



APPG Infrastructure launches with public survey results

The All Party Parliamentary Group on Infrastructure began its programme for 2009 with a launch reception at Portcullis House on 14 January with a presentation from Rt Hon Nick Raynsford MP to fellow parliamentarians and senior industry representatives.

The reception also saw the release of results from a survey commissioned by the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) on perceptions of infrastructure investment priorities. Over 1,000 members of the public took part in the survey, with a parallel survey polling over 1,000 of ICE's members.

The survey showed that public transport received the lowest satisfaction rating with only 57% of the public claiming to be satisfied with the service and 48% of engineers. The highest satisfaction rating went to drinking water and sewage, with 88% of the public satisfied and 91% of engineers.

Both groups put roads and highways as their second priority for investment. Other options included rubbish and waste disposal, electricity and gas supply, flood defences, and drinking water and sewage.

The results were presented by ICE Vice President Dr Scott Steedman.



From left to right: Lord Chidgey; Lionel Zetter, ICE Public Affairs Advisor; Nick Raynsford, Chair of the All Party Group; Scott Steedman, ICE Vice-President

Institution of Civil Engineers provides submission to 2009 Budget

The Institution of Civil Engineers has formulated a submission to the Treasury in advance of the 2009 Budget. The submission maintains that the UK already holds most of the tools needed to deliver a credible long term strategy for major infrastructure development. The Planning Act, through its provision of new National Policy Statements, provides the means of speeding up the delivery of major projects.

The paper calls for a link between the Comprehensive Spending Review and the strategic investment plans that exist, or are being created in a number of sectors, with a view to developing an effective national strategy and investment plan. This plan could be continuously developed as a framework by successive governments.

One warning the submission contains is on the dangers of a 'double dip' recession, where the policy of bringing forward projects to provide a fiscal stimulus in 2008/9 and 2009/10 could potentially lead to a dramatic decline in demand in 2010/11. ICE urges the government to fulfil its role as 'best practice customer' by maintaining a stable workflow.

The downturn also threatens skills and capacity, as the submission points out: "experience of previous recessions has proven that losses in the industry capacity required to develop, deliver and maintain major infrastructure are difficult to replace. This has resulted in increased costs for projects vital for the long term health of the nation."

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Energy briefing series with sector review available

The first in a series of energy briefing papers is now available from the Institution of Civil Engineers. The paper assesses the current state of the energy sector and highlights the difficult challenges of closing the looming energy gap, while meeting our ambitious emissions and renewable energy targets.

The briefing paper makes a number of recommendations in the areas of regulation, infrastructure, carbon reduction, security and resilience, and demand management.

In particular, the paper considers:

- A carbon pricing system that can meet our climate change goals.
- Investment in transmission grids.
- A review of the current role of the energy regulator, OFGEM, which should expand to reflect the changing conditions and new demands on the energy sector.

The first report can be found at:

http://www.ice.org.uk/downloads/Energy%20Report_2.pdf

Airport infrastructure debate heats up

As more announcements of plans surrounding various airport expansion schemes emerge, the need for independent debate on airport infrastructure is clear. At a strategic level, development of UK airport infrastructure throws up two overarching engineering challenges:

- Integrating airport infrastructure into other transport networks
- Managing the CO₂ associated with airport infrastructure, so that the aviation sector makes a reasonable contribution to the UK's 2050 target of an 80% reduction in emissions.

ICE argues that any individual airport infrastructure proposals must adequately address these challenges in the context of a comprehensive, integrated transport policy.

To this end the Institution has established an expert panel of engineers to look at the issues. The panel is expected to report on its findings in summer 2009.

The All Party Group will meet on the 31st March to discuss airport infrastructure in the United Kingdom.

Call for evidence on Defending Critical Infrastructure

In preparation for its State of the Nation report on Defending Critical Infrastructure, ICE is calling for submissions of evidence from a wide range of sources. This will cover the key issues which need to be addressed in order to protect the UK's critical infrastructure from natural hazards and man-made threats. The report will be launched on 24 June.

If you would like to contribute to the inquiry please contact Beth Bear on 020 7665 2232 or at email beth.bear@ice.org.uk.

Future Programme

Crossrail – Central Route Tour

16 March 2009, 11.30am
Collection from Westminster

Keith Berryman, Chief Executive of Crossrail, will personally brief APPGI members on the challenges, benefits and the status of the project on a tour of the central Crossrail route.

Airport Infrastructure Inquiry Session

31 March 2009, 5.30pm-7.30pm
Committee Room 8, House of Commons

All Party Group members are invited to hear, question and respond to leading figures from all sides of the debate regarding the future of British airport infrastructure - including on Heathrow and the proposed Thames Estuary Airport.

Full details, including speakers, will be circulated in coming weeks.