

Press release

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CECA: Infrastructure Sector Key To Building Britain's Next Industrial Success Stories

The UK Government's search for major investment sites should put the infrastructure needed to make them usable at the centre of its selection process, civil engineering contractors said today.

Responding to the launch of the Strategic Sites Accelerator, the Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA) said the programme offers an opportunity to tackle the practical obstacles that leave promising locations waiting years for development.

The Accelerator will bring together around £700 million in loans, equity and targeted grants, alongside technical support, to help bring forward up to ten major industrial and commercial sites across the UK.

CECA said early involvement of civil engineering contractors would help local leaders and investors establish what each site needs, how much the work is likely to cost, and the order in which it must be delivered.

Commenting, CECA Director of Policy & Public Affairs Ben Goodwin said: "Before a commercial or industrial site can begin to operate it needs power, water, drainage and access roads. These are fundamental investment decisions, and they need to be settled early.

"The Strategic Sites Accelerator recognises that a promising location and an interested investor are not always enough to get development moving. Bringing finance and technical expertise together could make a real difference where projects have stalled.

"Civil engineering contractors should be involved while the options are still open. Their knowledge of ground conditions, utility diversions, access and construction sequencing can help establish a workable proposition before commitments are made and expensive problems become harder to resolve.

"For each selected site, we would like to see an agreed programme for the enabling infrastructure, with clear responsibilities, funding and dates. Local authorities, utilities, developers and government must work to the same timetable.

"There is also an opportunity to look beyond the boundary of each development. Well-planned infrastructure can support neighbouring businesses and future investment, giving the public contribution a value that lasts beyond the first occupier.

"The measure of this programme will be whether businesses can build and operate on sites that were previously beyond reach. CECA members have the expertise to help make that happen, and to unlock local economic growth."

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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.

For more information, contact CECA Communications Manager **Huston Gilmore** 07949 566843 / hustongilmore@ceca.co.uk
Civil Engineering Contractors Association • Citibase, 7 Floor Suite 7.08B, Millbank Tower, 21-24 Millbank, London SW1P 4QP
enquiries@ceca.co.uk • 0203 834 9237 •@CECAPolicy