



# VIEWPOINT

**The first half of 2025 has seen the new Government get into gear with many announcements affecting the mineral products sector. Barely a week has gone by without a new pledge, proposal or policy coming out of Whitehall.**

The intent within much of these announcements is broadly right but as always, announcements are one thing, delivery another. MPA keeps reminding Government of this, highlighting the need for support for all parts of our industry, which is struggling with weak demand, heavy tax burdens and sluggish regulation.

## Boosting jobs and skills

The Government's stated commitment to prioritise UK jobs and boost skills when awarding major infrastructure contracts is among the most encouraging developments. However, we need to see some firm commitment from Government that the mineral products sector, which employs over 80,000 people, is part of that prioritisation. These are high-value, high-productivity local jobs that not only power the economy but also anchor communities in need of economic opportunity for working people. The Chancellor declared in her Comprehensive Spending Review Speech that *"Put simply: where things are made, and who makes them, matters."* While inspired by steel, this statement could equally apply to mineral products.

If Government is serious about 'boosting British' this approach must extend beyond construction sites. It must run right through the supply chain to include jobs in quarries, cement and lime works, concrete and asphalt plants, precast factories and recycling facilities.

Beyond public procurement of construction, the contribution of our domestic industrial minerals sector must not be forgotten. It underpins all

economic activity supporting a huge diversity of manufacturing and industrial activities, including the growth sectors in the Industrial Strategy.

## Long-term direction, short-term struggles

Long-term direction of policy is one thing, but our industry is on its knees due to lack of demand right now. MPA data shows historically low levels of construction activity. Announcements need to quickly turn to action, so while we welcome the recent steps to beef up and refocus the Building Safety Regulator it is vitally important to see a positive impact quickly.

The £725 billion Infrastructure Strategy marked an important signal of intent from the Government, as did announcements on Sizewell C, Lower Thames Crossing, Heathrow and the investment of £28.6 million by the National Wealth Fund into the Peak Cluster, the world's largest cement and lime Carbon Capture and Storage project. But we've been here before, and all too often bold infrastructure commitments have been followed by delays, descoping or outright cancellations. To avoid more false dawns, a realistic project pipeline must be backed by project-specific construction material resource audits, so those in the supply chain, like MPA members, can invest long-term with confidence.

## Domestic supply chain

The announcement of a £1 billion investment in offshore wind energy is a great opportunity for the UK to deliver net zero infrastructure and improve energy security while backing domestic industries. Using concrete floating foundations is the best way for the UK to develop its offshore wind capacity, because the UK's geological resources mean that large quantities of concrete can be locally manufactured using domestic materials.

Changes to mineral planning and permitting, plus solid commitment from Government to prioritise domestic

supply are vital for the UK to retain value, boost regional economies and reduce emissions in the process.

Doing so would reveal the need for a more strategic approach to the UK's domestic mineral products supply, something that was overlooked in the Industrial Strategy. Of course, we're pleased with the Government's intent to reduce industrial energy costs, helping to create a more level playing field with overseas competitors. But the omission of aggregates and industrial minerals as foundational industries is a missed opportunity.

At the same time, reforms to the planning system must address the specific needs of the minerals sector to ensure a steady supply of essential mineral products.

## Delivery not declarations

Our industry is too often taken for granted. Mineral products are not optional extras; they are essential to delivering every major Government priority from new homes to net zero. This is reflected by the fact that we represent the largest material flow in the economy – over 1 million tonnes of resources and products every day. And when well-intentioned policy inadvertently overlooks our sector, the biggest risk is to the Government's own ambitions for economic growth.

As we look ahead, there are some grounds for hope. Many of the building blocks are there – an ambitious infrastructure agenda, more competitive energy costs, momentum on planning reform and a new focus on domestic supply chains.

Yet it is delivery – not declarations – that will make the difference. If the Government can get this right, the prize is enormous – sustainable growth, secure jobs, and a stronger, greener more resilient UK economy.

**Chris Leese**  
**Executive Chair**  
**MPA Executive Management Committee**