

Dear First Minister

1st April 2020

Impacts of Coronavirus : support for the civil engineering sector in Wales

Further to my letter to you, dated 18th March 2020, requesting your support for the construction and infrastructure sector at this difficult time, I am writing to you again for your continued support.

As the public sector, and the Welsh Government in particular, is the major customer for infrastructure services there is much that you can still do to support the sector during these difficult times. There is also much that you can do to encourage and lead other public sector clients such as local authorities and health boards to focus on supporting this sector.

Current guidance from your government and the UK government is that, where it is safe to do so, construction works should proceed and many of our members are continuing to do this despite considerable difficulties. The UK Government via the Secretary of State for Business, Alok Sharma, has issued a letter of support to the construction sector, which I have attached, paying tribute to their huge efforts to maintain operations and keep the whole of the UK as resilient as possible. This is in the face of increasing difficulties in sourcing materials, reassuring workers and facing a, sometimes, hostile reaction from the public who are unclear as to why construction works are continuing despite restrictions on their own lives. As we look towards the future, this sector will be essential to our recovery as a nation and if your government was to issue a similar open letter, as a matter of urgency, that would provide a significant boost to morale and demonstrate your commitment to this key sector.

To further reassure those businesses working in this sector public bodies, including the Welsh Government, should issue a clear and sympathetic statement to those companies who are striving to support the UK and Welsh government's calls to maintain the resilience of our infrastructure that they will not be faced with contractual challenges from public bodies as we emerge from this crisis.

I look forward to hearing from you.



Ed Evans

Director and Secretary CECA Wales/Cyfarwyddwr ac Ysgrifennydd CECA Cymru

The Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA) Wales represents over 80% of Wales' civil engineering contractors who, between them, employ over 6,000 people directly and many others through supply chains and whose cumulative efforts support vital infrastructure across the nation.