

Press release

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CECA Welcomes Government Response To CMA Civil Engineering Market Study

Civils contractors today welcomed the Government's response to the Competition and Markets Authority's (CMA) civil engineering market study, but urged ministers to move at pace to implement reforms that could unlock billions of pounds in efficiency savings and drive economic growth.

The Government has accepted 15 of the CMA's 19 recommendations, with a further three accepted in principle and one deemed to have already been implemented at UK Government level.

Key commitments include the development of a strategic sector plan for road and rail civil engineering, greater flexibility for procuring authorities to enter into longer-term contracts, improvements to the UK Infrastructure Pipeline, and strengthened compliance with the Construction Playbook.

The Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA), which contributed extensively to the CMA's market study, said that the priority must now be to translate these commitments into meaningful improvements in market conditions for businesses operating across the infrastructure supply chain.

Commenting, Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA) Director of Policy & Public Affairs Ben Goodwin said: "We are extremely pleased that the Government has accepted the vast majority of the CMA's recommendations and believe their implementation has the potential to deliver substantial benefits in terms of the cost, efficiency and productivity of infrastructure delivery in the UK.

"However, amongst the small number of recommendations that the Government has accepted only in principle is that relating to contractual risk allocation and the use of Z clauses.

"The inappropriate use of Z clauses to amend standard forms of contract can undermine the principles of collaborative working, equitable risk sharing and streamlined project management across the infrastructure sector.

"The Government has committed to setting out by spring 2027 whether the Department for Transport intends to undertake a review of Z clauses and what any such review would entail.

"We would urge the Government to move at pace on this issue, with a view to initiating what we believe is a much-needed piece of work to drive better outcomes for contractors, infrastructure clients and the taxpayer."

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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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