ABP for the meeting in January.

Actions arising from December 11th 2023 meeting
1. Amendment of the tracker to improve clarity around timelines and to provide a breakdown into specific stages where required.
2. An Bord Pleanála to be invited to give presentation to the January Board meeting.

3. AOB

No other business arose.

Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Delivery Board will be held on January 24th 2024.