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£30 BILLION OF UK'S FUTURE INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS PLEDGE TO DECARBONISE

- Leading public and private sector construction organisations have set a pathway to Net Zero by being the latest companies to sign up to the Construction Leadership Council's "Five Client Carbon Commitments"
- The Environment Agency, Scottish Water and Transport for London are the latest to commit to tackle their biggest contributors to CO₂ emissions – diesel, steel and concrete
- Pledges will change the way infrastructure is delivered now and in the future, by setting new standards with commitments to end the use of diesel and only using the lowest-carbon concrete and steel possible

Minister for Industry Sarah Jones MP today unveiled three new major organisations that have pledged to decarbonise their projects: the Environment Agency, Scottish Water and Transport for London; joining Anglian Water, Heathrow, the Lower Thames Crossing, National Highways, Northumbrian Water and Sellafield Ltd, who committed last year. Today's announcement sees some of the largest UK infrastructure clients coming together and committing to decarbonise upwards of £30 billion worth of UK construction projects, 13% of the UK construction market – supporting the Prime Minister's announcement at COP29 to increase the UK's efforts to decarbonise by 2035.

The announcement was made at an event today, bringing together leaders from across the construction industry to update on the Construction Leadership Council's "Five Client Carbon Commitments" – five simple, practical pledges which will help the sector to achieve Net Zero.

Through their significant buying power, these powerhouses of UK infrastructure are setting a new standard for low-carbon construction. The public commitments give the global construction supply chain clarity on how modern infrastructure projects in the UK will be built and maintained, and incentivise manufacturers and suppliers to invest in the new green technologies and skills needed to meet that demand.

Other large infrastructure client organisations such as National Grid, East West Rail and Houses of Parliament Restoration and Renewal have joined the Future Partner list and are expected to sign up to the pledges in the coming months.

By signing up to these commitments, firms have publicly detailed their plans to phase out fossil fuels and demand zero emissions, together with low carbon materials for their projects.

"The Five Client Carbon Commitments" are;

- 1 Procure for low carbon construction and provide incentives in contracts
- 2 Set phase out dates for fossil fuel use
- 3 Eliminate the most carbon intensive concrete products
- 4 Eliminate the most carbon intensive steel products
- 5 Sign up to PAS 2080, allowing a common standard in carbon management and reporting

The Five Client Carbon Commitments were pioneered by the Lower Thames Crossing, a proposed new road and tunnel connecting Kent and Essex, that will help grow the UK economy and relieve congestion at the Dartford Crossing. The scheme has recently announced a massive 70% carbon reduction target and was the first major infrastructure project to put a legally binding carbon limit in its planning application.

The construction industry plays a vital role in the success of the country's economy by building and maintaining the infrastructure on which society relies, but it is also a significant generator of CO₂ emissions (contributing around 44% of the UK's emissions) and therefore climate change. The UK government has a target to reach Net Zero by 2050 – with the construction sector producing a significant share of the country's carbon emissions, change is needed.

Sarah Jones MP, Minister for Industry and Co-Chair of the Construction Leadership Council said: "From boosting new green jobs and tech to driving investment and innovation, there are huge opportunities in decarbonisation for the UK's construction sector.

"Decarbonising industry is vital to our plan to achieve net zero, grow the economy and make the UK a clean energy superpower. That's why it's fantastic to see more leading companies signing up to the five Client Carbon Commitments, which will go a long way towards achieving these ambitions."

Matt Palmer, Industry Sponsor for Net Zero and Biodiversity at the Construction Leadership Council and Executive Director, Lower Thames Crossing said: "To grow our economy, we must build and improve our infrastructure, for too long building infrastructure has been at odds with commitments on climate change. These forward looking clients, with £30 billion worth of future projects committing to driving out carbon, is helping the construction sector to seize the opportunity to adapt and deliver. Our experience on the Lower Thames Crossing is this can be done at no extra cost, and our hope is as the number of clients asking for low-carbon construction increases, this will continue to make it cost effective for all.

Thanks to the organisations who have signed up to the Five Client Carbon Commitments, the sector is demonstrating that vital infrastructure projects can be built in a Net Zero future and that we can lead the way across the Globe."

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Notes to Editor

The Construction Leadership Council

The CLC is a collaboration between government and industry. Its mission is to provide sector leadership to the construction industry. The expanded CLC has twelve workstreams that operate collaboratively to address the biggest issues facing the sector. Workstreams include skills and inclusion, building safety, Net Zero and business models.

The CLC is co-chaired by Minister of State at the Department for Business and Trade and the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, Sarah Jones MP and Mark Reynolds, Mace Group Chairman and Chief Executive. The Deputy Co-Chair is Richard Robinson, AtkinsRéalis President UK & Ireland.

Construct Zero:

CO₂nstruct Zero is the construction sector's Net Zero industry change programme. It's underpinned by nine priorities (drawn from the Committee for Climate Change), together with a suite of 31 evolving metrics. The CLC measures industry progress against the metrics through public progress reports (with three due for publication in 2025). Over 260 companies currently support the free programme, including companies across and beyond the construction sector.

Further details, including how to join, are available at <https://www.constructionleadershipcouncil.co.uk/workstream/co2nstructzero/>