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IF POLITICIANS WANT JOBS & GROWTH, THEY NEED A PLAN B

BMF TAKES PLAN B TO PARTY CONFERENCES

With the Autumn Statement due next week, the Builders Merchants' Federation (BMF) and other construction voices have joined forces to provide the Coalition Government with a Plan B.

As drastic public spending cuts loom, the BMF and its 'Get Britain Building' partners have written Plan B to make ministers and opposition spokesmen aware of the value that housebuilding & home improvement offers for jobs & growth.

The BMF plan gives Messrs Osborne and Alexander an industry view on how they can revive construction to re-build public confidence and prosperity - and 'Get Britain Building' again. Plan B argues that construction is the only industry capable of creating 2½ million real, meaningful jobs and the sustained economic growth necessary to help Britain climb out of recession.

Plan B - Key Facts & Figures

Every £1 invested in construction:

- generates £2:84p in GDP
- provides a 56p return to the Exchequer
- retains 92p within the UK.

The construction industry:

- employs 3 million workers = 8% of the workforce
- consists of 300,000 firms (mostly SMEs)
- accounts for 10% of overall GDP (inc. the value chain)
- can add an extra 28½ new jobs per £1 million invested

BMF Policy Manager, **Brett Amphlett**, shared some of the thinking behind Plan B:

"The Government's big idea is to replace jobs lost from public services with new ones created by commerce. The stark reality is public sector cuts are moving at a faster pace than private enterprise can create the new jobs. This means there's a huge chasm between political rhetoric and what's actually happening out there, on the ground".

"The cutbacks being earmarked are not simply those in Whitehall and your local council, health authority or police force. They involve merchants whose business is to supply the public sector with everyday building materials and the expertise required to deliver declared government priorities. That's why we're saying construction equals real, purposeful jobs and enduring economic growth at a local level, on a regional basis".

Commenting further, **Mike Leonard**, Director of the Modern Masonry Alliance, said:

"The market for new homes is softening. Next week, our members face the biggest public sector cuts in our lifetime. As an industry, there has never been a more important time to unite and make

sure politicians know and appreciate the contribution the building industry can make to the long-term economic recovery of Great Britain”.

“The Coalition Government is committed to spending cuts and tax rises to reduce the massive debt burden. Rising unemployment is likely to be the main consequences - and for this reason, we believe adopting our Plan B is vital to maintain and create real jobs.”

As politicians and activists gathered at their Party Conferences, the ‘Get Britain Building’ campaigners went to Liverpool, Manchester & Birmingham to lobby for Plan B on behalf of members.

The BMF and the MMA were joined there by:

- the Federation of Master Builders
- the British Ceramics Confederation
- the Glass & Glazing Federation
- and the Federation of Plastering & Drywall Contractors

to field industry spokesmen to make the case for housebuilding & home improvement.

In Manchester, they heard the new Labour leader, Ed Miliband MP, refer directly to the fortunes of construction in his maiden speech. He said: “You see when you cancel thousands of new school buildings at a stroke, it isn't just bad for our kids - it's bad for construction companies at a time when their order books are empty”.

In Birmingham, the message to the Conservatives was the need to see the return of a thriving RMI market - repair, maintenance & improvement - as a way to revitalise local economies. ‘Get Britain Building’ believes there is pent-up demand for small works in many local authority areas - a demand which has been severely restricted by a lack of confidence and economic uncertainty.

The ‘Get Britain Building’ position is supported by research carried out two years’ ago by Oxford University. It found the market potential to renovate and insulate existing homes is worth between £3½ and £6½ billion per year.

Speaking about renovation, the BMF’s **Brett Amphlett** added:

“Plan B is designed to bolster builders and allied crafts & trades that carry out housing improvements, every day of the week, out of sight from the London-based media. The attraction for municipal leaders is that every £1 spent in, say, Birmingham is captured in the city’s economy - or, at least, within the West Midlands”.

“Elected leaders can do this by insisting contracts contain clauses on using apprentices - and for a minimum percentage of inputs to come from the local supply chain”.

‘Get Britain Building’ is not alone in calling for a Plan B. Respected City economists such as Roger Bootle of Capital Economics, and Adam Posen, a member of the Bank of England’s Monetary Policy Committee, have both been quoted in national newspapers saying a Plan B is needed to kick-start the economy.

To download the leaflet and to publicly support Plan B, please visit www.getbritainbuilding.org

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