

Repair
Maintain
Improve

New homes

Infrastructure
Growth Jobs

Get Britain
Building

Jobs
Growth
and Social
Inclusion

Get Britain

Building



Brexit offers the UK a unique opportunity to build for the future and, in doing so, create jobs, promote inclusive growth, deliver a balanced economy and promote a greener environment. Now is the time to invest in critical infrastructure, public and commercial buildings and housing to ensure our built environment supports long-term economic growth, jobs and social inclusion.

Economy

In 2018 the contribution of construction to the UK economy was £117 billion, some 6%, and in Q2 accounted for 2.4 million jobs directly related to the industry, 7% of UK total (source: House of Commons Briefing Paper Number 01432, 16 December 2019).

Additionally, construction product manufacturing, which is not included in figures presented for the industry, in 2018 had a turnover of £61.2 billion – 10.7% of manufacturing – and was worth 36.2% of overall construction output as well as providing employment to 373,000 people (source: Construction Products Association) Around 80% of materials used in building new homes in England is manufactured in the UK.

Construction and its material supply-chain is an essential prerequisite to the built environment that allows society to enjoy every aspect of daily life including homes, health, work, recreation, and transport. It is a significant part of the UK economy and employment.

Global Britain should urgently capitalise on the ‘multiplier effect’ of investment in UK construction to create prosperity, jobs, economic growth as well as rebalancing and ‘levelling-up’ of regions across the United Kingdom.

Made in Britain

Increased use of domestically produced masonry would reduce the UK’s £10.8 billion building materials trading deficit. It is therefore crucial to ensure that any future trade deals focus on inward investment to expand the UK building materials manufacturing capacity in the UK. In the speculative housing model, speed of build is determined by purchaser demand and will flex to ensure home builders do not carry large amounts of finished stock. The mantra has to be on quality and value rather than speed and cost reduction.

The Importance of SMEs

SME construction related businesses who represent 99.6% of the industry will play a critical part in recruiting and developing the skilled workers we urgently need to deliver a high quality built environment. Assistance with employment and training costs, improved and simplified access to publicly funded projects and prompt payment will unlock the additional capacity and help to rebalance our economy.

Inward Investment

The Government has a key role to play in creating the right economic and regulatory environment to attract inward investment. This includes removing

barriers to enterprise the creation of long-term sustainable growth. Housing is an essential strand of infrastructure priority for the Government. This will secure the economic and environmental gains that are vital to re-energising the UK economy. The focus needs to be on whole-life value of the built environment rather than driving a race to the bottom.

Skills and Training

The skills base of the industry needs to be developed urgently to cope with an increase in activity that will include major infrastructure projects such as HS2, roads, railways, hospitals, schools, prisons and new homes. Whilst recognising this is a challenge, construction can offer long-term skilled employment opportunities that can act as a catalyst in achieving inclusive economic growth.

Climate Change

The reduction in energy use and carbon emissions in the built environment is universally agreed to be vital if the UK is to achieve the legally binding Net Zero 2050 targets. Part of fulfilling this objective is the need to reduce the energy consumption of new homes by 50% by 2030. This requires careful design, reduced energy use by better technology, as well as influencing occupants’ behaviour. There is an urgent need to commission independent research



The UK is world class in building materials and construction equipment manufacturing.

on matters such as Climate Change and Fire Safety. This evidenced based approach will help to ensure that any changes to the way we construct, insulate and ventilate our buildings, do not result in unintended consequences. We must avoid making emotional decisions and acting before we have the social and economic solutions in place, including UK manufacturing and a trained workforce. A fabric-first design-approach is vital. Whilst further improvements to new-build will contribute to reducing energy consumption, targets will only be met if we intervene at scale to improve the existing housing stock.

Design versus Performance and Quality

It is important to strive for excellence through effective design, construction and maintenance of all buildings. Re-occurring poor performance issues should be identified and eradicated. A cultural change, similar to the way the industry has embraced health and safety, is required and needs to be supported through training and enhanced quality control on site.

The CITB levy should fund Continuous Professional Development for all those working in 'core' building trades.

The Government should actively consult on ways to improve quality, increasing consumer confidence, enhancing safety, and improving communication for all involved in the design and construction of new build and renovation projects.

Investment

It is critical to increase investment in our infrastructure, manufacturing capacity and skills. The UK economy is already highly

dependent on assembly and services and should seek to retain and invest in its future manufacturing capability.

Fire and Building Resilience

The tragedy of Grenfell changes everything. Avoidance of major loss of life and property through fire is non-negotiable. Where practical any building where there is a sleep risk or where vulnerable people are likely to be present should be constructed using non-combustible materials.

Thermal mass and well-designed ventilation will reduce overheating and enhance indoor air quality. Appropriate interventions now will avoid an increase in the use of air conditioning that would undermine our obligations to meet Net Zero 2050.

Manufacturing and Distribution

Manufacturers and distributors of construction products and materials directly provide employment for at least 373,000 people across almost 24,000 companies, overwhelmingly based in the UK, with a combined annual turnover of over £62.1 billion (source: CPA).

The Industrial Strategy focuses on the automotive and aerospace industries but tends to ignore the value and contribution of building materials manufacture. Current Government policy directly supports through grants and funding criteria a move away from UK manufactured materials to offsite and modular homes where the raw materials are almost all imported.

The lack of a 'level playing field' will actively undermine global investment to replace and enhance manufacturing capacity for UK produced construction materials. This will result in the long-term demise of a very important industry and the loss of the multiplier effect to the economy.

Regulations and Standards

Carefully considered regulations and standards provide a codified system of ensuring safe and resilient construction of built environment. Post-Brexit it is essential that we continue to play an active role in standards setting through bodies such as CEN. In meeting the challenges presented by climate change and the Grenfell tragedy, we believe a healthy and strong industry that engages in participation in a collaborative way. This, in turn, requires ownership of the objectives whilst engaging in proper research, investment and an implementation period ensuring UK-produced products through a highly trained workforce.

High Quality Homes Built To Last

The multiplier effect of buying UK produced materials and building homes using local builders could deliver a £94 billion return to the UK economy at current rates of build. The delivery of new build homes is constrained due to land supply, finance for local builders, planning delays and affordability.

The UK needs high quality homes that are safe, flexible, adaptable, resilient and built to last 150 years.



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Recommendations

New Homes

- **Bring forward land supply and invest in planning resources to increase capacity and create more affordable homes**
- Create a “help to build fund” to secure the conditions banks require to facilitate lending to small local house builders via Government guarantees on private bank loans
- Uphold the National Planning Policy Framework and support its delivery with additional resources
- Continue the Help to Buy equity loan scheme for new build until 2030 to provide long term certainty.

Upgrade Existing Homes

- **The Federation of Master Builders, supported by a range of organisations, including the Building Alliance, has proposed that the construction industry should develop a mandatory licensing scheme for all UK construction companies**
- Make home energy efficiency a UK infrastructure investment priority
- Invest billions in the improvement of our existing 26 million homes, 65.1% of which are in private ownership to reduce fuel poverty and help us to achieve Net Zero 2050
- Reduce VAT on housing renovation and repair work from 20% to 5%.

Manufacturing and Infrastructure

- **We ask Government to take full advantage of the low cost of borrowing to invest in capital projects to ensure we have world leading energy capacity, schools, social homes, hospitals, roads and railways**
- Key projects such as HS2 and Hinkley Point require integration with regional road and rail and energy infrastructure. This will positively enhance regional connectivity and energy security
- Facilitate a business environment in which UK based manufacturers of building materials and products are confident to invest. Ensure UK manufacturers energy input prices are competitive with the rest of Europe.

Invest in SMEs

- **We call upon the Government to prioritise the introduction of a range of measures to support SMEs to grow, innovate, and recruit and train new talent. This is vital to ensuring business continuity and resilience**
- Mandatory 30-day payment by all levy paying contractors
- A training allowance for all SME employees to be spent against CPD training
- Encourage banks and building societies to offer low cost loans for home extensions secured against the equity in people’s homes
- Introduce streamlined public procurement processes to encourage greater SME participation.

Skills

- **Work with employers, learners and educators to attract new entrants and increase the take up of construction apprenticeships across the wider construction sector**
- Widen the scope of the Apprentice Levy funds to support 50% of the first-year wage costs for businesses with fewer than 10 employees who take on an apprentice
- Introduce an extensive upskilling programme to encourage continuous improvement across the wider and diverse construction sector
- Work with primary, secondary schools and colleges to encourage them to offer pupils detailed advice on vocational routes and apprenticeships.

About us

The Building Alliance, Builders Merchant Federation and the Federation of Master Builders, represent a large cross-section of the construction industry including manufacturers and the smaller companies who are a massive 99.6% of the industry and whose voice is seldom heard or understood.

From its creation in 2008 the Get Britain Building campaign has valued the support of the trade media, a wide cross-section of companies, trade bodies and the construction trade unions.