

Tuesday 23 April 2013

Construction Industry Needs Confidence and Certainty Says Association Chairman

Speaking to an audience of 500 senior industry leaders and government officials at the Construction Products Association's Annual Lunch, the Chairman Geoff Cooper shared his optimism for market growth from 2014 but urged policymakers to provide greater confidence and certainty to business by addressing a number of key challenges facing the sector.

Following economic forecasts by the Construction Products Association, Mr Cooper, who is also the Chief Executive of Travis Perkins plc, said he was encouraged by indications of growth arising in 2014 and beyond, and that a challenging period through 2013 might finally reflect the "darkest hour before dawn".

However, he said, 'For this to occur it is vital that government announcements feed through into real activity on the ground and the private sector find confidence in a gradually improving economy.

'Confidence in the future and certainty around government policies, plans and regulations will drive the decision making of the business community. We look to government to address key challenges such as: energy supply and security, access to finance, taxation, quality of infrastructure, education and skills and planning regulations.

Mr Cooper noted the recent successes of the government and industry working together to create benefits, particularly around reductions in the corporation tax and elimination of the

energy levy affecting the ceramics, steel, glass and cement sectors, helping give those firms a level playing field with their competitors on the continent.

He stated the development of an Industrial Strategy for Construction is an opportunity to define our industry's role in delivering a world class built environment, and to:

- 'Address our needs for a diverse, skilled and qualified workforce;
- Re-double our efforts towards achieving a 'Zero Harm' culture;
- Achieve greater sustainability performance;
- Promote a smarter and more productive UK supply chain which can supply the construction needs for all other UK industries;
- Create a fair and effective payments charter; and
- Think of ways of making our industry more collaborative whilst recognising its fragmented and competitive nature and the strengths already inherent in it.'

Mr Cooper closed his speech with a reminder to the audience of the value of construction product manufacturing: 'Every year the construction products industry produces £1.70 for the UK economy for every £1 invested. Our sector is directly providing jobs to more than 300,000 people across more than 20,000 companies, and indirectly employing millions more. We're keen to promote the positive impact this sector has as a driver of economic recovery for both construction and the wider UK economy.'

ENDS

NOTE TO EDITORS:

The Construction Products Association represents 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 more than £40 billion and accounts for more than 30% of total construction output.

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