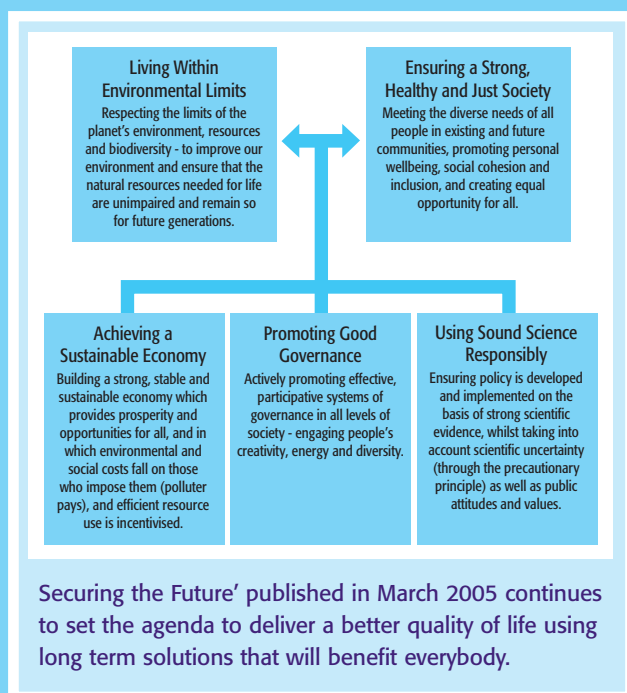


## Response to the Draft Strategy for Sustainable Construction Consultation Paper July 2007

At the last LGTF Board meeting in September Jeremy Sumeray, on behalf of Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR), introduced the report on the draft strategy which is intended to be a joined up strategy representing the intentions of all of central government.



Providing an answer to the following questions are seen as key to it's success:

- How best could local government be engaged in the consultation process?
- Were the targets/milestones achievable/stretching enough?
- What might government and the industry do to respond to the strategy?

The role of the Chairman of the Board, Roger Latham, in delivering local government's response to the Simms report,

has been of great value as it unites a number of sustainability issues in one location. In their review of this important document the LGTF made the following general comments:

- Local authorities are hampered in delivering a coherent sustainable construction strategy due to the fragmentation of funding and the delegation to individual establishments of decision-making on capital and revenue expenditure;
- The "competition" for resources and enhanced facilities makes it difficult to implement the sustainable construction strategy which, by its very nature, is long-term and about increased initial capital investment for long-term revenue gains. Whilst individual establishments are encouraged to expand, leaving surplus capacity elsewhere in the system, we are creating excessive and unnecessary consumption;
- We should be expending as much effort on reducing demand as concentrating on the supply side or more sustainable construction;
- Improving the performance of existing buildings and reducing demand (by better planning and sharing of facilities) will have a much greater impact than changes to the way we construct new buildings.

Further consultation has been co-ordinated by Mike Britch, LGTF Board member and MD of NPS Property Consultants Ltd., and will be taken account of in the response to BERR.

The consultation document and associated questions can be downloaded from the BERR website:

[www.dti.gov.uk/consultations/page40642.html](http://www.dti.gov.uk/consultations/page40642.html)

The paper containing the full list of comments from the LGTF can be viewed at [www.publicarchitecture.co.uk](http://www.publicarchitecture.co.uk)



# What is TrustMark?

TrustMark is the award-winning scheme supported by the Government, consumer groups and building industry to help you **find reputable firms** to do repair, maintenance and improvement work inside and outside your home.

If a firm displays the TrustMark logo you know that a trade association or other certification organisation that we have approved has checked the firm and found that it meets certain **standards the Government has set**.

## Your guide through the maze of trades

TrustMark is still new, but we have awarded licences to a range of scheme operators who cover many of the trades you might be looking for - from **builders, plumbers, electricians and glaziers, to painters and decorators, roofers, landscape gardeners and damp-proof specialists**.

New scheme operators are being added regularly, which means that TrustMark will **continue to grow** to cover a much wider group of trades.

Read our **Essential Advice** and then use our **Search** facility at [www.trustmark.org.uk](http://www.trustmark.org.uk) to help you find an approved scheme operator. Through them you can find a TrustMark-registered firm that works in your local area.

## Together, we are working to encourage and support:

- Confident, well-informed consumers who demand good standards of service;
- Considerate consumers who treat contractors fairly, but also know how to complain and where to seek help when necessary;
- An improvement in the performance and reputation of the repair, maintenance and improvement sector.

The view of the LGTF is that this scheme is particularly useful to local authorities who are recommending small builders for grant aided work. The TrustMark logo allows recommendations to be made with confidence.

To find out more about TrustMark go to [www.trustmark.org.uk](http://www.trustmark.org.uk)

# Vow to cut deaths at Construction Safety Forum

At the Construction Forum held on 18th September proposals for a Framework for Action were agreed by representatives of the construction industry and the trade unions in a bid to reduce the death rate in construction following an 28% increase in construction deaths.

Peter Hain, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, said: "Figures out last week showed that nearly one in three construction refurbishment sites inspected by the HSE put the lives of workers at risk - this is completely unacceptable. The HSE stopped work at 244 of the sites immediately. But health and safety should never have been compromised in the first place".

Key areas for action agreed at the Forum attended by government, the Health and Safety Executive, trade unions, industry bodies, suppliers, and contractors include:

- Sharing best practice - working together to agree standards of health and safety to be achieved on house building and domestic repair/refurbishment projects;
- Raising levels of competence - extending the requirement for all site workers in the house building sector to carry a Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) card or be able to demonstrate their occupational and health and safety competence to the same or better standard; and ensuring all workers receive induction training before they start work on a new site;
- Encouraging worker involvement - ensuring that all projects include trades union and worker representatives;

- Integrated working - ensuring that site specific planning and induction is provided to all those in control of tower crane erection, operation and dismantling, with an emphasis on appropriate risk assessment;
- Steps to drive out the informal economy in the sector, which can impact health and safety.

The Strategic Forum Health and Safety Task Group will be asked to coordinate the development of the Framework. The Task Group will report on progress to Ministers by the end of the year.

The UK construction industry has an annual turnover of £250 billion pounds, which is 8% of UK GDP. It employs about 10% of the working population, making it the country's biggest industry. It is a key industry in the delivery of London's 2012 Olympic Games and in the Prime Ministers plans for 3 million new homes by 2020.



Rt. Hon. Peter Hain MP, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions

The full Framework for Action is available from [www.dwp.gov.uk](http://www.dwp.gov.uk)

# Fair payment in construction - the next steps

## Public Sector Construction Clients Forum (PSCCF)

Following the articles in the last two editions of the LGTF newsletter on the work of the PSCCF Fair Payment Working Group which led to the Charter Signing Ceremony on 19 September the following initiatives are underway to facilitate progress:



Peter Bishop  
Director - LGTF

- OGC has let a commission to Rider Levett Bucknall (RLB) to undertake the 'baseline survey' and to develop the performance measurement methodology to track progress, between January 2008 and 2010, as agreed by Working Group 4 and recorded in the Fair Payment Guide. RLB have commenced this work;
- In conjunction with this and again, as agreed by Working Group 4, the umbrella bodies' services will be enlisted to track performance over the same period in the supply chain;
- In order to publicise the Fair Payments initiative, the OGC are undertaking a series of events including a programme of nine regional Roadshows in collaboration with Constructing Excellence and BERR on the subject of the 2012 Construction Commitments and Common Minimum Standards. Roadshows have already taken place in Bristol on 28 June and Cambridge on 25 September - events will continue around the country throughout the course of this and next year.

PSCCF, together with the industry, have delivered for the first time cross-industry agreement on the principles of fair payment best practice and have agreed to implement these. It is estimated that widespread adoption of the principles could save the public sector up to £750m.

This significant new Guide to Best "Fair Payment" practices describes a range of good practice tools and models such as Project Bank Accounts. It also includes the Fair Payment Charter, which commits clients, lead contractors and their supply chains to:

- Greater transparency;
- No unfair withholding of retentions;
- More efficient payment procedures;
- Payment periods not exceeding 30 days.

Central government construction clients are expected to adopt the principles set out in the Guide and the Fair Payment Charter by 1st January 2008.

OGC with PSCCF plans to monitor the progress of implementing the Fair Payment Charter and recommendations, together with the value gains accruing as a result during the next two years starting in January 2008.

You might like to know that we have sent a copy of the Charter and Guide out to every local authority in England, with a covering letter from Roger Latham encouraging them to adopt it! Copies of the Charter are available at [www.lgtf.org.uk](http://www.lgtf.org.uk)

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## What is the Value of Life?

Efficiency is much more than delivering challenges of CSR07. Yes, 3% is tough and since construction is the biggest area of local government spend we can imagine that lots of attention will be focused on maximising gains in this area. But just delivering 3%, or even more, is by no means the end of the issue. Under the current round all savings are to be cashable, but this provides a very narrow focus based on short termism. It does nothing to help turn the tide of investing in whole-life value - crucial to delivering a sustainable environment. Nor does it acknowledge the real value added benefits that smarter procurement regimes can deliver. Avoiding defects and disputes can deliver real tangible benefits, but they are not cashable. Adopting fair payment practices stops contractors having to inflate their costs to cover the effects of poor cash flow. Even more disturbing is the way that saving

lives and avoiding accidents are not counted as efficiencies! Surely some insanity here because no-one would argue that every death, every accident, has a negative impact on true costs, let alone the trauma they bring. Yet in the construction industry we continue to kill people at an alarming rate.

So whilst we focus on delivering efficiency savings, let's not forget that there are many other non-cashable benefits that can make a real difference. So let's deliver the most truly efficient solutions, and not just focus on delivering efficiency.

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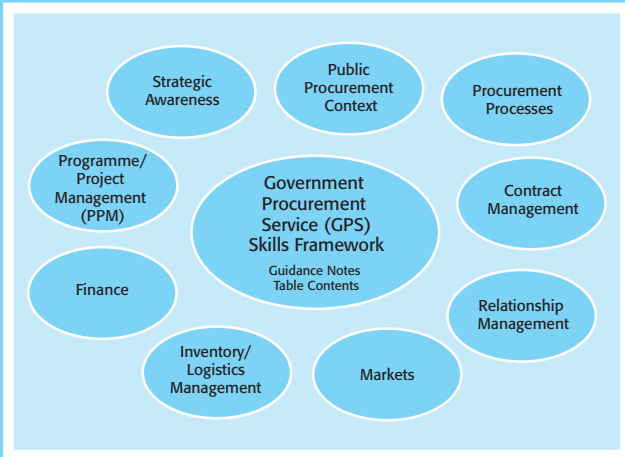


To respond or put forward your own view please e-mail the Editor  
E: [editorlgtfnews@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:editorlgtfnews@yahoo.co.uk)

# Government Procurement Service launches Skills Framework



The Government Procurement Service (GPS) has published the 'GPS Skills Framework', which provides a new standard that public sector bodies can now use to create or enhance their own skills frameworks for procurement practitioners.



Development of this support tool for the procurement profession is an essential element of the GPS response to 'Transforming Government Procurement' (see section 2.4 'Raising Skills'). It will underpin future GPS work to develop model job

descriptions and career paths, and training options, for public sector procurement professionals.

Procurement and skills professionals in 15 Departments have contributed to the design and content of the GPS Skills Framework, which is therefore designed to be flexible enough for use by a range of organisations, including Departments, their NDPBs and Agencies, and other Crown Bodies. It is not linked to Civil Service grades, but rather is structured into four levels of skill in nine skill areas.

Full guidance notes for users are provided in the Framework document which can be found at [www.ogc.gov.uk/introduction\\_to\\_the\\_gps\\_gps\\_skills\\_framework.asp](http://www.ogc.gov.uk/introduction_to_the_gps_gps_skills_framework.asp)

A further refresh of the GPS Skills Framework is planned for January 2008 to incorporate early enhancements identified by users. If you have any comments or contributions to make, or have questions about how to use the GPS Skills Framework, please contact the OGC Service Desk.

Contact details: OGC Service Desk  
T: 0845 000 4999 E: [ServiceDesk@ogc.gov.uk](mailto:ServiceDesk@ogc.gov.uk)



**Local Government Task Force**  
CONSTRUCTING EXCELLENCE



**Infrastructure Forum**  
CONSTRUCTING EXCELLENCE



The Demonstration Programme has been operating since 1998 (launched after the Egan Report) in which time it has worked with over 450 projects with a construction value of around £12bn. The purpose of the Programme is to capture the learning from leading edge projects and to use that learning to influence industry change.

Constructing Excellence has set up a number of sector-based industry working groups to drive the Demonstrations. These groups have two key roles. Firstly, they set the agenda for our Demonstration activity, choosing areas or themes in which they believe there is a need for best practice knowledge. The groups also make the decision as to whether projects which apply for Demonstration status should be taken onto the Programme.

We have identified two key benefits that organisations get from participating in the Programme. Firstly, there are the marketing and profile raising activities that Constructing Excellence can bring. These include case studies, press and newsletter articles and opportunities to present at Constructing Excellence events. Secondly, many Demonstration participants find a lot of value in engaging with other Demonstrations to learn and share from one another.

For the latest information on the Demonstration Programme go to: [www.constructingexcellence.org.uk/resources/demonstrationprojects/clusters.jsp](http://www.constructingexcellence.org.uk/resources/demonstrationprojects/clusters.jsp)

## Contact the LGTF

- to let us know your views;
- for information, support and resources on procurement issues;
- to change address details or nominate a colleague to receive this newsletter.

Next LGTF Board meeting: To be confirmed.  
See website for a synopsis of meetings.

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