

CECA Core Policy Positions 2026



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Introduction

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This paper sets out CECA's core policy positions on a range of civil engineering and broader infrastructure issues. They represent the action that we would like government, in partnership with industry, to take to improve infrastructure development and delivery.

CECA and its members believe that such action is vital in ensuring that the UK's infrastructure networks most effectively serve the public and the economy. Namely, providing access to high-performing and safe transport, energy, water, waste and communications networks nationwide.

Taking a cross-sectoral approach, it is broken down into the following sections:

- Planning, pipeline and procurement
- Delivery, skills and investment
- Business and supply chain practices
- Managing economic shocks

The paper provides both CECA members and staff with a resource that they can use when engaging with key policymakers and decisionmakers.

Background



To develop its core policy positions the CECA policy team ran a series of workshops across member regions to gather insights and perspectives on the key challenges and opportunities as our members see them.

Workshop series:

Northwest: Warrington, 5th February
Southwest: Exeter, 4th March
Northeast: Newcastle, 13th March
Midlands: Loughborough, 18th March
Southern: London, 25th March
Yorkshire & Humber: Wetherby, 22nd April





Policy Positions

Planning, pipeline and procurement

01. Urgently reform the planning system to speed up the delivery of major infrastructure

Planning system reform that reduces the time it takes high-quality infrastructure projects and programmes to achieve consent is urgently needed. A more efficient and predictable planning system will provide CECA members with the certainty that they need to invest in business growth and readiness.

02. Develop a clear and accurate National Infrastructure and Construction Pipeline

We need a comprehensive and up to date project and programme pipeline that will help CECA members understand available work volumes coming down the track, enabling them to prepare and plan accordingly to win and deliver projects.

03. Support the use of early contractor involvement in projects and programmes

CECA strongly encourages clients to use early contractor involvement when procuring civil engineering contractors, providing the ability of different infrastructure clients to benefit from the experience of our members in developing buildable and affordable solutions.



04. Support the development and use of best-in-class frameworks

The use of frameworks can help to deliver better value for money by aggregating projects into work banks. They also provide a basis for long-term continuity of teams working together and sharing best practice. They must however be carefully structured and used appropriately by clients to deliver these outcomes. This includes providing certainty around work volumes and a commitment to refrain from using mini-competitions unless there is a clear commercial reason to do so.

05. Support the standardisation of pre-qualification and accreditation to reduce bureaucracy for contractors

CECA has consistently highlighted the £1 billion that our members and the wider infrastructure sector waste each year on pre-qualification and accreditation exercises. We support all efforts to minimise this bureaucracy including the more effective utilisation of the Central Digital Platform to gather more of a supplier's core information, which allows suppliers to register once and share information across multiple contracts.



Delivery, skills and investment

06. Joining up infrastructure delivery with housing

The Government has set out ambitious plans to deliver 1.5 million more homes over the course of the parliament. This is laudable, but more must be done to ensure that new homes are delivered in a more integrated way with the infrastructure networks that are required to support housing growth.

07. Support the journey to a net zero economy by 2050

The Government is committed to delivering the 2050 net zero target. CECA members support this objective and are committed to delivering infrastructure projects in ways that support climate change mitigation and the health of the natural environment.

08. Support the use of innovative models and technologies for infrastructure delivery

The Government and industry must continue to work together to support the understanding and use of innovative business models e.g. Project 13. This includes approaches that seek to develop long term relationships with suppliers based on aligned incentives, digital transformation and artificial intelligence, integration of the supplier ecosystem and a focus on whole life outcomes rather than outputs.



09. Increase and effectively target investment in skills and training across the infrastructure sector

Civil engineering contractors and the wider industry need greater support and investment from the Government and its associated agencies to develop the skilled workforce that can deliver on the UK's long-term infrastructure strategy. This includes getting the apprenticeship regime working more effectively.

10. Support rebalancing of investment to ensure fairness across all parts of the UK

CECA is unequivocal that the Government, in partnership with industry and devolved and regional decisionmakers, must redouble efforts to rebalance investment in infrastructure around the UK, ensuring that all parts of the nation have access to the same levels of investment required to deliver the high-performing infrastructure networks that we all need.

11. Create increased flexibility in asset management periods across the infrastructure sector

Asset management periods across the infrastructure sector must become more flexible so that long-term planning, tied to changing policy aims and legislative requirements, can be better facilitated by the supply chain.



Business and supply chain practices

12. Support the abolition of cash retentions

The abolition of cash retentions is necessary to protect small businesses in the supply chain and the Government must act decisively to enable this to happen following the major package of reforms that were announced earlier in 2026.

13. Support the use of standard forms of contract and the minimisation of the use of z-clauses

CECA supports the adoption and use of government guidance that states that “Standardised contracts or standardised contract terms can be used to help simplify and speed up procurement procedures. By applying a common approach across the public sector, best practice is more easily embedded and suppliers are more likely to experience a consistent application of policies and practice. Contracting authorities should ensure that they have appropriate resources to effectively manage contracts effectively”.

14. Oppose the use of unconditional on-demand bonds

CECA is opposed to the use of unconditional on-demand bonds. These ‘blank cheque’ bonds can be called by a client at any time without having to provide a reason why. Members have reported that these bonds are very difficult or impossible to source from sureties.



Managing economic shocks

15. Government in partnership with industry must act decisively when economic shocks occur

The Government response to the Covid pandemic was very effective and ensured that infrastructure delivery was able to continue. However, the response to the Middle East crisis in early in 2026 has been more inconsistent. A templated approach is required so that when economic shocks occur the infrastructure sector is prepared to respond and adapt.

CECA Core Pillars

CECA aim to structure the work that it does against five core pillars, which are set out opposite. This paper speaks primarily to pillars 1, 4 and 5.

Ben Goodwin
Director of Policy & Public Affairs, CECA
enquiries@ceca.co.uk

01. Skills & Training
Creating a skilled workforce

02. Careers & Recruitment
Creating a talent pipeline

03. Health, Safety & Wellbeing
Creating a safer workplace

04. Clients, Policy & Workload
Creating work opportunities

05. Sustainability & Social Value
Creating a better environment for all