

Comment – Pre-Budget Report

Julia Evans, chief executive of the National Federation of Builders, said:

“While we welcome the Chancellor’s move to accelerate £3 billion of capital work, we still need to see more being done to speed up procurement processes and make them easier for SMEs to access.

“The Government must also take steps to ensure fair access to public sector contracts, be they at national or local government level, for SMEs. Too often they are frozen out by unnecessarily complex applications procedures.”

“The move to introduce £1 billion survival fund is also welcome but it’s vitally important that this funding is open to all SMEs. Gaining access to existing grants and loans is already an arduous process for many small companies who face a labyrinth of red tape when applying.

“We urge the Government to ensure that any such funding could be accessed quickly and easily. It could be disseminated quickly via regional development agencies (RDAs).”

Roger Humber, strategic policy advisor to House Builders’ Association, said:

“We welcome the recommendation by the Crosby Review that mortgages guarantees should be given. This is the most effective means of increasing supply of mortgages which is essential to recovery in the housing market.

“We hope Government quickly obtains EU approval. In addition, the Government should use Northern Rock to raise new funds for lending which it should also guarantee. The requirement that Northern Rock should transfer its mortgage book to other lenders has seriously reduced supply and the policy should be reversed.”

ENDS November 2008