

12 March 2009

Tony Mulcahy
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Dear Tony

Chief Construction Officer Consultation

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the discussion regarding the Chief Construction Officer. NSCC is responding on behalf of the 30 trade organisations listed on page 3 which collectively represent over 7,000 Specialist Contractors within the construction industry.

The role

What an opportunity, yet huge task, to find a suitable individual to both fill and fulfil this role! NSCC strongly supports the appointment of a Chief Construction Officer (CCO) on the basis that the role is focussed with SMART objectives (specified, measurable, achievable, realistic and timebound).

This does mean that we believe that the role of the CCO should focus on the following and should not be tasked with all the activities within the discussion document.

- Implementing and enforcing best practice in public sector construction procurement
- Developing consistency across public sector departments (both regulatory and non-regulatory)
- Reporting on public sector construction procurement performance.

The CCO should have the ability to call Government departments to account if best practice is not being implemented and poor procurement practices are affecting efficiency, increasing costs or placing unnecessary burdens on business.

The industry, particularly via the Strategic Forum, should have the ability to liaise and work with the CCO in relation to public sector procurement but the new position should not replace existing lines of communication between the industry, regulatory departments, PSCCF etc. In simple terms, the industry currently raises issues related to public procurement but the public sector can continue to procure 'badly' as there is no formal interface to properly address the issues.

SMEs must be on the radar of the CCO as public procurement affects companies of all sizes and within all sectors, not just large employers.

With regard to other possible duties, the industry has a key role in improving its image and promoting innovation, quality and best practice and the role of the CCO on these issues should be to ensure that the public sector is fully aware of the

contributions made by the industry to UK plc. This would include its commitment to apprentices, training, innovation and sustainability and the impact of the industry on our built environment particularly in meeting many Government targets e.g. carbon emission reductions.

We believe that Government departments do not always fully recognise the significant part that the construction industry plays in our everyday lives and the overall economy. 8% of GDP and 2.1 million workers is not a small industry yet other sectors receive far more attention and interest.

The individual

The 'right' person is most definitely required for this role. We believe that this is someone that has an understanding of the private sector, ideally the construction industry, but most importantly how Government operates, as we are looking for the CCO to change particular behaviours that are often unique to public sector. We would not wish to see a retired industry personality take on this role unless they had the interests of the whole industry at heart and could demonstrate substantial experience of working within Government. It is vital that this individual is acceptable to Government departments if he or she is to influence, and possibly enforce, on the issue of construction procurement.

The location

This role will be difficult enough to perform without the added burden of reporting to two masters. The CCO needs the respect of those it wishes to influence and if Government is serious about improving procurement and making efficiency savings whilst working with business then the CCO should be able to work effectively with both HM Treasury and BERR. As the role is about business efficiencies then a direct line to the Business Secretary, Lord Mandelson would seem appropriate.

A small but effective team should be required to support the CCO both in terms of research and administration and, as long as the role remains focussed and the team does not get sidetracked, a relatively lean team should be sufficient. It is well recognised that the OGC is not adequately resourced in the area of construction and this should be added to perhaps through the CCO's team rather than just OGC resources relocated.

We do believe that the industry is reasonably united in its view of the role and functions of the CCO and we would hope that the discussions can move swiftly to action.

If you require any further information from NSCC, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Suzannah Nichol MBE
Chief Executive

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NSCC Member Organisations

ACIFC	-	Association of Concrete Industrial Flooring Contractors
AIS	-	Association of Interior Specialists
ASA	-	Association of Sealant Applicators Ltd
ASFP	-	Association for Specialist Fire Protection
ASUCplus	-	Association of Specialist Underpinning Contractors plus
ATLAS	-	Association of Technical Lightning & Access Specialists
BBSA	-	British Blind and Shutter Association
BDA	-	British Drilling Association
BGA	-	British Geomembrane Association
CFA	-	Contract Flooring Association
DSA	-	Drilling and Sawing Association
FASET	-	Fall Arrest Safety Equipment Training
FBSC	-	Federation of Building Specialist Contractors
FeRFA	-	Resin Flooring Association
FPS	-	Federation of Piling Specialists
FRA	-	Flat Roofing Alliance
GGF	-	Glass and Glazing Federation
INCA	-	Insulated Render & Cladding Association
MAC	-	Mastic Asphalt Council
NASC	-	National Access & Scaffolding Confederation
NFRC	-	The National Federation of Roofing Contractors Ltd
NFTMMS	-	National Federation of Terrazzo Marble & Mosaic Specialists
PDA	-	Painting and Decorating Association
RIDBA	-	Rural & Industrial Design & Building Association
SAEMA	-	Specialist Access Engineering and Maintenance Association
SAPCA	-	Sports and Play Construction Association
SMWBA	-	Scottish Master Wrights and Builders Association
SPRA	-	Single Ply Roofing Association
SWA	-	Steel Window Association
TTA	-	The Tile Association