

CONSTRUCTION PROCUREMENT POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

UK Government initiatives

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) has central responsibility for promoting improvement in the performance of the industry and its clients. There is no specific policy or guidance for promoting equal opportunities in construction procurement, but the general intent of current guidance is to encourage improvement and innovation.

The DTI supports several initiatives aimed at different sectors of the construction industry and its clients under the 'Rethinking Construction' campaign.

Rethinking Construction

The Government's 1998 Egan Report 'Rethinking Construction' recognised the under-performance of the construction industry and recommended a commitment to continuous improvement in the construction process, with the whole supply chain aiming to produce better value.

It has become a major driver for change in construction, sharply raising the profile of the construction agenda, particularly on issues of safety, value and sustainability. The 'Rethinking Construction' Report set out five drivers for change: committed leadership, focus on the customer, product team integration, quality-driven agenda and commitment to people.

UK Government and Assembly policies emphasise the need for the construction industry and its public sector clients to fully implement the principles of 'Rethinking Construction'.

Local Government Task Force (LGTF)

As part of the Rethinking Construction campaign, the LGTF promotes 'Rethinking Construction' among local authorities in England and has produced best practice guidance, notably the 'Rethinking Construction Toolkit' which the DTLR Minister issued to all English Local Authorities in May 2001.

The Toolkit shows how the benefits of Rethinking Construction can be achieved within the public sector framework and offers practical guidance on how modern approaches to procurement can deliver major advantages to authorities.

Strategic Forum for Construction- 'Accelerating Change'

The UK Government has established the Strategic Forum for Construction to further encourage the implementation of Rethinking Construction. Its current consultation report 'Accelerating Change' seeks the widest possible consensus on the actions needed to embed Rethinking Construction principles into industry practice and commitment to delivering targets.

It identifies three main drivers to secure a culture of continuous improvement:

- The need for client leadership
- The need for integrated teams
- The need to address 'people issues'

It recommends a culture change in 'people issues' and supports a more concerted initiative to encourage Investors in People (IiP) in construction. It proposes a simple guidance booklet aimed specifically at SMEs to help focus on achieving change in 'people issues'. Also that a code of good working practices should be produced to be adopted by contractors, trade unions and their clients.

Respect for People- April 2002

The DTI aims to help improve the industry's performance on 'Respect for People' by promoting diversity, health, safety, good site conditions, welfare and training, and helping to demonstrate that problems of recruiting and retaining the right people with the right skills requires a radical improvement in the way the industry treats its workforce.

'A Commitment to People: Our Biggest Asset'

The report 'A Commitment to People: Our Biggest Asset' and its associated toolkits - produced by the Rethinking Construction Respect for People Working Group - aim to provide the industry with practical help. It identified six action themes:

Diversity, Site welfare, Health, Safety, Lifelong learning, and Off-site welfare.

It proposes radical improvements that can be measured and tracked through a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) and has developed a set of toolkits for each of these themes to help organisations to assess, monitor and benchmark.

Welsh Assembly Government

The Assembly supports the promotion of Rethinking Construction and the adoption of its recommendations by the public sector.

Welsh Procurement Review- 'Better Value Wales'

This found that the Welsh public sector must go further to implement 'Rethinking Construction' and that much needs to be done to introduce best practice thinking in construction to the Welsh public sector. It made a number of recommendations relating to 'Rethinking Construction'.

'Rethinking Construction'- Local Authorities in Wales

As part of the Assembly's vision for a Better Wales the public sector and the construction industry need to fully implement the principles of 'Rethinking Construction'. Part of the Assembly's commitment to working more closely with its Local Authority partners is to promote best practice in construction procurement.

LGTF 'Rethinking Construction Toolkit'

In support of promoting best practice, the Minister for Local Government, Finance and Communities wrote to all Chief Executives and Leaders of Local Authorities in September 2001 enclosing copies of the Local Government Task Force 'Toolkit' and recommending its use as a tool for the delivery of effective procurement of construction.

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