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Routemap to Zero Avoidable Waste in Construction – increase efficiency, save carbon, save cost.

The construction sector – comprising buildings and infrastructure – is the biggest producer of waste in England. The overall reduction of waste, significant reuse and the diversion of waste from landfill together form a significant part in the delivery of Government's net zero carbon targets.

The sector produces approximately two thirds of the country's total waste – in 2016 this amounted to 120 million tonnes. The Routemap leads on ways of generating less tonnage of material waste from the outset and across the building lifecycle. It sets a pathway to prevent, reuse and recycle more, in line with the waste hierarchy – and eliminate waste to landfill.

The [Routemap for Zero Avoidable Waste](#) has been prepared by the Green Construction Board (GCB), in collaboration with Defra and BEIS. It identifies the action that everyone involved in the construction sector – both public and private – can take to help deliver a lower carbon, more efficient industry. It is supported by the Construction Leadership Council, which leads on strategic government and industry issues for the sector.

Delivering reductions in waste will demand change to established ways of working – waste levels in construction have shown virtually no reduction across all sectors for nearly a decade. The benefits from making significant reductions are considerable – for the industry, efficiency can be increased and operating costs reduced and wider society will see a reduction in the 3.3 million tonnes of CO2 equivalent arising each year from materials that are currently wasted.

This Routemap recognises that actions by all parts of the supply chain are needed to reduce waste and ultimately eliminate all avoidable waste. It adopts the working interpretation of Zero Avoidable Waste in Construction published by the GCB in 2020 and adopts the principles of the waste hierarchy and life cycle assessment.

Actions are identified across the construction industry (infrastructure and building) and apply to new and existing buildings and structures. New buildings and structures should use resources efficiently, be designed for durability and longevity and safety, and designed for deconstruction and disassembly at end of life. For existing buildings and structures, as they approach the end of their current use we should seek to repurpose them for new uses, and if not possible, demolish them in a way to ensure the maximum amount of product and material is reused, recycled or recovered.

There are important actions for everyone in the supply chain to take – Public and Private Clients, Design Teams, Contractors, Suppliers, Facilities Managers and Demolition Contractors. The Routemap also identifies where government can contribute, both in its own procurement and the setting and implementation of policies.

We emphasise that to meet a target of Zero Avoidable Waste robust measurement systems are needed to enable consistent and regular monitoring which ultimately feeds into the development of a National Materials Strategy. At that point we can begin to realise a true circular economy.

The Routemap is an interactive infographic identifying aims, actions, context and guidance and is launched today, and is available on the website of the Construction Leadership Council.

Andy Mitchell: *The Routemap sets a way forward for the industry to reduce the significant amount of waste it creates, and reduce its impact on the environment. It will encourage many in the industry to take a fresh approach to what might be seen as a familiar topic, but it's one which we need to see some real changes in. The CLC supports GCB to help improve our overall resource efficiency, and through the Performance Framework we will be able to demonstrate industry progress on this important topic.*

Notes for editor:

- The CLC's mission is to provide sector leadership to the construction industry. Our main objective is to develop solutions that meet the 2025 challenges. We work with government and industry organisations to promote industry initiatives
- The CLC has twelve workstreams that work collaboratively to address the biggest issues facing the industry including skills, building safety and business models across all sectors of the industry. We are bringing together the best in the industry to deliver the change that we desire for ourselves and our clients.
- Constituted in 2011, the Green Construction Board (GCB) is the sustainability workstream of the Construction Leadership Council (CLC). David Pinder, Director of Mixergy, was appointed Chair in April 2018.
- The GCB's priority and main focus is to advise on the regulatory, policy and technical framework required to overcome key barriers to the delivery of a zero carbon and zero waste built environment (both buildings and infrastructure) and to identify the commercial, jobs and export opportunities that such a clean growth, zero carbon, zero waste economy requires.
- The Routemap has been prepared by the GCB's Resources and Waste Task Group with the principal authors being Katherine Adams (Consultant at Reusefully) and the co-chairs of the Working Group - Jane Thornback (CPA Policy Adviser and Co Secretariat of CLC) and Robert Pearce (Board member GCB, and Haskoll Architects.) The project received financial support from BEIS, and was in collaboration with Defra. The design was produced by Hayley Kilby

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