

Construction Leadership Forum
COVID-19: Recovery Planning Group
Meeting 06
16 June 2020
Telephone Conference Call
09:00 – 11:00

Note of meeting

Present:

Kevin Stewart MSP, Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning

Construction Industry

Bruce Clark - Joint Managing Director, RJ McLeod

Bruce Dickson – Industry Leadership Group Member, Construction Scotland

Steven Dillon – Scottish Trade Unions Congress

Elaine Ellis – Skills Development Scotland

Ron Fraser – Executive Director, Construction Scotland

Stephen Good, Chief Executive, Construction Scotland Innovation Centre

Ken Gillespie – Chair, Construction Scotland

Hector MacAulay – Managing Director, Balfour Beatty Scotland

Elliot Robertson – CEO Robertson Group

Alan Wilson – Managing Director, Select

Scottish Government and Associated Agencies

Scott Bell – Deputy Director, PDCRD, SG

Joe Brown – Head of Strategic Business Development, SG

Joe Dowd – Team Leader, Construction Team, SG

Dr Stephen Garvin, Head of Building Standards, SG

Alasdair Graham – Acting Director of Major Projects, Transport Scotland

Sharon Miller, Manufacturing and Construction, SG

Alan Morrison – Health Finance and Infrastructure, SG

Graham Porteous – Head of Construction Procurement Policy Unit, SG

Colin Proctor – Director, Construction Industry and Delivery, SFT

Peter Reekie – Chief Executive, SFT

Dermot Rhatigan - Deputy Director Manufacturing & Industries, SG

Mark Turley, More Homes Division, SG

John McLean - Construction Procurement Policy Unit, SG

Apologies:

Grahame Barn – Industry Leadership Group member, Construction Scotland

Ian Gilzean – Chief Architect, SG

		Action
1	Introduction and Apologies	
1.1	The meeting commenced at 09:00.	
1.2	The Minister welcomed the delegates to the meeting and thanked all present for their continued work on this group and the related sub-groups.	
1.3	He noted that the SG had announced, that work on phase 2 of the restart plan could commence from 11 June. He acknowledged the efforts of not just the group, but the wider construction industry and trade unions in getting to this point. The Minister also noted that there is still a significant amount of work to be done and that everyone needs to be clear on what is required and to follow the updated guidance.	
2	Minute of Previous Meeting	
2.1	The Group accepted the note of the meeting of 2 June as a true record.	
3	Actions	
3.1	At the Minister's request, Scott Bell read through the actions of the previous meeting, giving a progress update on each. These will be reflected in the updated Actions Register, which will be distributed to the members.	
	The Minister invited Questions	
3.2	Peter Reekie said that he was happy for the paper he had submitted on site visits (Action A041) to be circulated to the group. As Steven Dillion had not yet joined the call, it was agreed that officials would contact him around sharing his paper in relation to this action.	Action
3.3	Action: Officials to circulate details of Peter Reekie's site visit and contact Steven Dillon regarding sharing details of his site visit.	SM
4.	Update on Site Closures	
4.1	The Minister invited Joe Brown to provide the group with an update, noting that going forward, this item could perhaps be retitled 'Update on Site Openings'	

4.2	Joe Brown noted that the key milestone was the 11 June date of the 'soft restart', as announced by the First Minister, which involved a limited amount of workers going back on site. He informed the group that the First Minister will be announcing the outcome of the next scheduled review of lockdown measures later this week. Any emerging information, relevant to construction, be shared with those on the Group. Focus now would turn to recovery, which he noted was on the agenda for today's meeting.	
4.3	The Minister invited questions from the group, but none were forthcoming.	
4.4	Joe Brown noted that he had been attending in place of Dermot Rhatigan, who is now available to take his place at future meetings. The Minister thanked Joe for all of his work.	
5.	Safe Operating Procedures Working Group Update	
5.1	<p>The Minister invited Ron Fraser to provide an update. They key points were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from sites has found that subcontractor management are also carrying out their own reviews and site visits to check that conditions are suitable for the workforce to come back to. Some of the bigger subcontractors have done this across multiple sites. • The SOP subgroup will meet on the 17 June for the first time since return to work. Topics for discussion are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The continuing need for clarity on guidance. Most enquiries received so far have been minor. There will also be a review of the questions to, see if any further information is needed ○ Maintaining of the guidance – whether any review of the SOP is needed. It was noted that there is nothing at present to be reviewed. ○ A survey of PPE has been initiated to identify types required by industry and the numbers required. ○ Dissemination of good practice– need to find a good way of getting the guidance out to a wider audience. There is a need for quality checks on the 'good practice' on the website, prior to dissemination. ○ An extension of the guidance to cover offsite manufacturing, as not covered by existing documents. It 	

	was commented that this may require links to be made with other groups.	
5.2	The Minister acknowledged that Updating the SOP is very important. He also stated that having the correct PPE was vital. He stated that since Scottish manufacturers are providing PPE, companies should be made aware of this, as this would make things much easier, in terms of supply chains. He tasked officials with helping industry in publicising this and making the relevant connections.	Action
5.3	The Minister invited questions from the group, but none were forthcoming	
5.4	<p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officials to ensure that the industry is aware that Scottish Companies are producing PPE that they can access. 	SM
6.	Restart Working Group Update	
6.1	<p>Graham Porteous provided the members with an update on the Restart sub-group, which last met on the morning of Friday 12th June. The main points of discussion were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Construction industry are grateful that they are now able to move to phase 2 on their Restart Plan. The site visits by the Minister, SFT and Unite, coupled with the health data have provided the necessary assurance that careful steps can be taken to restart construction activity. It was confirmed that staff still able to work from home should do so and office based activity would only recommence in phase 3. The CICV Forum are planning a “Be Kind to Construction” campaign to coincide with the restart of construction activity, to give confidence to customers and workers that the industry is ready to return safely. The extension of “Help to Buy” was welcomed. It was noted that there is a possibility of supply chain issues if the manufacturing sector is unable to restart until SG phase 2. 	
	The Minister invited questions.	

6.2	Bruce Dickson wished to emphasise that despite construction having opened their gates a week ago, there was still an issue with manufacturing, as factories had not opened. This meant that it was harder to get materials from Scotland as opposed to elsewhere. He was hopeful that these would reopen soon, as this would become an issue if they did not.	
7	Outline Recovery Plan	
7.1	Scott Bell addressed the group on the paper, which outlined the process developing a recovery plan, continuing collaboration that has gone on throughout the restart phase. The paper highlighted the key factors to consider, ranging from the SG's high level overarching approach to economic recovery, right the way down to and including capability and capacity with both clients and industry.	
7.2	It was stated that there are a number of high level assets to help figure out way forward, such as the National Performance Framework and the Construction Scotland Industry Strategy. Scott Bell also thanked Elliot Robertson for the Sustainable Economic Benefits paper that has been included in the accompanying pack. It was noted that there is currently not enough on table to develop plan and as such there is a need to collaboratively develop a shared understanding to facilitate this.	
7.3	Recognising the collaborative work between the SG and industry over last 18-24 months, it was proposed that initially, there will be a very small focus group, with the suggestion that this is comprised of three people from the public sector and a further three from industry. This would look at initially shaping the plan, leading eventually to a larger working group.	
7.4	It was stated that we are currently in restart for period of the SG's phase 2, with a want to take that time to develop a robust recovery across short, medium and long term, providing a strong pan-industry strategy, following on from current one.	
	The Minister invited questions	
7.5	Alan Wilson informed the group that the CICV Forum has established their own futures work sub group three months ago, led by Hew Edgar of RICS. The group has already done some good work in relation to the recovery strategy, which goes all the way down to the smallest business. As such, he advised that himself or Hew Edgar would be available to help.	

7.6	Elliot Robertson said that he was happy to support shaping the recovery plan going forward. He stated that he hoped ongoing COVID costs could be looked at, in regards to local authority funding challenges and asked if maybe there was scope for bringing in an element of bringing in private sector funding.	
7.7	The Minister asked that of any members encountered difficulties with local authority capital spend, then they should let him me know so he could address this. He added that he believed that this was something that LAs could overcome quickly and he was keen not to see risk adverse approaches going forward.	
7.8	Hector MacAulay, stated that whilst he was supportive of longer term goals, it was important that issues affecting the industry in the short term were not lost. He asked that consideration was given to the impact of last three months on industry and the immediate impact on productivity be included separately.	
7.9	The Minister agreed that this was an important point, but at the same time he was very keen to ensure that there are pipelines of work, moving forward. He was sure that more immediate concerns would not be lost sight of.	
7.10	Bruce Dickson stated that the damage done to the industry cannot be overestimated. He also added that legal claims are still there. He also noted that on new procurements there are wide range of approaches being taken on COVID-19, and was concerned that if cost becomes a bigger priority, then there may be a preference for lowest price, leading to all the associated issues. As such, he felt work that has taken place on sustainable procurement needs to be accelerated to get guidance out to contracting bodies.	
7.11	Scott Bell stated that overall, the SG recognises he near term issues, highlighting that the closing point in paper does not preclude short term considerations. He informed the group that the new Policy Notes, SPPN 8 and CPN 5 were extending earlier work to the end of September. He stated that he was keen to hear of any emerging issues, so that the SG could intervene with appropriate tools, policy notes, engagements, etc. He assured members that he took on board the points on the short term actions required.	
7.12	Peter Reekie offered SFT help with this, suggesting that there could perhaps be a short term meeting of the previously exiting workgroup on sustainable procurement.	
7.13	The Minister asked officials to keep him apprised on the recovery plan, as this would be useful in meetings with other Ministers so that the government can do whatever we can to make things as smooth as possible.	Action
7.14	Stephen Good noted that the Innovation Centre doesn't fit into SG or industry, but that they still have role and as such, he would be engaged. He asked if the small focus group proposed of six individuals would be a sub group of the CLF.	

7.15	Scott Bell stated that the initial group will eventually need to extend. The goal of the initial meeting was stated as being a meeting to get a grip on the issues.	
7.16	Elliot Robertson asked the Minister if he was aware of any financial support coming from the UK Government.	
7.17	The Minister advised that the SG was in discussions with the UK Government on this and the hope is that that UK Government will look at all of this and consider ending austerity. He said that it was the firm belief of SG that infrastructure spending could provide a boost to the economy.	
7.18	The Minister finished the item by saying that he felt that this was an extremely important piece of work as we move forward he suggested that if people were happy, he thought it was a good idea to be involved in the meetings in short term. Scott Bell agreed that he would pick this up with the Minister. He noted that all would will need to collaborate to large degree to get this right.	
7.19	Action: Officials to ensure Minister kept up to date on recovery plan, including being invited to any appropriate meetings.	SB
8	Data Working Group Update	
8.1	<p>Ron Fraser presented the update to the group. He reiterated that in its present form previous this was a 'virtual group' that is getting data from surveys, which had shown that;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homes for Scotland expect a drop from 6000 to 4000 homes delivered over the next 3 months, due to slower productivity levels and demand. The Federation of Master Builders were please to get back to work, but noted that their members we nowhere near capacity. The will be performing their own survey of members shortly and expected disappointing data on areas such as business confidence and expected workload to come out in the near future. CECA's priorities are pipeline, cash flow and the resolution of contractual issues. One of their members, regarding pipeline, had made an appeal to prioritise contracts and projects with a high labour, rather than material content. <p>In terms of looking at recovery, it was stated this group would need to be formalised into an actual working group. To achieve</p>	

	<p>this it would likely need lots of feed in across the piece, bringing in others such as SFT, Scottish Enterprise and the SG to help fill in gaps in understanding of scale and filling in any gaps in knowledge. To this end a paper will be produced.</p>	Action
8.2	<p>The Minister welcomed this approach, stating that conversation was good at capturing information in ways that surveys couldn't and this would put group on a firmer footing. He invited any comments or questions, but none were forthcoming.</p>	
8.5	<p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ron Fraser to produce paper on formalising the Data working group 	RF
9.	Skills Working Group Update	
9.1	<p>Elaine Ellis gave the update to the group noting that there are various working groups involved with skills and that work was progressing well. The key points were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regarding colleges there is now four practical groups working with Energy Skills Partnership (ESP) looking at the practical side of delivering the four main types of construction qualifications. • There is going to be a working group around supporting apprentice redundancies and helping get re-placed. • There is also a working group around what the future apprentice intake is likely to be and at various model around the delivery of this. • The trades test is moving well in terms of practical plans and getting the assurance of access to college at the earliest opportunity. • Regarding the Digital side, following on from the last meeting it seems that the issue may not necessarily be digital poverty, more about digital accessibility and responsibility. Apprentices have been put in touch with ScotlandIS, who are looking at various opportunities. • The working group have been looking at a group called CG's who manage IT for Borders and Glasgow, although this looks to be cost prohibitive as this is not something that SDS core funds. SDS's digital manager, will however speak to the group to speak around digital issues. • From a wider strategic picture the Skills and Enterprise Board are doing recommendations around a cross-sector 	

	response to COVID-19, which will go to Scottish Ministers at the end of June.	
	The Minister invited questions	
9.2	Steven Dillon commented that he was aware of lot of good work here to shape the future, which is essential to meet the skills gaps. He advised the group that, unfortunately, there are some sixty-five displaced apprentices, as of last week, which UNITE have scheduled a Zoom call on. The Fair Work Apprentice Co-ordinator has also been working with all partners.	
9.3	The Minister, noting the importance of apprentices, asked if he could join the call for a short while. It was agreed that as soon as a date was confirmed, Steven Dillon would contact the Minister's office regarding this.	Action
9.4	The Minister asked Elaine Ellis to expand on the difficulties she had mentioned around IT security.	
9.5	Elaine Ellis replied that this would need looking into as the issues were complex, sitting across the two SG directorates of Digital Economy and Fair Work.	
9.6	The Minister asked officials to investigate and resolve any barriers to stop this moving forward. He wondered if there may be some paranoia around IT restrictions within the SG, citing a recent pilot with homeless access to IT that had proved successful, which had not run into any similar issues.	
9.7	Alan Wilson commented that his sector was lucky to have charity whereby trustees are funding IT for 60 apprentices and that he was happy to assist, wherever possible.	
9.8	Elliott Robertson informed the group that his company has an academy with allocated money, but which has been scaled back in the short term, but which can provide learning through supply chain. He wondered if he was not aware of all available routes to address funding and perhaps some kind of wider collaboration regarding funding could be looked at.	
9.9	The Minister highlighted the need to keep young people in construction and asked if maybe other organisations are doing something similar and if there could be collaboration to bring resources together and connecting with the Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills and any other relevant areas of Government.	Action
9.10	Elaine Ellis noted that SDS have a lot a free training, including various generic courses. She noted that a collaborative project similar to that being proposed had been on the verge of funding, but this had all been paused.	
9.11	Stephen Good suggested that the iCon platform has online learning components which could be of use here.	

9.12	Elliot Robertson commented that his company had learning across every job function and that he was happy to see if those resources lined up with the proposed project.	
9.13	<p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steven Dillon to connect with Minister's office over availability to participate in apprentice call. • Officials to investigate and look at ways to overcome any issues regarding digital accessibility and responsibility relating to IT for apprentices. Will involve both Digital Economy and Fair Work colleagues. 	<p>SD</p> <p>Jane Duffy</p>
10.	Open Discussion	
10.1	Steven Dillon raised the point that there was an issue with construction and maintenance work, involving workers going into people's houses that was not covered in the SOP. He felt that there was a lack of guidance around this, suggesting that this was a particular problem with Arm's Length External Organisations (ALEOs) working for local authorities.	
10.2	The Minister responded that he was aware of some issues around this and asked Steven Dillon to feed in information of where these difficulties are occurring, so that the SG can see what is required in providing advice. He added that in all of this there needs to be sensitive to people's fears of having people enter their houses and that perhaps input could be sought from Alan Wilson's members on this. The Minister also noted that there had been guidance produced by the Social Housing Resilience Group on this and that there was a need to get the most up to date picture on this and ensure that guidance was being disseminated amongst all relevant parties, particularly in the case of local authorities and those working for them.	<p>Action</p> <p>Action</p>
10.3	Regarding the proposed cards containing QR Codes linking to the SG's return to work guidance, Dermot Rhatigan advised the Minister that work was progressing with colleagues around the route map and that one of the most valuable ways of getting out information is through the First Minister's Briefings.	
10.4	The Minister agreed that this was a good way to get information out, but that he still wanted the card process to progress.	Action
10.5	Alan Wilson noted that the CICV forum had introduced guidance on domestic working, including an animation. He noted that he was in regular dialog with the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA) in terms of cascading the information, but had not had much success with local authorities and so would be happy to be involved.	

10.6	The Minister stated that he wanted to make sure that all of the relevant guidance was being disseminated and that any issues, or barriers to this are addressed.	
10.7	Scott Bell informed the Minister that he would be in touch with both Alan Wilson and Ron Fraser about links to information produced by the CICV group and SOP group respectively and that he would follow up with Mark Turley to make sure that local authorities are disseminating guidance to those working in domestic properties.	Action
10.8	<p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steven Dillon to feed in to officials difficulties with people going into people's houses to carry out maintenance work etc., to see what assistance can be provided. • Officials to ensure that guidance on domestic working is being communicated to relevant parties. • Officials to follow up on cards with QR code links to return to work guidance. • SOP group and CICV forum to ensure that information they have produced is also getting to those working in a domestic setting. 	SD MT JD RF/AW
	Any other Business	
11.1	As there was no other business, the Minister thanked all of the group for their participation.	
	Date of Next Meeting	
12.1	The next meeting will be on 30 June 2020 at 09:00. Details will be circulated prior to the meeting,	