Ideas for the Programme for Government

THE IRISH ACADEMY OF ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY

MARCH 2020
Introduction

This document is being sent by the Academy to all the principal participants in the discussions and negotiations on government formation.

The document contains selected observations and ideas on a range of issues. It does not seek to be nor is it a comprehensive review. Its purpose is to stimulate and inform discussion and debate and to support optimised policy selection in government formation discussions.

The Academy would be very pleased to elaborate on any aspect of the material contained herein. The information is presented under three broad headings and represents selected output from the Academy’s three main standing committees:

1. Climate Action and the Environment
2. Transportation and Housing
3. Innovation, Enterprise and Education.

The Academy is an independent think tank whose membership comprises many of the most experienced and distinguished engineers and technologists in Ireland. The Fellows provide of their time on a pro bono basis with the goal of advancing the wellbeing of the country. It is in that spirit that the attached ideas are presented to elected representatives of all backgrounds.

For further information on the Irish Academy of Engineering and Technology, its membership and publications please visit our website [www.iae.ie](http://www.iae.ie).

The Academy may be contacted at academy@iae.ie.

Dr. Jimmie Browne
President

Dr. Gabriel Dennison
Chief Executive
Contents

1. Climate Action and Environment  
   Prospects for achieving the agreed EU Targets  
   Financial Implications

2. Transportation and Housing  
   The Greater Dublin Area – Review of Existing Medium-Term Projects  
   The Greater Dublin Area – Suggested Short Term Opportunity Project  
   Atlantic Corridor Cities – Ideas for Improved Connectivity  
   Conclusions

3. Enterprise, Innovation and Education  
   The Premise  
   Critique  
   Suggested Actions  
   Specifics  
   Construction, Engineering and Technology Skills
The Irish government declared a “Climate Emergency” in May 2019 and issued an ambitious National Climate Action Plan the following month. Irish policy and plans are driven by EU Targets centred on reducing carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions by 2030 and to be “carbon neutral” by 2050. The Academy is of the view that the primary focus of policy should be on achieving the agreed EU 2030 targets. The main target is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by approximately 25% between 2020 and 2030 i.e. from 60m tonnes p.a. to 45m tonnes p.a. As it typically takes 10 years to successfully implement and see a return on policies of this nature, the plans, targets and proposed actions have to be decided in 2020. Longer term targets will depend on progress between now and 2030 and the emergence of new technologies.

To meet the 2030 emission targets the Academy believes that all sectors of the economy will have to make significant contributions to reducing or offsetting emissions and pollution.

Prospects for achieving the agreed EU Targets

1. Electricity
   - Covered by the EU Energy Trading Scheme (ETS).
   - Ireland is on track to meet the EU Targets with the planned closure of peat and coal plants.
   - However, the continued and rapid growth in the number of data centres could impact negatively on the achievement of the target.

2. Agriculture
   - The largest single source of emissions in Ireland (34%).
   - 3 times the European average (c.10%) and growing.
   - Ammonia emissions are also growing.
   - Reductions are essential but will be challenging to achieve.
   - A “just transition” mechanism will be necessary to support change.

3. Transportation
   - Emissions track economic growth.
   - A significant switch to public transport and more fuel-efficient, low emission vehicles (e.g. electric/hybrid) is essential.
   - Provision of fast charging infrastructure to accommodate 1 m EVs by 2030 - slow progress to date.
   - See specific proposals relating to the Greater Dublin Area in following section.
4. Heating of buildings
- Good progress already made in this sector.
- Although potentially considerable, retrofitting is very capital intensive with long payback times.
- Innovative funding models should be considered to accelerate progress.
- All new build should be passive standard.

5. Forestry
- A fundamental change in planting and harvesting policy is required if forestry is to become a “carbon sink”.

6. Re-wetting/wilding of cutover bogs and other lands
- Major tracts of State-owned cutaway industrial bog (possibly augmented by additional Coillte lands) can be readily transformed from carbon emitters to carbon sinks with a modest level of capital investment.
- The opportunity to enhance biodiversity and promote ‘green tourism’ means this should be a priority area and early action is warranted.

7. Energy Efficiency
- The most cost-effective way to reduce emissions is to reduce energy consumption.
- Significant potential in all sectors unrealised due to absence of overarching vision and plan, with supporting promotion, incentives and investment.

8. Disposal and management of waste
- Good progress has been achieved to date
- Urgent need for a clear future policy, e.g. elimination of single-use plastics and enhanced recovery and recycling of all materials using financial incentives as necessary (deposit/refund).

With the exception of the ETS sector (electricity and heavy industry), at this stage it is difficult to envisage Ireland meeting its 2030 targets.

A range of proposals have been published but comprehensive policies are not in place, e.g. in relation to public transport, agriculture, cutover bogs and waste.

Financial Implications
Addressing climate change requires massive investment. EU President von der Leyen recently announced a one trillion Euro budget to meet 2050 targets.
To meet the targets contained within the Irish National Climate Action Plan, the Academy estimates that in excess of €50 billion will need to be expended over the next 10 years (see below). This is equivalent to about 2.5% of Irish GNI* over the period – a not untypical level of investment by international norms.
While investment will come from both public and private sectors, the bulk of the risk and the added costs will likely be borne by the exchequer (taxpayers) and consumers.
Current policy envisages a phased increase in the carbon tax to €80 per tonne by 2030 – the probable impact of this is queried and the likelihood is that a much more rapid rate of increase, to at least €100 per tonne, will be required to effect the necessary change in behaviour and drive carbon intensive technologies out of the system.
The main components of the required investment are set out below in Table 1 in the form of best estimates based on current knowledge.
These are the estimated incremental costs of meeting the agreed emission targets and dealing with climate change adaptation measures.

Table 1: Estimated Cost of Meeting 2030 Emissions Targets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Cost Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Electricity, Networks, Heavy Industry</td>
<td>€20 bn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Transportation</td>
<td>€5 bn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Insulation of Buildings</td>
<td>€8 bn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Energy efficiency programmes</td>
<td>€4 bn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Agriculture and Forestry</td>
<td>€4 bn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Electric vehicles programme</td>
<td>€3 bn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Misc. infrastructure¹</td>
<td>€10 bn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Write down of assets²</td>
<td>€2 bn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>€56 bn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ including water supply and wastewater treatment, security, roads, flooding protection measures, waste and bio-fuels
² e.g. modern gas fired power plants.
2 Transportation and Housing

- Many parts the country, notably, but not exclusively, Dublin, are suffering from an acute housing crisis and chronic traffic congestion.
- Both problems are driven by unprecedented population growth. The Irish national population has grown by nearly 50% over the past 30 years - no other country in Europe has experienced this rate of population growth.
- The present total is probably about 5.0m.
- Population increase drives demand for housing, and this is compounded by ongoing social change as the average household size has fallen considerably in recent decades – though it is still larger than in England.
- In 1990 there were one million registered vehicles on Irish roads. Whereas in 2019 the number of registered vehicles is likely to exceed 2.75 million.
- Apart from congestion, growth in vehicle numbers has led to a very significant increase in transport related greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Ireland since 1990, thus compounding the problem of meeting our EU mandated GHG reduction targets.
- While the Greater Dublin Area has experienced the greatest problems with respect to housing affordability and transportation bottlenecks, every major urban area in the State has similar difficulties.
- The Academy believes the longer-term solution to both these problems lies in adopting an integrated approach to Land Use and Transportation planning. The Ireland 2040 Plan will gradually bring about improvements to the situation, if properly implemented.

In the meantime, more immediate solutions are required to address current acute problems, particularly in the Greater Dublin Area. Some of the Academy’s ideas in this regard are highlighted below.

- The Ireland 2040 Plan embraces many of the key recommendations arising from the Academy’s work on its “Atlantic Cities” project – a plan to balance the population growth of Dublin with that of Galway, Limerick, Waterford and Cork in the period to 2040. See below and here.
A number of important solutions have been proposed to date for the Greater Dublin region that will provide additional capacity in the medium to longer term. These are outlined below.

**Multipoint Tolling on the M50**
- There is no further potential to expand capacity on the M50 between the junctions serving the M1 and the N81.
- Projected growth in population and employment will continue to add to the Mean Annual Daily Traffic.
- This problem will be compounded by the plan announced by Dublin Port Company, to almost double unified freight throughput by 2040, and the Dublin Airport Authority’s plan to increase passenger throughput to 55m by 2040.
- This solution may raise revenue but will not necessarily provide a solution to the problem.

**MetroLink**
- The Irish Academy of Engineering (IAE) has been to the fore in advocating for a medium capacity metro service, from Swords to Sandyford, approximate capacity, 20,000 passengers/hour/direction.
- The revised proposals of the NTA on this subject do not satisfy this requirement as they do not envisage a continuous metro service from Swords to Sandyford.
- The full delivery of this project can not be delivered within a ten-year timeframe in the view of the Academy.
- The NTAs current proposal also fails to address the issue that the Green Line is currently operating at peak time capacity and that this problem will be compounded by planned development at Cherrywood.
- These problems could potentially be resolved, and at substantially lower cost than would be incurred with the present NTA proposal, through the adoption of the detailed proposals put forward by the IAE in its submission in relation to MetroLink.
- The IAE proposals would also result in improved integration with other modes of transport and provide for much better opportunities for integrated housing and transport planning.
DART Interconnector

- Dublin’s heavy rail commuter capacity is currently restricted by the fact that all commuter services, save Kildare line services to Heuston and M3 Parkway services to the Docklands, pass through Connolly. The network is now operating at capacity.

- The problem is compounded by the fact that the Northern, Maynooth and recently developed services to Newbridge, via the Phoenix Park tunnel, meet at flat rather than grade separated junctions, north of Connolly.

- This results in considerable timetable complexity and requires that significant slack, i.e. delays, is built into the timetabling of each service, to allow for exigencies, thus adding to commuter travel times.

- In the early 2000s the DART Interconnector proposal was put forward to resolve these problems, and to improve the connection between mainline services from Heuston, the commuter network and the city centre.

- This was an elegant solution to the problem, but like MetroLink it is both very capital intensive and the railway order obtained to enable it has lapsed.

- Completion of this important project would again probably take in excess of 10 years, even if funding was available.

BusConnects

- The NTA’s BusConnects proposal envisages the development of 12 core bus routes through the city to substantially increase bus passenger capacity and reduce travel times, while also providing dedicated cycle lanes.

- The requirement to cut down many roadside trees and acquire portions of front gardens has raised considerable controversy and much opposition.

- The requirement to widen roads and relocate footpath also creates considerable engineering problems, as many services are buried under existing footpaths, to facilitate access.

- The relocation of services is feasible, but experience in developing the Luas network indicates that it is complex, slow and costly, particularly on the scale required to deliver BusConnects as proposed.

- There is considerable uncertainty about when elements of this proposal could be delivered. It should also be borne in mind that in the 170 years since the ‘Wide Streets Commission’ was dissolved, only three streets between the canals have been widened.

Conclusions

There is substantial uncertainty as to whether the above medium-term proposals can deliver significant improvement for the Region over a 5-7-year horizon. However, the manner in which the Docklands area has developed in the past 15 years provides new opportunities for delivering some cost-effective solutions in a timely manner. We call these “short term opportunity projects” and we believe they could provide a real boost to solving the Region’s problems.
THE GREATER DUBLIN AREA

Suggested Short Term Opportunity Projects

Expand Commuter Services to Dockland Station

The Docklands area now provides employment for 40,000 people, primarily in the high tech, financial, accounting and legal services areas - this is likely to exceed 50,000 people when the development of this area is completed in the near future. An initial approach to developing rail commuter services to this area was taken with the opening of Docklands Station in 2007, with limited services to the M3 Parkway, north of Dunboyne in Co. Meath.

Conditions are now ripe for a full-blown development of commuter services to the Docklands. The Academy believes that much can be achieved in a relatively short period of time by imaginatively “sweating” the existing transportation assets of the region.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS

- Rerouting expanded Maynooth and M3 Parkway services along the Great Western Railway line to the Docklands.
- Rerouting expanded Kildare line commuter services through the Phoenix Park tunnel and along the Great Southern Railway line to Docklands.
- Extending Docklands Station.

These developments, coupled with other upgrade work already mentioned, could provide commuter capacity of up to 15,000 passengers per hour on the western lines from Maynooth/M3 Parkway. A similar level of commuter capacity could be delivered on the Kildare line, from Hazelhatch near Celbridge, to Heuston/Docklands, again providing additional upgrade works are undertaken.

These relatively easily achieved changes would make a major contribution to reducing traffic congestion, carbon emissions and commuter travel times, while also providing access to more affordable housing.

The rerouting of Kildare and Maynooth line commuter services to the Docklands would allow an expansion of Northern line commuter services by eliminating the current capacity constraint through Connolly. It would also facilitate a reduction in travel times on all commuter routes.

The contribution that the suggested developments could make to facilitate the future development of large-scale housing developments, close to the city centre, is examined below.

Housing for a population of 25,000 to 30,000 in the Broombridge/Glasnevin area

Expanded commuter services, as outlined in the previous section, coupled with Dublin City Council’s decision to rezone several major industrial zoned areas for housing provide a great opportunity for integrated land use and transport planning.

This is particularly true in the Broombridge/Glasnevin area. Several contiguous industrial estates in the area have been rezoned. At present these estates contain a large number of primarily distribution companies, generally housed in single-storey industrial units. These could potentially be relocated to the State-owned, fully serviced, 60-hectare Thornton Hall site, which is only 10-15 minutes away on the M2.

The 55-hectare site at Broombridge could then be re-developed for housing along the lines proposed by the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland (RIAI). The site has the potential to house 25,000-30,000 persons with excellent transport connections, provided by an upgraded western line rail service at Broombridge Station, Luas Cross City, which has its terminus at the same location, and the Royal Canal cycleway. The site also benefits from the location of Tolka Valley Park, which extends right along the northern boundary of the site.
Housing for a population of 100,000+ to the west of the city

The main rail line out of Heuston Station also serves as a commuter route for rapidly growing areas in the West County, Kildare and Laois.

A section of the route from Cherry Orchard to beyond Hazelhatch Station was 4 tracked, before the property crash, to cater for planned housing developments at Fonthill Rd Clondalkin, Kishoge/Clonburris and Adamstown. Development in these areas halted with the crash and is only now resuming.

More recently, encouraged by the NTA, the Phoenix Park Tunnel route from Newbridge to Connolly and Grand Canal Dock was developed for passenger services.

The potential to fully develop commuter services from Kildare and substantially expand housing development to the west of the city is currently limited by the fact that the line from Heuston Station to Cherry Orchard is a mixture of twin and three tracks. At present there are no stations on this line section.

To fully develop commuter services on this line requires a series of measures. These are outlined below.

**SUGGESTED ACTIONS**

- Complete the 4 tracking on the Kildare line, from Islandbridge Junction to Cherry Orchard, a distance of 3.5 kilometres.
- Re-direct the Kildare line commuter services through the Phoenix Park Tunnel from Grand Canal Dock to the Docklands, providing a much expanded and faster commuter service on the Kildare line to Docklands, using the Great Southern and Western line.
- Develop a major park and ride facility off the R120 at Kishoge Station.
- Extend the 4 tracking from Hazelhatch to Sallins/Naas at a future date.

These works would provide very significant opportunities for integrated housing and transportation planning in the short term.

A very extensive area of industrially zoned land, extending to c.125 hectare, immediately to the south of the rail line from Inchicore to Park West, has also been rezoned to permit housing. Around 25 hectares of this land contains the Inchicore train maintenance works and stabling sidings, Iarnród Éireann and CIÉ are in discussions with the Land Development Agency (LDA) about relocating these facilities.

Much of the remaining land contains relatively old industrial buildings.

All of the land is located between the rail line and the Grand Canal with road access into the area is consequently restricted.

The 4 tracking of this line section would also provide the opportunity to develop new commuter stations, perhaps at Kylemore Road and at the Inchicore site. These could then sustainably service, and indeed encourage, a very large-scale residential development on these previously zoned industrially lands.

The above developments would also open up other opportunities for sustainable housing development. The area along each side of the Naas Rd, from Bluebell to the M50, is primarily occupied by vehicle importers, with large surface vehicle parks. This activity would be much better located outside the city, with a number of distributors are already doing so.

The Luas Red Line bisects this area but is presently capacity constrained because of its route through the city. However, more frequent and longer trams could be operated from Tallaght and Saggart to Inchicore, if a 1 km long spur extension was provided into a redeveloped Inchicore site - to provide connection to a frequent Kildare line commuter service to the Docklands.
Atlantic Corridor Cities – Ideas for Improved Connectivity

As noted above the Academy has published extensively on the subject of the “Atlantic Cities” and coined the term to cover the four cities of Galway, Limerick, Cork and Waterford – see our website and reference above.

These cities are too small on their own to compete economically on an individual basis with the Greater Dublin Area, but with improved connectivity, good planning and enough investment they have sufficient aggregate population – 1.4 million as compared with 2.1 million in the Greater Dublin Area - to offer a competitive alternative to a capital region that threatens to become damagingly over-developed.

For the alternative option to fully emerge there will have to be relatively short travel times between the four population centres. In particular, one-hour travel times are required between Galway and Limerick, Limerick and Cork. This cannot be achieved by rail travel – due to the existing rail alignment and the fact that there is only a single-track line from Limerick Junction to Galway.

It can however be delivered by road transport provided developments already planned are completed in a timely manner - particularly the Galway bypass and a motorway connection from Limerick to Cork.

A Limerick-Cork motorway will not function satisfactorily unless it is provided with direct access to the soon-to-be free-flow interchange at Dunkettle. The earlier, now abandoned, M20 plan, did not provide for such a connection.

The required motorway connectivity between Cork and Limerick can be delivered by either of the routes indicated in the following graphic.

A motorway on the alignment of the existing N20, incorporating a portion of the proposed Cork North Ring Road, has an estimated cost of €1,100 million. In comparison, an alternative route from the M8 at Mitchelstown could be delivered at a cost of less than €500 million and in a substantially shorter timeframe.

The adoption of the lower cost solution is significantly aided by the decision of the Port of Cork to relocate its Lo-Lo operations from Tivoli to Ringaskiddy.

In common with all of Ireland’s cities, Cork suffers from serious congestion problems. These difficulties will be partially alleviated by the provision of freeflow conditions at the Dunkettle interchange (now under construction).

A key objective should be to reduce the number of cars entering the city. One relatively straightforward way of doing this would be by developing the Cork-Mallow rail line for commuter services.
Conclusions

1. Feasible and practicable engineering solutions exist to provide commuter capacity of up to 30,000 passengers per hour to Heuston and Docklands Stations – 15,000 passengers per hour on the western lines from Maynooth/M3 Parkway and a similar number on the Kildare line, from Hazelhatch near Celbridge, to Heuston/Docklands. This compares with peak hour one-way vehicle flows on the N3 at Blanchardstown of less than 3,750 vehicles/hour, and less than 5,000 vehicles/hour on the N4 at Palmerston and the N7 at Newlands Cross.

2. There is potential to develop housing for a population of up to 150,000 in the Greater Dublin Area in locations that are, or could be, well served by commuter rail and Luas services. Housing for 25,000 to 30,000 could be developed in an area close to Broombridge Station. Housing for over 100,000 could be developed in west Dublin along with enhanced rail services to Heuston and Docklands.

3. The Academy believes the necessary rail developments to achieve these goals can be delivered in a shorter timeframe and at lower cost than Bus Connects and MetroLink.

4. In view of the urgent need to tackle Ireland’s housing and transport problems, it is recommended that the proposals presented in this paper are considered for inclusion in the new government’s programme of work.

5. Infrastructural investment must be balanced between the Greater Dublin Area and the Atlantic Cities in order to ensure the settlement objectives of the Ireland 2040 Plan are achieved.

The Academy has published extensively in recent years on matters relating to infrastructure, land use and settlement. Suggested titles that are relevant in the present context include:

- Atlantic Cities Regions
- Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor
- Sustainable Transport 2035
- Brexit – Implications for Transport Infrastructure Investment
- Spatial Planning and Infrastructure.

These and all reports published by the Academy are available free to consult or download at www.iae.ie.
The Premise

The opportunities and the challenges facing the Irish economy are complex, urgent and require a commitment to developing and implementing long-term strategies. Brexit, potential trade wars, the policies of the current US Administration and the OECD’s focus on BEPS (base erosion and profit shifting) all create uncertainty and will challenge the existing model of enterprise development.

To survive and thrive in these uncertain times, we need to ensure that we continue to attract and retain FDI companies while improving the value-add and export performance of Ireland’s indigenous companies. Ireland’s economy is small and open with a relatively high cost base. Therefore, the nation’s ability to provide well-paid jobs and good-quality public services, in an increasingly competitive globalised world, relies on our ability to sell our goods and services at a premium abroad.

Critique

The Irish enterprise base is overly concentrated. We rely on a small number of companies to deliver performance on productivity, exports and tax. To minimise vulnerability, we must increase the contribution from the indigenous sector of the economy while increasing the resilience and sustainability of the FDI sector. Innovation has a key role to play.

Over the past decade much progress has been made to improve Ireland as a location for innovative businesses. Ireland consistently ranks above the EU average on the EU Innovation Union Scorecard. Ireland is still however ranked as an ‘Innovation Follower’.

We must now chart a course to becoming an ‘Innovation Leader’.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS

The Irish Academy of Engineering believes that we must urgently act to improve the entire innovation landscape by embracing:

- Start-ups and the creation of new innovative indigenous companies.
- Scaling and expanding the global reach of Irish SMEs.
- Retaining and maintaining large Irish companies and FDI.
Specifics

The specific suggestions outlined below are based on the output of a discussion forum held in Dublin Castle in November 2019, hosted by the Academy, and focussed on the subject of “Innovating for Growth”.
See selected presentations from the seminar at the Academy website www.iae.ie.
The Academy published a discussion paper on the same subject in July 2019 – see here.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Suggested Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talent</td>
<td>Government should respond to the Report of the Expert Group on Future Funding for Higher Education and adopt an appropriate funding solution to ensure a supply of talent to position Ireland as an innovation leader.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R&amp;D</td>
<td>Government should use the current buoyancy in corporation tax to invest in the future by narrowing the R&amp;D investment gap between Ireland and the global Innovation leaders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start-ups</td>
<td>Government must act to improve the tax regime to promote entrepreneurship and investment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| SMEs          |Government should move to set up a pilot Research & Technology Organisation (RTO) to assist Irish owned companies engage with external R&D.  
Government should reestablish the Management Development Council and review and revise the Key Employment Engagement Programme (KEEP) to encourage employee mobility from Large Companies to SMEs. |
| Large Companies/ FDI | Government should examine and amend the Knowledge Development Box scheme to promote increased business expenditure on R&D.  
Government should establish a globally significant challenge-centric programme that attracts significant business expenditure on research and development. |

Construction, Engineering and Technology Skills

The Academy has been keenly aware of the need to maintain an ongoing oversight of Ireland’s engineering skills needs – professional and trades – for many years. In conjunction with Engineers Ireland, the Academy published “Engineering a Knowledge Island” in 2005 (available on the website).

It was intended that this seminal study be updated on an annual basis, but due to budgetary constraints, the practice was discontinued in 2008.
The loss of insights and associated forward planning resulting from this lapse are all too evident in the current marketplace, where the shortage of engineering-related skills at all levels presents a serious obstacle to our economic and social wellbeing on multiple fronts.
There is clearly a pressing need now for up-to-date information on all aspects of our skills requirements in the engineering, construction and technology fields.
Recently the Academy has been in liaison with the IDA and the Department of Education and Skills regarding the urgent need for an update on the 2005 study.
Many construction-related organisations have highlighted the “skills crisis” that has overtaken the construction industry in the wake of the downturn following 2007/2008. There is now a wholesale shortage of all trades particularly so-called “wet trades”, such as bricklaying and plastering.
In the absence of adequate numbers of skilled tradespeople infrastructural and housing construction goals simply cannot be achieved.
We note and welcome the recent decision of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs to undertake a study on the demand and nature of the Irish Construction sector’s skills needs in the period to 2030. The study will apparently be, “Framed by national strategies such as the Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness, Project Ireland 2040, and the built environment elements of the Climate Action Plan” and is scheduled to be completed by mid 2020.
The Academy anticipates the study will recommend major changes in order to stimulate recruitment and suggests that addressing the current shortage of key construction trades and skills should be a key priority for the incoming government.