

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY****Off-site manufacture for construction****Call for Evidence**

The House of Lords Science and Technology Select Committee, under the Chairmanship of Lord Patel, is conducting an inquiry into Off-site manufacture for construction. The Committee invites interested individuals and organisations to submit evidence to this inquiry.

When preparing your response, please bear in mind that short, concise submissions are preferred and responses must not be any longer than four sides of A4 – bullet points are acceptable. We do not expect you to address every question below. Equally, if there are any crucial issues not captured by the questions we pose, please highlight what they are and explain their salience.

How to submit evidence is set out in Annex I but if you have any questions or require any adjustments to enable you to respond, please contact the staff of the Committee on the details provided. **The deadline for receiving written submissions is Thursday 26 April.**

Public hearings will be held in April and May 2018. The Committee aims to report to the House, with recommendations in summer 2018. The report will receive a response from the Government, and may be debated in the House.

**Background**

The UK Construction industry was worth nearly £100 billion to the UK economy in 2016. The sector contributes 6.1% to UK GDP. The construction industry is also vital to solving some of the pressing problems facing the UK, such as a lack of affordable housing and ageing infrastructure that needs replacing or increasing in capacity. However, the construction industry suffers from poor productivity and has not experienced the improvements in productivity seen in other sectors. New technologies, including off-site manufacture, could help to improve the productivity of the construction industry.

Off-site manufacture for construction describes a range of construction activities that involve bringing together construction processes, components, elements or modules in a factory before installation into their final location. While it is not a new idea the level of technology now available means it is much more viable as a modern method of construction.

The Government announced a construction sector deal in November 2017 as part of its Industrial Strategy white paper. This included £170 million of investment from the Government in the Transforming Construction programme. The construction industry committed to match that funding with a £250 million investment. The programme will "bring together the construction, manufacturing, energy and digital sectors in a new hub to

commercialise technologies capable of building assets which are both cost effective and energy efficient."<sup>1</sup>

## **Scope**

The Committee's inquiry will consider the potential benefits of off-site manufacture for construction and any drawbacks or obstacles to its wider use. It will also consider how off-site manufacture might contribute to improving productivity within the construction industry and how it will fit in with the Construction sector deal announced by the Government. It will examine how Government policy, particularly around public procurement, might need to change to encourage economically and environmentally sustainable practises in the construction industry, which could facilitate off-site manufacture.

## **Questions**

In answering the questions below please provide practical examples where possible. If relevant, please state how you define off-site manufacture in your response.

### **Perceived advantages of offsite manufacture for construction**

1. What are the opportunities offered by offsite manufacture for construction? What are the likely drawbacks? What factors are likely to influence clients, architects, design engineers, contractors and the supply chain in deciding whether to choose offsite manufacture?
2. It is often claimed that offsite manufacture can lead to:
  - lower costs, faster delivery and increased quality;
  - increased productivity;
  - improved health and safety;
  - greater provision of new, affordable housing.

What is the evidence for this?

### **Potential barriers to wider use of offsite manufacture**

3. What are the drawbacks to offsite manufacture for construction?
4. What re-skilling of the construction workforce is required to facilitate a change to more off-site manufacture for construction?
5. Can the benefits of standardisation and factory manufacture be realised without hampering architectural ambition? If so, how?
6. What R&D is needed, and by whom, to realise fully the potential benefits of off-site manufacture?

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-and-industry-cement-deal-to-give-uk-construction-the-edge>

## **Government actions**

7. (If published) does the construction sector deal correctly identify the issues faced by the construction industry and the actions that the Government and other stakeholders need to take to address them? What should it contain/what is missing?
8. What changes could be made to public procurement processes to encourage more economically and environmentally sustainable practises in the construction industry and facilitate off-site manufacture?

## ANNEX I: GUIDANCE FOR SUBMISSIONS

Written evidence should be submitted online using the written submission form available at <https://www.parliament.uk/off-site-written-submission-form>. This page also provides guidance on submitting evidence. The deadline for written evidence is **Thursday 26 April 2018**.

If you have difficulty submitting evidence online, please contact the Committee staff by email [hlscience@parliament.uk](mailto:hlscience@parliament.uk) or by telephoning 020 7219 5750.

Shorter submissions are preferred, no longer four sides of A4. A submission longer than eight pages should include a one-page summary. Paragraphs should be numbered. All submissions made through the written submission form will be acknowledged automatically by email.

Evidence which is accepted by the Committee may be published online at any stage; when it is so published it becomes subject to parliamentary copyright and is protected by parliamentary privilege. Submissions which have been previously published will not be accepted as evidence.

Once you have received acknowledgement that the evidence has been accepted you will receive a further email, and at this point you may publicise or publish your evidence yourself. In doing so you must indicate that it was prepared for the Committee, and you should be aware that your publication or re-publication of your evidence may not be protected by parliamentary privilege.

Personal contact details will be removed from evidence before publication, but will be retained by the Committee Office and used for specific purposes relating to the Committee's work, for instance to seek additional information.

Persons who submit written evidence, and others, may be invited to give oral evidence. Oral evidence is usually given in public at Westminster and broadcast online; transcripts are also taken and published online. Persons invited to give oral evidence will be notified separately of the procedure to be followed and the topics likely to be discussed.

Substantive communications to the Committee about the inquiry should be addressed through the clerk of the Committee, whether or not they are intended to constitute formal evidence to the Committee.

This is a public call for evidence. Please bring it to the attention of other groups and individuals who may not have received a copy direct.

You may follow the progress of the inquiry at: <https://www.parliament.uk/off-site-manufacture-construction>.