



10 July 2007

Cement industry welcomes the appointment of new Construction Minister

The British Cement Association today welcomed the appointment of Stephen Timms MP as the new Minister for Competitiveness and Consumer Affairs, with responsibility for construction.

Damian Testa, Head of Public Affairs said, 'the cement industry is delighted that the government has recognised the importance of construction to the UK economy. The cement industry alone has an annual turnover of £775 million and is just one component of the £80 billion a year construction industry that employs 650,000 people. Cement is a virtually irreplaceable, building material that is vital to every house, school, hospital, road and bridge in the UK.

The industry needs an effective Minister that understands the challenges faced by the industry and the importance of maintaining a vibrant domestic cement manufacturing capability. We look forward to working with Stephen Timms who has considerable experience of economic issues from his time spent as a Treasury Minister.

We also welcome the establishment of the Business Council for Britain, but are disappointed it does not include representation from the construction industry. At the heart of the UK economy, the construction industry plays a key role in the economic well-being of the country. We call on the Prime Minister to invite the Chairman of the Strategic Forum for Construction, Mike Davies, to join the Council.'

For further information:

Damian Testa, Head of Public Affairs and External Communications at the British Cement Association. Telephone 01276 608708, mobile 07866 388250, email dtesta@bca.org.uk

Notes to editors:

The British Cement Association (BCA) is the trade and research organisation that represents the interests of the United Kingdom's cement industry in its relations with Her Majesty's Government, the European Union and relevant organisations in the United Kingdom. The members of the BCA (Tarmac Buxton Lime and Cement, Castle Cement, Cemex UK Operations and Lafarge Cement UK) are the major domestic manufacturers of Portland cement producing over 90% of the cement sold in the UK.

The cement industry has an annual turnover of £775 million and is a major supplier to the construction industry. It employs around 3,400 people directly with a further 15,000 jobs depending upon its operations.

The Strategic Forum for Construction a cross industry/government body which comprises six members: Construction Industry Council, Construction Clients Group, Construction Confederation, the Construction Products Association, NSCC/SEC Group and the TUC. DBERR acts as an observer at main meetings. Amongst the key themes in the Forum's work are improving health & safety, promoting sustainable construction, and encouraging a more integrated approach to construction procurement.

Mike Davies took up his chairmanship of the forum in July 2007 in succession to James Wates. Mr Davies is a former Chairman and Chief Executive of Baxi Group Ltd and is currently the Senior Independent Non-Executive Director at Taylor Woodrow plc. He is a former Vice President of the Construction Products Association.