



Press Release

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CECA: Commitment To Northern Powerhouse Rail Must Mean Momentum In Delivery

Civils contractors today welcomed the UK Government's new Northern Growth Strategy and said that its commitment to Northern Powerhouse Rail must lead to a new focus on momentum in delivery.

The UK Government has announced that a funding cap of £45 billion will be set for the programme, with £1.1 billion committed over the Spending Review period as the first stage of this, to allow for development and design work to progress and enabling the creation of a detailed delivery plan.

Northern Powerhouse Rail will see a major new rail service across the North that will transform commutes between Liverpool, Manchester, Warrington, Leeds, Bradford, Sheffield, and York, with services running on to Newcastle and Hull. The Government has also set out its intention in the long term to build a new rail line between Birmingham and Manchester, to be delivered after the completion of HS2.

Commenting, Director of Policy & Public Affairs for the Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA) Ben Goodwin said: "Northern Powerhouse Rail will be a once-in-a-generation investment in the economic future of the entire UK, and will bring major gains to the communities and businesses it serves.

"But industry needs clarity and confidence if it is to plan, invest, and mobilise effectively. Certainty on scope, funding, and timescales are essential to controlling costs, building skills capacity, and delivering major infrastructure effectively.

"The concept of the Northern Powerhouse has been around for more than a decade. If the Government is to make sure it is now successfully delivered, it needs to work with industry to ensure that inefficiencies associated with delays, redesigns, or stop-start decision-making are avoided.

"CECA members have the expertise and capability to deliver complex major infrastructure such as Northern Powerhouse Rail and will be itching to get started - providing all stages of the project are supported by stable pipelines, realistic procurement models, and early contractor engagement.

"The lessons from recent major projects are clear - the commitment to delivering a once-in-a-generation scheme like this must be matched by a clear funding structure and a detailed delivery plan, which allows businesses to invest in skills, plant, and resourcing, confident in secure forward pipelines of work.

"CECA stands ready to work with local and national government, regional leaders, delivery bodies, and our members to ensure that Northern Powerhouse Rail is developed and delivered in a way that maximises its economic benefits, supports skills and jobs across the North, and forms the basis of a transport system that is fit for the future."

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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.

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