



Press Release

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CECA: Infrastructure Maintains Momentum, But Fears Over Housing Data

Small and regional civil engineering firms face uncertainty after work to prepare the ground for new homes and other developments went into reverse at the end of 2022.

Research published today by the UK's civil engineering contractors shows that while the infrastructure sector continues to maintain momentum, preliminary works saw a significant decline that could spell trouble for the sector.

Results from the Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA)'s Workload Trends Survey for 2022 Q4 showed that 2022 ended with a ninth quarter of growth in workloads, with 26% on balance of British firms reporting an increase.

The largest negative balance by sector was in preliminary works, in which 42 per cent of respondents reported a fall in workloads, the first decline since 2020 Q3. This category covers work to get development sites ready for construction including demolition, services and groundworks.

Commenting, CECA Chief Executive Alasdair Reisner said: "These results show the extent to which CECA members are continuing to drive much-needed growth in the economy and show the value of continuing to invest in infrastructure in all parts of the UK.

"At the same time, the drop-off in preliminary works is a clear concern, as this shows that UK construction is undertaking less preparatory works for projects, particularly in housing and commercial development.

"A drop in work of this kind will disproportionately impact SMEs who specialise in preliminary works and hence will act as a brake on the UK Government's aim of levelling up the whole economy.

"Less preliminary works will ultimately feed through to the delivery of less projects, with negative connotations for jobs and growth.

"We call on the UK Government to work with industry to identify the pinch-points that are slowing growth in this sector, so we can begin to address them, and ensure that UK infrastructure is firing on all cylinders in all parts of England, Scotland and Wales."

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Notes to Editors

1. The Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA) represents over 300 contractors of all sizes, covering approximately 80% of the civil engineering market in Great Britain. Our members build infrastructure that provides the basis for economic sustainability and quality of life in communities across the country.
2. A copy of CECA's Workload Trends Survey Report for 2022 Q4 is included with this release.

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