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News

Parlon criticises lack of urgency

Genevieve Carbery

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expressed by some organisations yesterday.

; billion capital investment programme will be implemented was

Thousands of construction jobs would be lost before any work began on new stimulus package projects, the Construction Industry Federation said yesterday.

More than 13,000 jobs would be lost in construction by the time projects began, the same number of jobs the Government had pledged to create with the investment package, the federation said.

There was “little sense of urgency” in the Government’s announcement, which had “vague” timelines, the federation’s director general Tom Parlon said yesterday. While the construction sector had been “crying out for greater capital investment”, it would not see any real progress for 18 months to two years.

The Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed said it was critical that the stimulus plan moved in a timely manner from announcement to implementation

The public-private partnership aspect of the plan was welcomed by business groups.

The Irish Business and Employers Confederation (Ibec) said the announcement of infrastructure funding was “an important first step in helping to restore domestic demand in the Irish economy”.

The importance of public-private partnerships in the package was a real vote of confidence and highlighted the “significant improvement in how international investors see Ireland’s growth prospects”, it said.

Bank of Ireland also welcomed the use of private sector funding and the public-private partnership model for projects.

The bank said it was working with bidders and the European Investment Bank on a number of pipeline public-private partnership projects.

The go-ahead for a new centralised Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) at the old Grangegorman hospital site was widely welcomed

Dublin Chamber of Commerce welcomed the investment, saying it would strengthen Dublin’s brand as a global centre for higher education.

The project had the potential to “dramatically change the face of Dublin 7 and the north side of the city”, said Fine Gael Dublin Central TD Paschal Donohoe. He said the Grangegorman project would bring 11,000 students to the north side by 2017.

DIT Student Union and the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) were “delighted” with yesterday’s announcement of funding for which they had campaigned. USI said it was not only a victory for DIT, but a “victory for Irish third-level education”.

The Teachers Union of Ireland, although welcoming the provision of funding for the new DIT campus, warned that a cut in lecturer numbers at a time of a stark rise in student numbers was damaging to the sector.

Other groups were critical of the sectors overlooked by the capital investment programme.

The stimulus plan should have included an agriculture stimulus plan, the Irish Farmers Association said. There was a “contradiction” that the Government could find the money for these projects when funding for farm schemes was being “severely cut”, said association president John Bryan.

Homeless charity Focus Ireland criticised the Government for failing to include any social housing provision in the stimulus package. Friends of the Irish Environment criticised the investment in roads. Investments such as insulating houses and building sewage treatment plants would be more labour intensive and reduce pollution.

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