

Construction Commitments

6 principles through which the construction industry will endeavour to achieve a better industry and achieve best practice

The Construction Commitments bring together the six key areas vital to delivering construction projects on time, safely and to budget. They represent the principles which it is intended will underpin all construction projects in order to achieve a better industry and exceed current best practice. In support of this the Strategic Forum has set a number of key targets which will demonstrate the improvements that the industry is making as a result of the adoption of these Commitments and these targets are set down in a separate document available on the Forum's website

The Forum will be working with Constructing Excellence in the Built Environment to promote the use of these Commitments as a framework for all construction projects. We are therefore keen that all companies that support the Commitments and intend to work in accordance with these principles indicate this by signing up on the Strategic Forum web site – www.strategicforum.org.uk

1. Procurement & Integration

A successful procurement policy requires ethical sourcing, enables best value to be achieved and encourages the early involvement of the supply chain. An integrated project team works together to achieve the best possible solution in terms of design, buildability, environmental performance and sustainable development

- Procurement decisions will be transparent, made on best value rather than lower cost, use evaluation criteria and where appropriate, specialist advisors, whilst encouraging the contribution of smaller organisations
- All members of the construction team will be identified and involved at an early stage, particularly during the design process and encouraged to work collaboratively
- Supply chain partners will be required to demonstrate their competency, their commitment to integrated working, innovation, sustainability and to a culture of trust and transparency
- To ensure effective and equitable cashflow for all those involved, all contracts will incorporate fair payment practices, such as payment periods of 30 days, no unfair withholding of retentions, project bank

accounts, where practicable and cost effective and will include mechanisms to encourage defects-free construction

- The duties of each project team member will be identified and shared at the outset of the project and appropriate insurance policies, such as project insurance, put in place
- Risks will be clearly identified, financially quantified and allocated in line with each party's ownership and ability to manage the risk
- All contracts will have an informal and nonconfrontational mechanism to manage-out disputes
- The employment practices of all organisations, including sub-contractors and the self-employed, will be scrutinised by the client and the supply chain to avoid abuses

2. Commitment to People

Valuing people leads to a more productive and engaged workforce, facilitates recruitment and retention of staff and engages local communities positively in construction projects

- Local employment projects and local training initiatives will be utilised in order to create sustainable communities
- Local communities will be fully involved and engaged from the outset of all projects
- Training and development will be offered to all staff, including the client, to meet individual, project and company needs
- Opportunities for apprenticeships and work experience will be offered
- A policy of equal opportunities will be adopted to encourage a diverse workforce
- Project specific agreements will be established between unions and employers to encourage better employment practices, including training as well as health and safety
- Construction sites will be clean, tidy and provide good quality facilities, including catering, appropriate to the diverse needs of the workforce
- Sites will be run considerately without causing nuisance to local communities

3. Client Leadership

Client leadership is vital to the success of any project and enables the construction industry to perform at its best

- The client structure and responsibilities will be clearly identified and adequately resourced to ensure continuity in leadership for the duration of the project
- There will be client commitment to best practice guidelines and engendering cooperation with all organisations involved in the project
- A clearly expressed and well researched vision and business case for the construction project will be developed by the client
- A detailed brief with clear financial objectives, programme and definition of what is meant by success will be developed by the client before the design stage for all projects and this will be shared at the outset with all those involved
- The client will champion best practice in design, teamworking, innovation, health and safety and sustainability and demand an appropriately trained and qualified workforce
- A clear, collaborative and flexible procurement policy will be developed by the client, together with a clearly expressed industrial relations' framework
- The client will work within the project team from the outset of the project to identify and manage project risks
- Projects will be properly commissioned before handover

4. Sustainability

Sustainability lies at the heart of design and construction. A sustainable approach will bring full and lasting environmental, social and economic benefits

- The overarching government and industry Strategy for Sustainable Construction provides the framework for future construction projects
- Each project will develop a specific Sustainability Action Plan which will address environmental, social and economic aspects and aim to exceed the highest levels within relevant standards and include all aspects of the supply chain

- Targets, including the business case, will be set within all contracts and performance will be monitored and appraised regularly
- Projects will incorporate best practice approaches to resource use, waste minimisation, low-carbon performance, employment, training and community engagement
- Development plans will seek to enhance, create and protect the local natural environment
- Projects will actively aim to enhance the vitality and viability of local communities

5. Design Quality

The design should be creative, imaginative, sustainable and capable of meeting delivery objectives. Quality in design and construction utilising the best of modern methods will ensure that the project meets the needs of all stakeholders, both functionally and architecturally

- The client will produce a clear brief before design commences
- Designers will be selected according to ability and quality, together with other criteria appropriate to the scale and complexity of the project
- Every opportunity will be taken to encourage visionary designs, including art sculpture and to provide opportunities for emerging designers and artists
- The design must suit the practical, functional and operational requirements of the building and meet both the client's and users' needs, to ensure that whole-life value is delivered by addressing buildability, maintainability and usability, whilst driving health and safety throughout
- Project briefs will specify performance criteria to encourage innovation in order to deliver cost-effective solutions, taking advantage of opportunities for standardisation, prefabrication, off-site manufacture and adopting modern logistics principles
- The design will be tested using third party design reviews and other tools for assessing design quality
- IT-based collaborative tools and communication technologies will be exploited

6. Health & Safety

Health and safety is integral to the success of any project, from design and construction to subsequent operation and maintenance

- All designs will address health and safety issues and all projects will have a risk register
- Construction projects will aspire to be injury and incident-free
- Every project will have a strategy to deal with occupational health and provide full-time qualified medical staff on site
- All health and safety risks, including those relating to occupational health, will be assessed, managed, action taken and communicated from inception to design
- Companies will sign up to and implement the Strategic Forum Health and Safety Code
- All professional and site staff will hold Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) cards or equivalent

The UK Construction Industry

The UK Construction Industry has an annual turnover of more than £100 billion and accounts for almost 10% of the country's GDP. The industry employs some two million people in more than 250,000 different companies. It is five times the size of the aerospace industry and more than three times the size of the automotive industry.

The construction industry is fundamental to the country's economic and social development. Improved transport infrastructure and modern efficient buildings play a major part in lifting the productivity of businesses in the UK. At the same time improvements in social housing, schools and hospitals, as well as the provision of high quality public transport, all depend on the construction industry delivering successful projects.

In a world in which environmental considerations are increasingly seen as of overriding importance, an innovative construction industry holds the key to delivering the solutions that will address the challenge of climate change and the more efficient use of the world's resources.

The Strategic Forum for Construction

The Strategic Forum for Construction brings together the main representative bodies in the construction industry. Its vision is for the UK construction industry to achieve maximum value for all clients, and users and stakeholders and to exceed their expectations through the consistent delivery of world-class products and projects.

Member organisations:

Construction Clients Group
Construction Confederation
Construction Industry Council
Construction Products Association
NSCC/SEC Group
TUC.

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