

Press Release

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The National Federation of Builders looks to more efficient schools building programme

The National Federation of Builders (NFB) welcomes the government's decision to spend £15.8 billion on rebuilding and refurbishing 600 schools. This is an important investment because the construction industry represents value for money as it not only represents immediate economic activity, it is an investment that provides long-term social and economic benefits. It is estimated that for every £1 spent on construction, £2.84 is returned to the UK economy.

The scrapping of the inefficient £55 billion Building Schools for the Future programme was a blow to the construction industry. Construction has lost over 300,000 jobs since the start of the downturn and between 250 and 300 construction companies enter into administration each month. The NFB believes that more programmes of work can be delivered by cutting the costs from an inefficient and needlessly costly process, than by cutting the cost of the projects and sacrificing jobs.

The NFB has highlighted inefficient procurement processes in the public sector for years and its procurement survey, published in October 2010, showed that 49% of suppliers had difficulties with the procurement process (up from 34% in 2007) and almost a quarter (22%) spent over four weeks each year on form filling in order to compete for work.

The introduction of a standard pre-qualification questionnaire for competing for public construction work, introduced by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills will save the industry billions of pounds over the next decade. The standard approach will also allow a wider range of firms to compete, ensuring the taxpayer receives value for money.

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