

# PRESS RELEASE

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## DTI ignores construction in composition of new Technology Strategy Board

The Construction Industry Council has strongly criticised the lack of any construction or built environment knowledge or expertise amongst the membership of the Technology Strategy Board, which has been recently announced by the Department of Trade and Industry.

Members of the Board comprises senior people from the IT, automotive, pharmaceutical, manufacturing and telecommunications industries, together with an academic.

Speaking about the Board's composition, the CIC Chief Executive, Graham Watts said:

"The construction industry is fundamental to the UK Economy. It employs 2 million people and provides infrastructure, facilities and buildings for every other industry. Although it is one of the largest industries, accounting for 10% of GDP, it is unlike any other. The largest construction firm has less than 3% of the overall market which comprises hundreds of thousands of small businesses.

Construction has driven 20% of UK GDP growth in the past year and over one third of net job creation in the past two years<sup>2</sup>. For this reason, the industry needs a central Research, Innovation and Technology Strategy and, as its biggest client, the Government has a huge stake in gaining from the benefits of improved technology to create and construct our built environment.

However, since 2001, the Government has progressively eroded its sponsorship of the construction industry to the effect that the industry no longer has a strong voice within Whitehall and it has withdrawn over £23m of specific annual R&I pump-priming funding (which certainly levered a further £30/£40m of industry support) without any specific policy decision to do so. Now, the most important body to determine the future direction of Technology Strategy in the DTI completely overlooks the industry that is most vital to achieving the Government's policies in health, education, transport, housing and in so many other areas.

Although, I hope to be proved wrong, I suspect that this will mean that the research funding being delivered by the DTI, on the advice of this Board, will inevitably point towards the automotive, IT, pharmaceutical, manufacturing and telecommunications industries and is likely to continue to have little relevance to construction."

**Ends**



## Notes to the editor

1. CIC is the representative forum for the professional bodies, research organisations and specialist trade associations in the construction industry. It provides a single voice for professionals in all sectors of the built environment through its collective membership of 500,000 individual professionals and 25,000 firms of construction consultants.
2. Source, Centre for Economics and Business Research Ltd (CEBR) Monthly Economic Bulletin.

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