

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru	National Assembly for Wales
Pwyllgor yr Economi, Seilwaith a Sgiliau	Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee
Blaenoriaethau ar gyfer Pwyllgor yr Economi, Seilwaith a Sgiliau	Priorities for the Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee
EIS 32 Cymdeithas Contractwyr Peirianeg Sifil	EIS 32 Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA) Wales/Cymru

## **Issues for consideration by the Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee at the National Assembly for Wales**

### **Submission from the Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA) Wales**

#### **Background**

The Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA) Wales represents 60 of Wales' largest and smallest civil engineering contracting businesses with a cumulative annual turnover in excess of £800m and employing over 3,000 people. These businesses play a huge part in supporting communities across Wales and make a significant contribution to the economic prosperity of our nation. Our members are also major providers of training and apprenticeship opportunities. On a more fundamental level it is our members who will build the infrastructure that our nation needs to prosper.

#### **What do we want to see happening in Wales?**

- A clear economic vision and strategy for Wales
- A long term programme of infrastructure projects
- A long term investment strategy to fund an infrastructure programme
- A skills strategy to support delivery and ensure that Wales grows its own talent pool

#### **What would we like to see the Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee focusing on?**

We believe that proposals by the Welsh Government to establish a National Infrastructure Commission for Wales and a Welsh Development Bank are important elements to support our aims and objectives and this committee should focus on both to ensure their fitness for purpose. However, more specifically, we want to see this committee focus on :

##### **1. Increased investment to speed up the delivery of new building assets and infrastructure**

Other parts of the UK and globally are investing heavily in new building assets, housing and infrastructure to drive their economies forward. Investment in the Northern Powerhouse, as an example, will put the north of Wales at an even greater disadvantage. We cannot afford to sit back and let this happen.

We want to see the Welsh Government seeking other sources of funding to bolster ever reducing public sector funds and potentially using public sector funding to leverage more private sector investment.

## **2.Streamline the process of procurement making it more efficient and effective**

Whilst there are some examples of very good procurement practices in Wales based on collaborative approaches and a commercial understanding of risk and its management, these examples are relatively few and far between and the landscape is dominated by costly, ineffective and bureaucratic approaches which do nothing to ensure value for public money.

We want to see :

- public sector procurement processes simplified;
- bidding costs for businesses reduced; and
- opportunities for Welsh SMEs to grow and develop.

What needs to happen :

- a comprehensive review of the competence of public sector bodies to procure and deliver construction projects;
- the use of SQUID (the pre-qualification questionnaire) consistently applied and mandated across the whole public sector in Wales to remove duplication and wasted effort;
- the development of procurement strategies which promote rather than constrain opportunities for Welsh SMEs.

## **3.Attracting a diverse and talented workforce to support the sector**

Although we still await decisions on a number of major building and infrastructure projects, if and when those announcements are made, the industry will face a huge challenge in securing the necessary skilled people to deliver this work. The danger is that this leads to another “boom and bust” scenario with businesses desperately trying to secure whatever resources they can and from wherever. This will not deliver good value for public money.

We want to see :

- long term visibility of workload based on a long term economic strategy;
- certainty of investment to allow employers to invest, with confidence, in people and skills;
- a Welsh workforce that is trained and developed to the highest standards and whose health, safety and wellbeing is secured.

What needs to happen :

- a comprehensive, long term forward programme of work developed across the whole sector;
- an investment strategy based on this programme;
- a skills strategy directly linked to the forward programme – real jobs for real work.

Should you wish to discuss any of these matters further please contact :

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