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Construction industry calls on government to resist 'stop-go' investment policy

The construction industry has called on the Government to maintain its public sector improvement programme and not to revert to the old 'stop-go' investment plans of the past.

The plea came at a Labour Party Conference fringe meeting organised by the construction industry umbrella bodies – the Construction Industry Council (CIC), Construction Confederation (CC) and Construction Products Association. The meeting's theme was *Working Together to Deliver Better Public Services*.

CC chairman Trevor Walker said the construction industry was key to the government's commitment to provide improved public services and stressed that sustained investment and consistency was vital to the programme's delivery.

He said: "We need a commitment that funds intended for capital expenditure will not be diverted elsewhere. The decision earlier this year to raid school capital maintenance budgets to fund the crisis in revenue funding must not be repeated."

"Government policy on infrastructure has to take the form of a long-term framework for investment and renewal. This provides firms with stability of workload enabling them to invest in and gear up their operations to meet demand and deliver to the Government's agenda.

"Our industry is investing in its people – in health and safety, in recruitment and training, in improved processes, plant and machinery – all of which helps us to achieve increased productivity and Best Value in the Government's public services improvement programme."

Mr Walker said that industry was capable of helping the government get back on track in areas where it was already behind in meeting its own targets, as highlighted in the Construction Products Association's third annual report '*Achievable Targets? Is Government Delivering?*'.

He also urged the Government, which is responsible for more than 40% of the construction work carried out in the UK, to use its influence as a major client, saying: “Make Best Value your criteria, encourage Best Practice in our industry, reward responsible health and safety regimes and help us to drive out those who cut corners.”

“Together we can provide the people of this country with the world-class public services they want and deserve – and which this Labour government has promised them.”

Construction Minister Nigel Griffiths re-affirmed the Government’s commitment to its investment programme and backed the use of the Private Finance Initiative as a means of achieving public service delivery.

The meeting, chaired by Construction Products Association president Roy Harrison, included a lively discussion session where speakers Nigel Griffiths and Trevor Walker were joined by CIC chief executive Graham Watts and UCATT general secretary George Brumwell to answer questions on a wide range of related topics.

Notes:

1. CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY COUNCIL

The Construction Industry Council occupies a unique role within the UK construction industry. Its members represent over 500,000 professionals working for, and in association with, the construction industry and more than 25,000 construction firms. It is the representative forum for the industry’s professional bodies, research organisations and specialist trade associations.

www.cic.org.uk

2. CONSTRUCTION PRODUCTS ASSOCIATION

The Construction Products Association represents over 2000 of the UK’s manufacturers and suppliers of construction products, components and fittings. The Association acts as the voice of the construction products sector, representing the industry-wide view of its members. The sector has an annual turnover of £30 billion and accounts for 40% of total construction output.

www.constprod.org.uk

3. CONSTRUCTION CONFEDERATION

The Construction Confederation is the main representative organisation for building and civil engineering contractors within the UK construction industry, one of the largest and most diverse sectors within the British economy. The Confederation represents over 5,000 companies who between them carry out over 75% of the total turnover of the industry.

www.theCC.org.uk

4. FURTHER INFORMATION:

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