



Chris McDonald MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary, Department for Business and Trade

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Dear Ministers,

As leaders across construction and the built environment, we are writing together to welcome the Government's commitment to ensuring public investment delivers lasting value for communities, local economies and the national infrastructure pipeline. We welcomed your consultation this summer on how social value can be delivered most effectively through public procurement. We see a particular opportunity for this to make a significant impact in construction and the built environment and are writing to urge you to implement these proposals at pace.

Our organisations collectively represent and employ tens of thousands of skilled trade professionals across Engineering and Building Services, the largest built environment subsector employing over 433,900 workers, 28% of the built environment workforce¹, and 51% of all built environment apprenticeship starts in England². This workforce is essential to delivering the UK's major infrastructure needs – from transport and housing to energy security and the transition to net zero – while supporting high-quality jobs, apprenticeships and upskilling across the country.

However, we are increasingly concerned that current procurement and planning models are inadvertently undermining the sector's ability to invest in skills and workforce development at the scale required. Persistent skills shortages drive up project costs and constrain delivery capacity. Without intervention, this will limit the UK's ability to meet its infrastructure, housing and net zero ambitions.

We believe there is now a timely and important opportunity for Government and skilled trade sectors to work in partnership to ensure the implementation of procurement reforms strengthens the UK's ability to deliver high-quality, sustainable economic and social outcomes. The Government recently published its Clean Energy Jobs Plan, which has already established priorities in the energy sector. There are clear opportunities to replicate this ambition in the wider built environment sector.

Our sectors already demonstrate the benefits of a principles-based approach that prioritises competence, workforce quality, fair and secure work and positive community outcomes. Multi-employer national collective agreements, negotiated between employer associations and trade unions, have helped embed these principles across projects and supply chains large and small, underpinned by a skilled workforce, verified competence, and more stable labour markets.

¹ Department for Business and Trade. (2025). *Construction output in Great Britain: July 2025*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/construction-output-in-great-britain-july-2025>.

² Department for Education. (2025). *Apprenticeships: Academic year 2024/25. Explore Education Statistics*. <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/apprenticeships/2024-25>.

To this end, we have identified three practical priorities that would have the greatest impact:

1. Embed skills-led social value across public procurement and Section 106 obligations

We welcome the Government's ambition to strengthen social value delivery. To be fully effective, this needs to be embedded as much in the private sector as in the public sector. As a first step, a clear and consistent approach in public procurement, co-designed with industry, will help ensure social value requirements genuinely support local supply chains, create high-quality jobs, and expand skills and training opportunities. For SMEs in particular, social value criteria must remain proportionate, achievable and meaningfully linked to local economic outcomes.

Greater alignment is needed between skills-related social value requirements under public procurement and employment and training obligations through Section 106 agreements. Inconsistent expectations, measurement and enforcement are limiting their effectiveness and, in some cases, act as a disincentive to genuine skills investment. Outcome-based measures that evidence delivery have the potential to be far more effective in achieving our shared ambitions.

2. Promote competence, quality and workforce standards across delivery

The consistent application of workforce sector-specific competence frameworks, built on the initial achievement of competence-based vocational qualifications, and including personnel certification schemes operating under the umbrella of the Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) and CSCS Alliance, will help improve safety, performance and productivity throughout supply chains. Building these principles into the implementation of procurement reforms would support delivery certainty, reinforce high-quality employment practices, and provide assurance to contracting authorities.

3. Strengthen collaboration between Government and industry

National collective agreements, such as those listed below, demonstrate the benefits of stable employment models, multi-year pay deals, and verified competence in delivering projects. Harnessing this experience as part of the procurement reform implementation process would help ensure that public contracts continue to deliver value for money, improved productivity and local economic benefit through a proven model sustained over more than 60 years.

Together, these principles can help shape a public procurement system that rewards quality and responsibility, strengthens UK construction and built environment supply chains, and supports long-term growth through investment in people, skills and high-quality work.

To support this, we would be delighted to convene a joint discussion with you and your officials, bringing together senior leaders from across the built environment to explore how Government and skilled trade sectors can work closely together during the implementation phase of public procurement reforms. This will also support the work of the Construction Skills Mission Board to agree priorities on the necessary reforms to public procurement and, given the representation below, will help align the broader sector on these important and interrelated topics.

Please let me know your upcoming availability and the JIB will facilitate a meeting with the below signatories to collaborate on this important work.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Eldred Deputy Chief Executive Officer, ECA



David Frise, Chief Executive Officer BESA



Kevan Holmes, General Manager JIB-PMES



Jason Poulter, National Officer, Construction Sector, Unite the Union



Jason Clark, President CIPHE



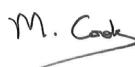
Jay Parmar Chief Executive, Joint Industry Board



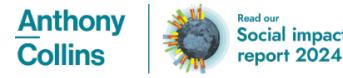
Chris Claydon, Chief Executive JTL



Charlotte Brumpton-Childs, GMB National Officer & NECC Chair, GMB



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Marion Marsland, Chief Executive Officer, TICA



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