

Wednesday 03 December 2014

Construction Products Association Welcomes Focus on Infrastructure

Responding to the Autumn Statement, Dr Diana Montgomery, Chief Executive of the Construction Products Association, said: “The most important element of the Statement for the construction industry was ‘National Infrastructure Plan 2014’. Construction is an enabler of UK economic growth, and that is never more evident than in the delivery of the new infrastructure the country needs for the 21st century.

“Taken together, with the handful of marginal but welcomed additional measures in the Autumn Statement itself, we are optimistic that the government’s actions this week will improve the construction industry’s recovery, increase our members’ confidence and strengthen the case to invest in the UK.

“We were encouraged by the announcements of a £15 billion Road Investment Strategy. The road-building plan is the largest in a generation, but key to this ambition is delivery of projects and the need for government to set-up the Highways Agency with ring-fenced funding. This will help provide the market with the certainty it requires.

“The updated National Infrastructure Plan is beginning to provide the project detail we’ve been calling for, including the start, completion dates and progress reports. While there is little new money involved across the pipeline of works, the greater clarity now given will increase the likelihood that projects progress from simple announcements to genuine activity on the ground.

“The additional measures announced today,” Dr Montgomery continued, “will, in a small way, support the industry. Changes to stamp duty should boost the housing market, which had been slowing recently. Abolishing employer’s National Insurance for firms taking on apprentices acknowledges the need to develop a new generation of skilled young people across all sectors, although it should be noted that often apprentices in construction and manufacturing are above the 25 years old threshold.

“The funding for lending extension will benefit our SMEs, as will the increased research and development tax credit for small firms. We’re also keen to learn more of the funding directed to manufacturing research. Finally, we note the £45m package to help SMEs export to fast growing emerging economies in Africa, Asia and South America; however, we feel that the lack of support for existing exporters to expand into closer linked markets is a missed opportunity.”

Dr Montgomery concluded, “We are pleased to see that the government recognises the value of infrastructure, and so has prioritised projects of national significance. It is essential that announcements are matched with delivery if UK economic growth is to be sustained long-term.”

ENDS

NOTE TO EDITORS:

CONSTRUCTION PRODUCTS ASSOCIATION:

The [Construction Products Association](#) represents the UK’s manufacturers and suppliers of construction products, components and fittings. The Association acts as a single voice for the construction products sector, representing the industry-wide view of its members. The sector has an annual turnover of more than £40 billion and accounts for over 1/3 of total construction output.

The Construction Trade Survey is one of a range of economic publications produced by the Association, including the Construction Industry Forecasts and the State of Trade Survey. These reports are available to Association members and interested parties via our website.

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