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Aggregates, concrete and cement industry moves towards a single body:

Background: At the internal stakeholder meetings of the aggregates, concrete and cement industry in 2007, there was general consensus across a number of companies in the sector that consolidation of the market development, technical and trade association activities into a single industry body could be beneficial in improving effectiveness and efficiency and improve working in areas of common interest on behalf of members.

The specific benefits identified included:

- Improved visibility and impact
- Improved clarity of responsibilities
- Simplified Governance and control
- Improved use of resources
- Reduction in fragmentation

An industry project team has been set up to explore the benefits of:

- Merging BCA and TCC into QPA in order to form a single industry body aligning market development and trade association activities - in order to improve external representation, advocacy and market access – ‘new QPA’.
- Establishing an effective wider concrete industry Alliance with key organisations such as British Precast Concrete Federation and The Concrete Society in order to ensure integrated working on common key issues – like Sustainable Construction.
- Supporting the Society and their vision for the development of a Concrete Institute - in order to improve industry wide competencies.

Project team: A project team led by Lynda Thompson (Chair of QPA); Ian M Reid (Chair of TCC) with Mike Gilbert (BCA CEO) as the Project Director will manage the activity.

It is anticipated that the new expanded industry body will continue to deliver all the current work of the BCA, QPA and TCC – in a more integrated way. It is anticipated that the improved visibility and extra authority that is inherent with an £11m new Association, would meet many of the operational benefits sought by the industry.

Timetable: The BCA, QPA and the TCC have agreed to initiate the study into the merger during 2008, with the necessary reviews, consultations and legal work yet to be developed. If the outline of the new organisation, when the feasibility work is complete, meets the needs of all the stakeholders, formal approval will be sought from the relevant Boards and Councils during 2008.

The Alliance: Will be developed over the coming 12 months in parallel with the merger study.

The Institute: The timetable will be set by the Society, supported by industry.

Mike Gilbert, Project Director, commented: "The aggregates, concrete and cement industries' work very closely together today; but the demands of the construction industry for more innovation, the challenges of the sustainable construction agenda and continual improvements in membership services, means we have to align ourselves even more closely in the future. The government, our members, and the specifiers of our products expect us to provide 'joined-up' advice, guidance and construction solutions. We believe bringing the industry organisations together will help us be more effective and efficient in delivering exactly that."

-ENDS-

For further information:

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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 (Buxton Lime Industries, Castle Cement, Lafarge Cement UK and CEMEX UK Cement) are the major domestic manufacturers of Portland Cement producing over 90% of the cement sold in the UK. For more information see: www.cementindustry.co.uk

- The Concrete Centre is the central market development organisation for the £5 billion UK concrete sector. The Centre works in the interests of all those involved in concrete design and construction. It focuses on design and construction methods, education and training, research, new product and process development and the performance of concrete in practice. It works closely with other well-established cement and concrete bodies in the UK. For more information see: www.concretecentre.com
- The Quarry Products Association is the principal UK-wide trade association for the quarry products industries with a total membership of some 200 companies, of which nearly all are SMEs. The Association represents its members on European, national, regional and local political and policy matters and directs the work of the 9 constituent Product Groups, covering materials as diverse as industrial and agricultural lime, aggregates (including land-won, marine, secondary and recycled materials), asphalt, ready-mixed concrete, mortar and industrial sand. For more information see: www.qpa.org