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APPG for Project Delivery

Building a Better Future:
Inquiry into improving the delivery of national infrastructure projects

November 2025

The APPG for Project Delivery was set up in February 2025. It aims to provide a forum where parliamentarians can support and discuss the delivery of national projects and promote the uptake of best practices for project management from around the world. The APPG's work aims to ensure the UK has the essential skills, policies, and people required to successfully deliver major projects that drive economic growth, spread innovation, and build infrastructure across the entire country.

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Foreword

Henry Tufnell

Chair of the APPG for Project Delivery

This country was once known for building things that improved people's lives. Today, the word 'infrastructure' elicits a groan of frustration from the public. All too often, our constituents view our infrastructure projects as beset by delays, overspends, and short-term thinking. Nothing works, everything costs more and talk of ambitious infrastructure projects is met with scepticism and friction. We need to get this right because infrastructure is the cornerstone of our lives. The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Project Delivery launched this inquiry, calling on the industry sectors and professionals to highlight the action needed to improve infrastructure delivery. Our goal is to work with them to put this issue at the heart of the conversation in Westminster and across the country.

"Change is a killer for projects" was one of the most striking remarks we heard in the APPG's evidence sessions. Too often, infrastructure projects are boiled in the pressure cooker of Government, Parliament, the media and public expectation. We don't replicate what works, we don't grow the skills we need, and we don't embed delivery from the start. Only radical action will change that. The scale of the problem is still best articulated by one line: many projects fall into the so-called "valley of death" between policy and delivery. The evidence we received makes clear that this won't solve itself. Infrastructure that could improve living standards, boost the economy, and create more highly skilled jobs requires us to put delivery into the very heart of the system.

To deliver on the 10-year infrastructure plan and the work of the National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority (NISTA), we need a major shift that embeds project delivery into every corner of the system. We should be looking at examples from other jurisdictions to see how they replicate projects. NISTA, as an infrastructure body, needs power to have a proper impact. Vital projects must resist many tensions over their lifespan. And parliamentarians, senior officials, and stakeholders must hold up a mirror to themselves when examining what needs to happen. I therefore welcome the huge response to our call for evidence and solutions, as we heard from a range of experts, including architects, engineers, investors, project professionals, local leaders, and academics.

Governments make the right noises. But when you examine the machinery itself, you see that a culture of delivery has not yet been hardwired into the system. Too often, the first spade in the ground and the ribbon-cutting at the opening ceremony are the only moments in an infrastructure project's life that can rely on firm political support. Evidence shared with us pointed out several overlooked solutions, quick wins, and long-term policy changes. If adopted, many of these could spark the changes we need to improve project delivery across the country.

One crucial improvement needed is the urgent addressing of the country's skills deficit. As we heard during the oral evidence sessions, even with the right planning, funding, and project pipeline, a lack of skilled people creates an insurmountable barrier. Action is needed to enhance the skills and professions involved in infrastructure delivery and provide clear career progression routes. The Government should consider ring-fencing funding for vital project delivery skills or apprenticeships. A stable pipeline of projects could create thousands of skilled, well-paid jobs and ensure that the expertise we build stays in our communities. Most importantly, we need to see these jobs develop within communities that have not historically had them.

The value and objectives of infrastructure projects must be set early. Project leaders should be empowered, have a strong supply of skilled people, resources, and a framework to deliver on this. A lot could be achieved by embedding professionals with project management skills at the very early stages, when goals are set. When combined with a strong NISTA or sponsoring departmental body, project leaders would have a mandate and the protection to resist external pressures.

We heard how many major project challenges arise because projects are unprecedented. Hospitals, energy infrastructure, and similar projects should consider flat-pack models. While on procurement, we heard it needs to be more agile, linked to smarter contracting, with earlier supplier engagement. We also need to rebuild the relationship between the public and private sectors. It's essential to find a better way to bring SMEs back into the heart of our project thinking. And we must learn from every success and failure because the data and lessons from these projects are national assets.

I urge ministers to consider these recommendations, engage with the APPG and, most importantly, embrace the solutions presented by the infrastructure world. One of the biggest takeaways from this inquiry is that the country is overflowing with ambition, ideas and the will to deliver the cultural change that's needed.

If we get this right, we can build the transport, energy and health systems that truly change lives.

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Introduction

In recent years, the UK has seen national infrastructure projects plagued with cost overruns, delays, and poor outcomes, all affecting the delivery of the infrastructure and inevitably hindering job creation, progress, and economic growth. High-profile examples of poor delivery and poor outcomes have dampened expectations around projects. However, infrastructure underpins everything we need, from housing to education, healthcare, and energy. If the UK cannot deliver these projects, communities will suffer, and our quality of life will decline.

The Government has placed a strong emphasis on infrastructure as a driver for growth. This has been evident through recent policy initiatives, such as the establishment of NISTA, the launch of the 10-Year Infrastructure Strategy, and the introduction of the Planning and Infrastructure Bill. With the launch of the Infrastructure Pipeline in 2025, greater clarity has also been a welcome development for stakeholders, helping them plan and invest for the long term, with over £540 billion of planned investment over the next 10 years.[1]

However, despite these steps, major barriers to successful project delivery in the UK persist, putting the Government's vision for infrastructure at risk. In light of this, the APPG for Project Delivery launched its first inquiry into improving the delivery of national infrastructure projects in March 2025. In order to understand some of the key areas for improving infrastructure delivery, this inquiry sought to explore current barriers and opportunities to improve the delivery of the major projects.

The call for written evidence ran between 25 March and 6 May, and we were delighted to receive over 30 submissions from key stakeholders. We were also very pleased to hold three evidence sessions with leading industry representatives. The APPG is grateful to all stakeholders who shared their knowledge and expertise on the barriers to successful project delivery. A list of respondents to the call for evidence and the questions posed in the written evidence can be found in the Appendix.

[1] The Infrastructure Pipeline, National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority 2025

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Recommendations

Following the evidence received, the APPG makes the following recommendations to the Government:

1. **Drive a radical shift in delivery culture to make the project delivery discipline a permanent feature of government and the civil service**
   The Government should use the 10-year infrastructure plan and NISTA, backed by long-term investment in projects, to make delivery discipline a permanent feature of government. This will help end the so-called "valley of death" problem that exists between policy and delivery. This would require targets to be set early, resources and accountability to be clarified, and major projects to be protected from short-term politics and delivered consistently across Parliaments. All other recommendations flow from this long term aim.

2. **Embed delivery expertise early and mandate it in the project process**
   The Government should mandate that all major projects secure independent delivery assurance before announcement, involve project specialists at the policymaking phase and ensure project delivery skills and expertise are built in from inception. This should be accompanied by departmental benchmarks and clear targets for the proportion of officials who are delivery-focused professionals.

3. **Professionalise project leadership within Government**
   Project management training should be expanded and made mandatory for Senior Civil Servants and anyone managing a government project over £10m. An accountable Chief Project Officer role should be incorporated into Government departments to ensure all areas of Government understand how complex, long-term projects are delivered.

4. **Boost our project skills base**
   Take urgent action to ensure the country has the skills and jobs needed to deliver on infrastructure. The Government should consider establishing a National Infrastructure Delivery Skills Roadmap to establish a consistent talent pipeline aligned with long-term national infrastructure priorities. Actions such as the ringfencing of funding for support training and apprenticeships in project management should be considered through routes such as the Growth and Skills Levy.

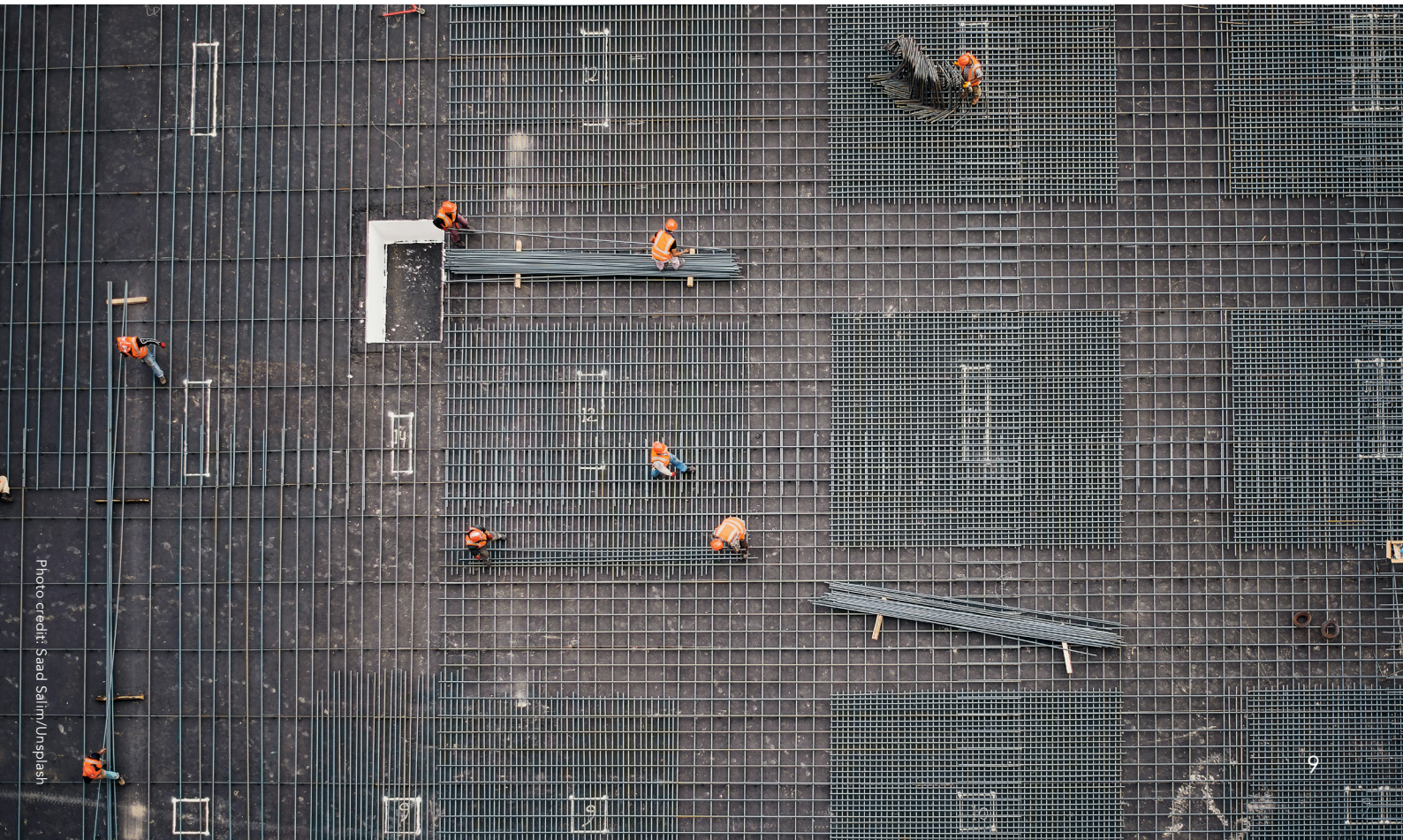
5. **Strengthen public and private partnerships (PPPs)**
   When considering PPPs the Government must ensure the public sector has the engineering, legal, financial and negotiation expertise needed to match the private sector. This is vital to clarify risks, set clear project specifications, and drive value for the taxpayer.

6. **Update procurement and supplier engagement**
   A major shift is needed in procurement to ensure early supplier involvement, the inclusion of project professionals throughout the process and lessons learned from other countries.

7. **The Government's infrastructure body must have powers to ensure delivery**
   Drawing on international examples NISTA must be given teeth to act and oversee national infrastructure projects from policy to completion. This will ensure NISTA must be given teeth to act and oversee national infrastructure projects from policy to completion, ensuring consistency, accountability and effective delivery across Government.

8. **Establish the value of a project and ensure it is successfully communicated**
   The Government should lead in communicating the benefits and public value of national infrastructure projects, requiring major projects to set clear Public Value Statements.

The APPG will be conducting a number of focused meetings and deep dives into the recommendations. We encourage parliamentarians to email contact@appgprojectdelivery.org to get involved.



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Section 1.
Managing National Infrastructure Projects

"Change is a killer for projects" was a strong phrase uttered in one of our APPG meetings and was heard loud and clear. National infrastructure projects are often incredibly complex and can take years to complete. This means that a project's lifecycle often spans multiple parliaments, governments and ministers, and involves a wide range of stakeholders. Therefore, successful delivery requires not only the on-the-ground skills, but also governance models that empower leadership, provide insulation from political changes and create clear structures of accountability.[2]

1.1: Driving a Radical Shift in Delivery Culture

Across submissions and oral evidence, a consistent picture emerged: the UK's recurring delivery problems cannot be solved by looking at a handful of technical problems. The reality is we have a systemic problem, leading to the delays, cost overruns, and tensions that create public distrust and doubt. Even well-intentioned policies and strategies become stranded between policy and delivery. While these issues are well-understood, they remain unresolved because the *discipline of delivery* has never been fully embedded across the machinery of Government.

Organisations, including Amentum, APM, ICE, CECA, WSP, Pinsent Masons, and others, provided written and oral evidence that pointed to a range of linked issues traced back to decisions made in an environment where proper consideration of delivery was absent. These include an oversimplification of projects, a failure to learn lessons from other projects and data, and late involvement of delivery professionals as core drivers of delay and cost growth. During the APPG's oral evidence on energy projects, the panel was clear that large major projects are challenging and starting in the right way is vital. There is a frequent temptation to start digging into the ground before finalising the scope and concept of a project. We heard that while many current Government initiatives acknowledge the problems, *"these efforts lack authority, scale and systemic integration required to achieve lasting improvement"*.[3]

1.2 Standardisation, Change, and Projects

We fail to replicate successful strategies, neglect to nurture essential skills, and overlook the need for solid delivery from the outset. It's crystal clear: only bold, transformative action will turn the tide. A key component of both our health-focused and energy-focused oral evidence sessions highlighted the importance of a proper culture in answering questions like *"Why does it take country X a fraction of the time to build their power station?"*. In both sessions, we heard the benefits of focusing on replication, 'flat pack' models, or a baseline design. When combined with the right skills base, you have more people with more experience and proven methods at your disposal.

[2] Gianina Caballero, Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry. 2025.
[3] Acumen7, Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry. 2025

Photo credit: bardhok/Adobe Stock

1.3: Protecting Projects from Political Mood Swings

A significant proportion of the evidence submitted to the inquiry highlighted the important role of the Government in ensuring the successful delivery of national infrastructure projects. The current Government, clearly aware of its role, has signalled its intention to create certainty and stability for those involved in delivering national infrastructure projects through the unveiling of a 10-year infrastructure strategy and the launch of a new Infrastructure Pipeline. However, evidence called for national infrastructure projects and their delivery to be depoliticised and protected from short-term political volatility or used as a political football through the building of long-term cross-party support.[4] As one evidence submission summarised, *"the UK's delivery system remains too fragmented, politicised and short-term in its orientation"*.[5]

[4] Amentum, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry*. 2025; Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA), *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry*. 2025; Dr Juliano Denicol, University College London, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry*. 2025; Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE), *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry*. 2025; WSP, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry*. 2025

[5] Gianina Caballero, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry*. 2025.

As the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) and WSP highlighted in their submissions, the lifecycle of a national infrastructure project, from creation to delivery, can span multiple parliaments.[6] Therefore, without cross-party political buy-in on infrastructure projects or priorities, the political continuity needed to create a stable delivery environment and enable long-term planning will not materialise.[7] Similarly, long-term strategies need some level of cross-party support to enable consistency, which will, in turn, unlock investment and create better outcomes.[8] As a report from the Institute for Government explained, *"frequent political flaws such as failure to secure cross-party agreement... translates into high political risk for investors, and local community opposition, which often leads to delay"*.[9] In a more recent report, the Major Projects Association describes the Government's approach to national infrastructure projects as both *"erratic"* and *"fragmented"*.[10]

Without some level of long-term cross-party support, national infrastructure projects are vulnerable to shifting political priorities, driven by short-term motivations, electoral cycles, ministerial changes and policy shifts.[11] In their submission, Acumen7 highlighted the culture of frequent ministerial turnover, evidencing 33 prison ministers in just 20 years.[12] Similarly, HS2 had to navigate six Prime Ministers, eight Chancellors and nine Secretaries of State for Transport in the time up to the cancellation of the northern leg, leading to an inconsistent overarching strategy.[13]

Short-term political motivations can lead to changes to projects, which drive up costs and cause delays.[14] Over the long term, they can create an environment of uncertainty and a feeling of vulnerability, which hinders business confidence, public faith and investor trust.[15] As Terry Meighan, Infrastructure Director at Rolls-Royce, told Parliamentarians in a recent APPG evidence session, changes can be a *"killer for projects"* — even if well-meaning — and should be carefully thought through.[16] Unnecessary changes introduce cost, risk and delay, some of which could be mitigated in a more stable funding environment.[17] Another submission highlighted how *"uncertainty creates ripple effects throughout the delivery ecosystem, affecting everything from initial planning to resource allocation and stakeholder management"*.[18]

Furthermore, exposure to political volatility can lead to decisions on the development, scope, or delivery of projects which are driven by short-term pressures rather than a long-term vision.[19]

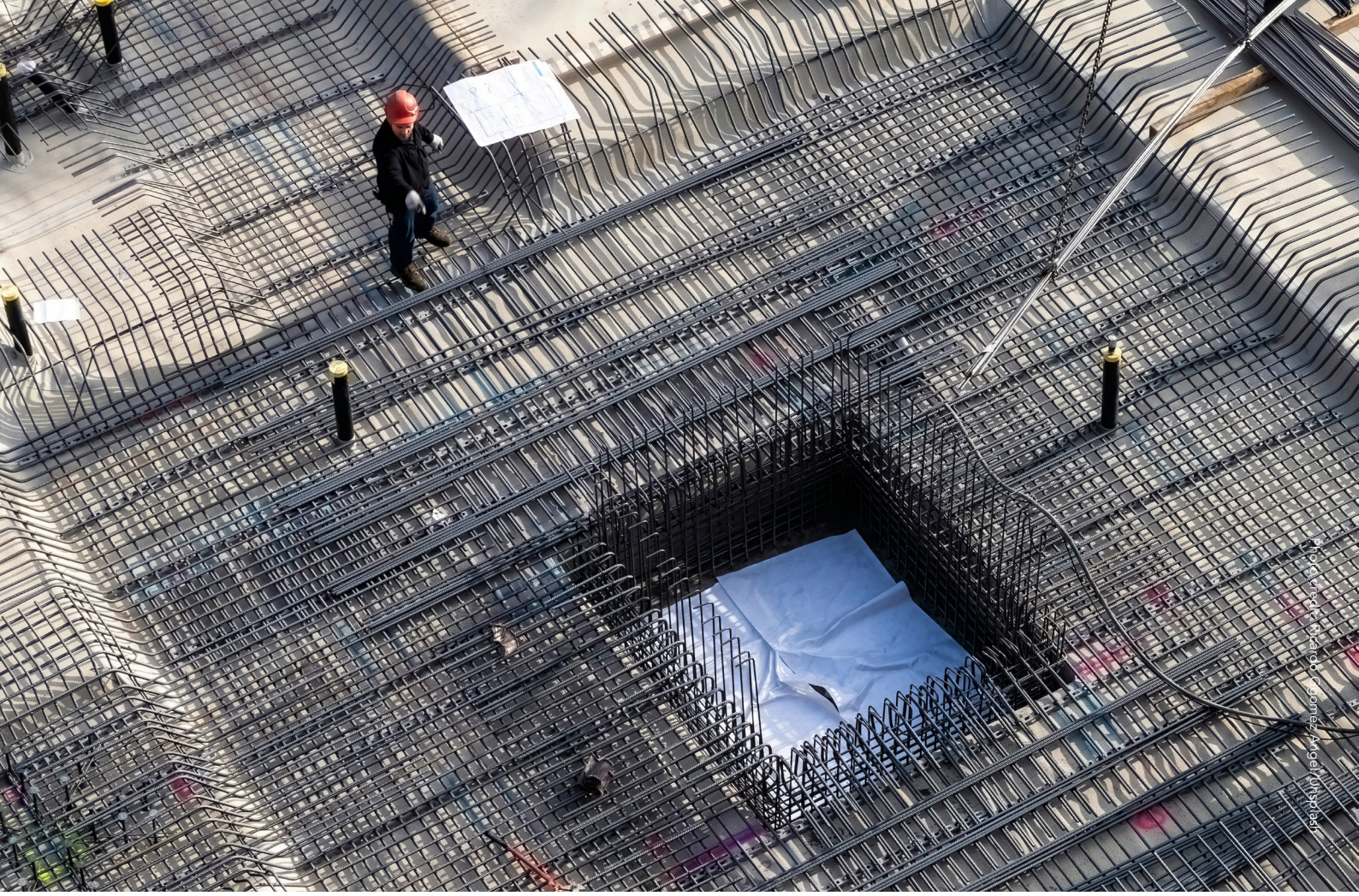
[6] Institution of Civil Engineers, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry*. 2025; WSP, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry*. 2025
[7] WSP, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry*. 2025
[8] Ridge Partners, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry*. 2025
[9] Institute for Government, *What's Wrong with Infrastructure Decision Making*, 2017.
[10] Major Projects Association, *Cancellation of Major Projects*, 2024.
[11] Acumen7, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025; ICE, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry*. 2025
[12] Acumen7, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[13] ICE, *Briefing Paper: The cancellation of HS2's northern leg – learning lessons, Institution of Civil Engineers.* 2024
[14] Amentum, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025; ICE, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025; Acumen7, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[15] Amentum, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025; CECA, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025; Ridge Partners, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025; Acumen7, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[16] Terry Meighan, *Inquiry Oral Evidence Session,* 10th June 2025
[17] WSP, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[18] Nicholas Dacre, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[19] ICE, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025

The Government's new Infrastructure Pipeline is a clear attempt to provide the long-term clarity and stability needed to deliver infrastructure projects which provide clear economic and social benefits to communities across the UK. However, without protecting the project pipeline from political shifts, particularly in cases where the groundwork has not been done to engage with local communities, it will be hard to provide the consistent, transparent and stable landscape that businesses, investors and the public want and need.[20] By removing politics from national infrastructure projects and gaining support from all parties and affected communities, the Government can ensure a stable environment and funding certainty, which is currently lacking in infrastructure delivery.

Furthermore, evidence drew attention to the impact of political pressure to get spades in the ground before project design has been completed — whether to fit electoral timelines or showcase progress.[21] Rushing the planning stage and diving into delivery can lead to delays and rework later.[22] One example of international best practice highlighted Norway, where greater flexibility is built in during the early stages of the project to ensure more realistic programming and budgeting.[23]

[20] Acumen7, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025; Dr Paul Chapman, *Inquiry Oral Evidence Session,* 25th March 2025; Anonymous, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[21] Gianina Caballero, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025.
[22] WSP, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[23] Ibid.

Photo credit: APPG PD



1.4: Giving NISTA the Power to Transform Infrastructure Delivery

Partly in response to concerns about the lack of a stable policymaking environment, in 2024 it was announced that the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) would merge with the Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA).[24] Formally established in 2025, the resulting National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority (NISTA) has the stated aim of boosting oversight and delivery of the Government's infrastructure strategy, *"bridg[ing] the gap between what we build and how we build"*.[25]

Many respondents to the APPG's inquiry welcomed the establishment of NISTA, with the Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA) heralding it as a *"step-change"* in how infrastructure is planned and delivered.[26] The gap between planning and delivery, which the IPA's former-Chief Executive memorably described as *"the valley of death"*, is where many projects falter.[27] By bringing together NIC and the IPA, NISTA has been given end-to-end responsibility over infrastructure delivery, including planning long-term strategy, project prioritisation, the infrastructure pipeline and project delivery — in other words, it is hoping to build a bridge over the *"valley of death"*.

[24] ICE, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[25] Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Darren Jones, *Chief Secretary to the Treasury sets vision for future of Britain's infrastructure,* 10 October 2024.
[26] CECA, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[27] Infrastructure and Projects Authority, *Crossing the Valley of Death - Bridging the Gap between Policy Creation and Policy Delivery in Government*, 2018; CECA, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025

However, NISTA's ability to achieve its goals and stabilise the infrastructure landscape is far from certain.[28] From the evidence received by the APPG's inquiry, stakeholders clearly want to see a NISTA with more independence and authority to drive the UK's infrastructure systems forward and achieve the economic and social benefits that come from delivering national infrastructure projects.[29] Stakeholders urged NISTA not to be relegated to a *"passive commissioner"*, a *"delivery monitor"*, or another layer of bureaucracy.[30]

Before the NIC merged with the IPA, it acted as a long-term impartial advisor to Government departments, a role that stakeholders want to see maintained through NISTA. [31] Evidence suggests that when the NIC's advice was followed, the Government made progress towards long-term goals and the public felt the benefits of investment in infrastructure.[32] By giving NISTA an independent voice, it can retain this role and constructively challenge the Government, supported by the ability to convene and access expert advice to produce meaningful reports.[33] This requires not only independence, but as the Association for Project Management wrote in their submission, *"[a] clearly defined mandate, delivery accountabilities and leadership"*.[34]

By empowering NISTA with the resources, leadership and independence required for it to become a *"system steward"* and *"national programme manager"*, it could become a vehicle to transform infrastructure delivery, boost investment and create a stable environment for the delivery of national infrastructure projects.[35] Evidence highlighted how NISTA could play a role in encouraging cross-party buy-in for national projects, shielding the pipeline from short-term political motivations, helping turn policy ideas into implementable projects, promoting collaborative partnerships between the public and private sectors, supporting innovation in project delivery, tackling the skills shortages and providing independent advice to Government.[36]

As another example, NISTA could have an important role in the early phases of project planning.[37] One of the key findings from James Stewart's report on HS2 is that it was *"pushed forward on the schedule before there was sufficient design maturity and caused progressive removals of scope"*.[38] The finding echoes evidence received by the inquiry that there is a culture of *"aiming to get spades in the ground before sufficient planning and scoping have taken place"*.[39] Rushing the early stages of project planning increases the risk of delays or changes to the scope, which impact the chances of a project being successfully delivered. In its written evidence, ICE emphasised the gateway role NISTA can play to *"prevent projects from getting the go-ahead until they have reached a sufficient level of design and delivery model maturity"* and highlighted the benefits of spending more time developing projects.[40] This would reduce the likelihood of the Government committing to unrealistic budgets and dates, reduce risk and increase delivery.[41]

[28] ICE, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[29] ICE, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025; Pinsent Masons, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[30] CECA, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025; IQ Property Services, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[31] IQ Property Services, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry*. 2025.
[32] ICE, *5 Takeaways from the UK's Second National Infrastructure Assessment*. 2023
[33] WSP, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[34] Association for Project Management (APM), *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[35] CECA, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025; APM, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry*. 2025
[36] ICE, Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry. 2025; CECA, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry*. 2025; WSP, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025; Pinsent Masons, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry*. 2025.
[37] Major Projects Association, *Cancellation of Major Projects*, 2024.
[38] Department for Transport, *Major Transport Projects Governance and Assurance Review,* 2025.
[39] WSP, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[40] ICE, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[41] Ibid.

Section 2. Fostering Collaboration in the Delivery of National Infrastructure Projects

Both the public and private sectors are essential to delivering the Government's infrastructure ambitions. By providing financing, construction, innovation and long-term operation, the private sector can bolster the delivery of major projects across the UK.[42] Yet collaboration between the two has been hampered, and the current adversarial dynamics pose a barrier to the effective delivery of infrastructure projects.[43]

Improving how the private and public sectors communicate and collaborate would enhance the delivery of national infrastructure projects, and by fostering true collaboration, the strengths of the private sector can be harnessed to deliver infrastructure projects which provide social and economic benefits both locally and nationally.[44]

2.1: Building Collaboration into Contracts, Procurement and Tenders

Building collaboration requires a move away from traditional transactional relationships to more long-term cooperative relationships between the private and public sectors.[45] Evidence received by the APPG highlighted the adversarial dynamics and limited cooperation which is often built into contracts and procurement processes.[46] Meanwhile, evidence highlighted the lessons to be learned from Scandinavia and other areas of Europe that have adopted more integrated project delivery models prioritising shared goals and risk, early contractor involvement, and mutual trust.[47]

Acumen7 highlighted how relationships are often based on *"contract compliance rather than performance partnership"*.[48] Contracts which foster adversarial, transactional, compliance-based relationships limit opportunities for innovation, shared learning, and improvements, all of which could otherwise contribute to successful project delivery.[49] Instead, more collaborative relationships can be fostered through joint ownership of risk, shared ownership of challenges and solutions, building mutual trust, early engagement, shared goals and performance incentives, and transparent costings.[50] As Acumen7 wrote, this will allow contracts to become *"performance enablers"* rather than *"compliance traps"*.[51]

[42] Amentum, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[43] Ibid.
[44] Acumen7, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry*. 2025; Anonymous, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry*. 2025
[45] Acumen7, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025; Amy Morley, *Inquiry Oral Evidence Session,* 10th June 2025
[46] Gianina Caballero, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025; Anonymous, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025; IQ Property Services, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[47] IQ Property Services, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[48] Acumen7, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[49] Acumen7, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025; Ridge Partners, W*ritten Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[50] Acumen7, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025; Amentum, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025; Projecting Success, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025; Ridge Partners, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[51] Acumen7, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025

Furthermore, when cost scoring dominates tender processes, other important aspects — such as life-cycle value, decarbonisation, digital delivery and innovation — are treated as second tier.[52] Lowest-cost tendering can create a race to the bottom, rather than encouraging innovation, digital readiness, skills and workforce development and sustainability.[53] It can also encourage adversarial dynamics, which could lead to higher costs later on in the delivery of a project.[54] For example, Professor Nicholas Dacre, Director of the Advanced Project Management Research Centre at the University of Southampton, highlighted how traditional procurement models do not foster technological innovation and instead create barriers to digital tools such as AI or advanced digital twins, which could otherwise improve how infrastructure is delivered.[55] Similarly, Pinsent and Masons emphasised that improving the procurement process by encouraging innovation in delivery could support the Government to better harness technological advancements.[56]

We heard a strong argument that procurement needed to be frontloaded and engagement with suppliers must start early. Early supplier involvement and more stable, long-term pipelines are essential. This needs to be coupled with the institutional discipline and standardisation that we heard was used in countries like France.[57] We also heard that despite procurement accounting for almost a third of public sector spending, challenges to efficient delivery persist, with too few opportunities for suppliers to engage early in project design. Furthermore, misaligned incentives and unclear risk allocation continue to undermine trust between public and private partners. Evidence implied that countries such as Australia and the Netherlands demonstrate the benefits of structured collaboration, statutory infrastructure strategies and clear, long-term funding commitments. Reforming UK procurement is not simply about process but about culture, embedding long-term partnership thinking and delivery discipline into every stage of the system.

Project 13 Model

Project 13 model, developed by the Infrastructure Client Group, shifts the focus from traditional, cost-based procurement to an enterprise-based model that prioritises collaboration, long-term value and improved outcomes for all stakeholders. Currently, organisations with programmes valued over £145 billion are implementing Project 13 model.

The model promotes integrated teams, digital tools, modern construction methods and data-driven decision-making by fostering collaborative relationships between clients, suppliers and stakeholders. This supports both productivity and innovation in infrastructure delivery.

Project 13 also incentivises long-term value creation. Whilst traditional procurement methods focus on lowest cost bidding, the enterprise-based model encourages investment in skills, technologies and sustainability measures.

Finally, by ensuring fairer risk allocation, creating long-term relationships and focusing on capability development, Project 13 strengthens supply chains and workforce resilience.

[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid.
[54] IQ Property Services, Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry. 2025
[55] Professor Nicholas Dacre, Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry. 2025
[56] Pinsent Masons, Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry. 2025
[57] APPG oral evidence session 10th June 2025

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Alliance Contracting: The Ministry of Justice New Prisons Programme

The UK's Ministry of Justice (MoJ) used the **NEC4 Alliance Contract** to build four new prisons. This approach was chosen to move away from traditional, adversarial contracts and create a collaborative environment. This contract meant:

- The MoJ, along with key contractors like ISG, Kier, Laing O'Rourke, and Wates, formed a single alliance. All parties shared the risks and rewards, which encouraged them to focus on the project's overall success rather than individual gain.
- All parties were involved early, which improved risk management and led to innovations like standardised designs and off-site manufacturing.
- This contract meant: Improved resilience, which prevented significant delays.

2.2: Encouraging Collaboration with SMEs

Evidence received during the inquiry highlighted the struggles small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) face throughout the procurement process, leading to capable, smaller firms being excluded from large frameworks or bundled contracts.[58] SMEs, which account for 99% of businesses in the UK, are the backbone of our economy.[59] Progress has been made to ensure SMEs have a greater chance of securing public sector opportunities, with the Procurement Act and SME Strategy bringing a range of policy changes to support this.

However, evidence received by the inquiry emphasised the need to break down barriers in the public procurement process. For example, stakeholders highlighted how procurement in construction has overly focused on tier 1 contractors, despite the industry being dominated by SMEs.[60] Furthermore, concerns were raised about what constitutes an SME, with some of the truly smaller companies being left out of the procurement process.[61] For instance, in industries such as project management, quantity surveying and design services, businesses with over 200 staff are being positioned and compared to businesses with 30 employees.[62]

Whilst larger firms are often well resourced, smaller firms typically offer more senior-led delivery teams, have shorter chains of command, can respond more quickly, and are more flexible and adaptable in their approach.[63] By improving the procurement process, we can ensure access to publicly funded infrastructure projects is not concentrated among large firms, and we can allow capable smaller businesses to thrive, delivering expertise and innovation.[64]

2.3: Building Public Sector Capability

Evidence submitted also highlighted the issues of public sector capability and capacity within local and central Government in relation to the delivery of major projects.[65] Taking steps to build public sector capacity will help ensure the private sector's involvement in project delivery is successful, and is increasingly important with the introduction of new technologies and digitalisation.[66] Academic research on UK Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) has found that *"more effective collaboration between Government and the private sector depends on bridging persistent gaps between project delivery organisations and local authorities"*.[67]

Evidence from UCL explained that *"local authorities face mounting pressures but often lack the financial and staffing capacity to engage effectively"*.[68] Creating a collaborative culture which enables skills to be transferred, resilience to be built, and knowledge gaps to be addressed will increase the chances of long-term lasting success.[69] Furthermore, improving access to training and resources, particularly around project delivery, will improve the ability of local government authorities to support the delivery of major infrastructure projects.[70]

[58] IQ Property Services, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry*. 2025; Acumen7, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[59] Department for Business and Trade, *Business population estimates for the UK and regions 2024: statistical release.*
[60] IQ Property Services, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[61] Graham Black, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[62] Ibid.
[63] Graham Black, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025; *Crown Commercial Service, Procurement Essentials.* N.D
[64] IQ Property Services, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry*. 2025; *Graham Black, Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[65] Laura Grimes, Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry. 2025
[66] APM, Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry. 2025; Boyer, E.J. *Identifying a knowledge management approach for public-private partnerships.* 2016; ICE, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[67] Di Maddaloni et al. *Twenty Steps to Better Collaboration: Bridging Project Organisations and Local Authorities in Major Infrastructure Projects.* 2025.
[68] University College London, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[69] Ibid.
[70] Laura Grimes, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025

Photo credit: Shirish Suwal/Unsplash

Section 3. Building National Infrastructure Projects

Delivering infrastructure requires skilled workers across multiple fields of expertise and areas of infrastructure delivery, including construction, logistics, digital, project management and engineering. However, the UK is facing skill shortages in many of these key industries, across all stages of infrastructure delivery, and this remains one of the biggest challenges faced in the delivery of national infrastructure.[71] In 2024, the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee warned of the continuing challenges faced in developing technical, engineering and project management skills needed to deliver the UK's infrastructure ambitions.[72]

3.1: Creating the Stability to Build a Skilled Workforce

Whilst the need to invest in the development and retention of a skilled workforce is clear, the inquiry heard from key stakeholders about external barriers to this. Several respondents to the inquiry highlighted the impact of an inconsistent pipeline on skills in both the public and private sectors. Both have struggled with a lack of clear overarching vision and continuity, as projects are vulnerable to short-term political thinking. This instability makes it difficult for organisations and businesses — in both the private and public sectors to retain experience and confidently invest in skills and recruitment.[73]

Furthermore, an inconsistent pipeline can lead to long gaps between similar projects, making it difficult to grow expertise, retain and build skills and increase productivity.[74] As EDF summarised, *"long gaps [are] not a good way to develop major infrastructure projects"*.[75] Having a healthy pipeline can lead to improvements in the delivery of projects. For instance, evidence highlighted the difference between Hinkley Point C's first and second units, seeing, on average, a 20 — 30% faster performance.[76] On the other side, the decision to scrap the Northern portion of HS2 meant a lost opportunity to develop engineering skill and capacity, which might have otherwise supported and improved the delivery of future infrastructure projects.[77] Creating a clear, consistent pipeline, which is shielded from political interference driven by short-term political motivations, will help create the stability industry needs to develop and maintain project and infrastructure skills.

[71] WSP, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry*. 2025
[72] Public Accounts Committee, *UK lacks skills and capacity to deliver major infrastructure, PAC warns,* 2024.
[73] Amentum, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025; Anonymous, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025; Gianina Caballero, Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry. 2025; APM, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025.
[74] Amentum, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025; Anonymous, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025.
[75] EDF, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025.
[76] Ibid.
[77] ICE, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry*. 2025.

3.2: Harnessing Technological Advancements Through Skills, Innovation and Stability

As in many industries, rapid technological advancements and innovations, such as those in AI and data, will likely transform national infrastructure delivery.[78] These advancements are quickly changing the skills involved in infrastructure delivery and, if harnessed, projects could benefit from improved outcomes and increased efficiency, productivity, decision-making and capability, and reduce costs and risk of delays.[79] However, responses expressed concern that the Government is not keeping pace with new technological advancements, such as AI.[80] Projects are only becoming increasingly technologically complex, and the infrastructure sector is already facing a digital skills shortage.[81] This means that technology threatens to be a roadblock, rather than an enabler, for better project delivery.[82] In their submission, Acumen7 stressed that *"digital innovation... remain[s] underutilised"* and urged future projects to *"embrace modern technology — including AI"*.[83]

Whilst ensuring the current and future workforce have the skills and expertise to use data and technology, the Government also needs to consider how this technology is deployed.[84] Deploying technology in isolation can lead to *"digital tools becoming patchwork solutions"*.[85] As one piece of evidence put it, *"you don't improve delivery by throwing technology at a broken system. You fix the system, then use tech to enhance it"*.[86] Responses we received also suggested the need to consider how delivery-focused innovation can be used for infrastructure projects, underscored by a mindset shift in how we view technological advancement — not as a "nice-to-have" but as an enabler of success.[87] Furthermore, stakeholders pointed towards the importance of political stability for unlocking the use of new technologies for infrastructure projects and ensuring that both the people and structures involved are capable of using them.[88]

If technological advancements are not harnessed, the UK will lose out on all the benefits it could offer. For example, the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT) highlighted how the limited adoption of technology in logistics leads to inefficiencies, delays and increased costs.[89] Instead, by undergoing digital transformation and upskilling the workforce with digital expertise, construction logistics could play a pivotal role in ensuring national infrastructure projects are delivered on time and on budget.[90]

[78] IQ Property Services, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[79] WSP, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025; Dr Juliano Denicol, University College London, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025; Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT), *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025; The Project Data Analytical Task Force, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025; WSP, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[80] Projecting Success, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[81] Nicholas Dacre, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[82] Nicholas Dacre, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[83] Acumen7, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[84] Acumen7, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[85] Ibid.
[86] IQ Property Services, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[87] Ibid.
[88] Gianina Caballero, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[89] CILT, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[90] Ibid.

Harnessing technological advancements to improve outcomes requires training people to confidently and appropriately use them.[91] For example, developing AI literacy skills could turn AI into a *"thinking partner"* which can interpret and explore complex ideas or information, whilst giving the user the skills to understand when to trust its output.[92] AI models could be leveraged by project teams to analyse data and detect early risk signals, productivity gaps, or cost deviations.[93] Other evidence pointed to the importance of data literacy to improve data-driven decision-making by ensuring those involved in project delivery are confident in understanding and interpreting data.[94]

Overall, digital transformation and upskilling the workforce with digital and data literacy could enhance the delivery of national infrastructure projects.[95] The Government can support the harnessing of technological advancements by building the required skills, encouraging early integration of digital tools and creating a culture of innovation through open data standards, flexible procurement models and early engagement with industry.[96]

[91] IQ Property Services, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[92] The Project Data Analytics Taskforce, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[93] Acumen7, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[94] Dr Juliano Denicol, University College London, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025; The Project Data Analytics Taskforce, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025; WSP, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[95] CILT, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[96] Ibid.

Photo credit: Nick Beer/Adobe Stock

3.3: Embedding Project Delivery Expertise Throughout the Whole Project Lifecycle

Project professionals — those who plan, lead and manage complex projects — are critical to the successful delivery of national infrastructure. However, project skills have been identified as a major skills gap, and half of businesses have reported difficulty in recruiting project professionals.[97] During one Oral Evidence session, APPG members heard how the nuclear sector alone is projected to require 30,000 project management professionals by 2030, with shortages already apparent.[98]

Throughout the inquiry, stakeholders consistently highlighted the positive impact that the early involvement of experienced project professionals can have on infrastructure projects, particularly those which are complex, large-scale and span decades. Yet stakeholders pointed out that project professionals are frequently brought in after key decisions are locked in, resulting in the exclusion of their vital technical expertise from shaping the overall vision, structure and strategy of an infrastructure project.[99]

Instead, embedding project expertise early in the policy formation stage of a project will enable their expertise to be considered in decisions on programme logic, risk allocation, timescales and scope.[100] Evidence submitted to the inquiry suggested *"increasing the role of project professionals in leadership structures, particularly at higher C-suite level"*, would improve accountability, cohesion and integration, and public confidence.[101] Uplifting project expertise in both national and local government would also support the successful delivery of national infrastructure projects. Further evidence highlighted the need to improve project delivery expertise within Government departments and build it throughout the lifecycle of a project.[102] The Government should consider expanding project management training for Senior Civil Servants and anyone managing a government project over £10m. Evidence we received highlighted the potential of an accountable Chief Project Officer being incorporated into Government departments to ensure all areas of Government understand how complex, long-term projects are delivered. Respondents emphasised the importance of investing in career pathways for project professionals and empowering them to be recognised as a core part of project delivery, starting from policy formation.[103]

Embedding the required cultural shift towards delivery requires the support of the Government and NISTA to develop project management skills. The Association for Project Management (APM) highlighted their concerns about the current approach to tackling skills, which has tended to focus on the *"on-the-ground"* roles needed for infrastructure delivery.[104] Similarly, Amentum pointed to the lack of a *"coherent national strategy to address skills shortages in engineering, project management and digital delivery"* as one of the key limitations to successful infrastructure delivery in the UK.[105]

[97] APM, *The Golden Thread: A Study of the Contribution of the Project Profession to the UK's Economy.* 2024
[98] Amy Morley, *Inquiry Oral Evidence Session,* 10th June 2025
[99] Gianina Caballero, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025; Amentum, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025; IQ Property Services, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[100] Amentum, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025; Gianina Caballero, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.*
[101] Greg Gaiger, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[102] Laura Grimes, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025; APM, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[103] APM, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025; Gianina Caballero, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[104] APM, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[105] Amentum, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025

Section 4. Improving How National Infrastructure Projects are Communicated

Polling has found that almost two-thirds of people feel that major infrastructure projects are poorly communicated to them, and over half distrust the Government's ability to fund and deliver them.[106] As ICE pointed out in their submission, *"people often feel that infrastructure is done to them, not for them, even when projects deliver huge benefits"*.[107] To achieve Britain's long-term infrastructure ambitions and needs, public support is critical to ensuring their delivery is smooth.[108]

The UK has delivered some world-class infrastructure projects, and research has found that we are not an outlier when it comes to some of the challenges we face, with many major projects across the world tackling budget and timeframe issues.[109] Yet successes are not being communicated effectively to local communities in a clear, persuasive manner, leaving a feeling that the UK is bad at building infrastructure.[110] Stakeholders observed that communication about projects often fails to convey their benefits clearly, resulting in the outcomes being reduced to a simple "success" or "failure" narrative.[111]

4.1: Improving Communication through Community and Stakeholder Engagement

The success of a project can hinge on the support, engagement and involvement of affected communities and relevant stakeholders.[112] Treating community engagement as an afterthought can lead to late or inconsistent engagement, which increases the risk of local opposition.[113] This opposition can, in turn, lead to infrastructure projects being significantly delayed or even cancelled, with evidence highlighting the London Olympics, Tideway, HS2 and the Lower Thames Crossing as clear examples of how early engagement and community involvement can *"make or break a project"*.[114]

[106] ICE, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[107] Ibid.
[108] Ibid.
[109] National Infrastructure Commission, *Cost drivers of major infrastructure projects in the UK.* 2024.
[110] ICE, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[111] APM, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[112] ICE, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025; Historic England, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[113] Acumen7, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025; The Barlett School of Sustainable Construction at University College London (UCL), *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[114] Amentum, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025

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Evidence emphasised the need for a greater focus on stakeholder engagement, along with better communication of project decisions, to foster trust and support of affected communities.[115] Amentum outlined how including outcome-based delivery, rather than simply value-for-money delivery, could support the inclusion of communities in national infrastructure projects.[116] By putting the time into engaging with local communities, it can also reduce the risk of changes due to short-term political thinking in the face of growing local opposition.

Furthermore, improving local community and stakeholder engagement can also minimise the risk of the historic or natural environment becoming a barrier to the delivery of national infrastructure projects.[117] Ensuring that both the historic and natural environment are considered at the earliest possible opportunity will decrease the likelihood of local opposition further down the line and ensure impacts are identified and either avoided, minimised or mitigated.[118]

Instead, embedding structures which encourage early, inclusive, regular engagement and communication with affected communities throughout the planning and delivery of infrastructure projects can improve trust and create the social licence for successful delivery without delays.[119] Evidence highlighted practices in the Global South, where early and meaningful community involvement leads to better infrastructure outcomes in comparison to the UK, where public participation is often limited.[120]

[115] APM, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[116] Amentum, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[117] Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers (ALGAO), *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry*. 2025; Historic England, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[118] ALGAO, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025; Historic England, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[119] Acumen7, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025; The Barlett School of Sustainable Construction at University College London (UCL), *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[120] The Barlett School of Sustainable Construction at University College London (UCL), *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025

4.2: Bringing Project Successes to the Forefront of the Conversation

Despite delivering some world-class infrastructure projects, in the UK, the dominant conversation around infrastructure has focused on delays, cost overruns and failure.[121] However, the UK does a lot well and evidence seen by the APPG highlights our strong global reputation for strategic infrastructure planning, finance and delivery.[122] When successes are not brought to the forefront, the focus of infrastructures becomes protest or controversy, rather than the benefits these projects unlock.[123] By engaging with the public about the benefits of infrastructure investment, not only will key decision makers understand the needs of those using the infrastructure, they will also derisk projects as they progress.[124]

One recent example of this is HS2, where the overarching goals to increase rail network capacity and stimulate regional growth were overshadowed by a focus on reducing travel times to London, which became the dominant narrative.[125] Consequently, the lack of perceived benefits left HS2 vulnerable to criticisms of high costs and unable to effectively address environmental concerns despite its contributions to the UK's net-zero ambitions.[1326]

Project success encompasses more than budget and timescales, and narrowly focusing on these metrics can create a poor public understanding of projects which could deliver substantial benefit to the population.[127] In their evidence, APM highlighted how oversimplifying projects into a failure-success dichotomy ignores long-term value creation and indirect benefits.[128] During one oral evidence session, the APPG heard from Amy Morley, who advocated for a shift in the narrative to celebrate the *"most amazing British engineering"* and highlighted how positive stories of skill development and local impact for projects like HS2 often get missed.[129] Positive narratives about successful project delivery and the purpose of projects can also have a wider knock-on effect on skills, as they encourage young people to consider a career in a variety of sectors which are needed throughout the project delivery process.[130]

[121] Amentum, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025; The Barlett School of Sustainable Construction at University College London (UCL), *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[122] ICE, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[123] ICE, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[124] Ibid.
[125] Major Projects Association, *Cancellation of Major Projects,* 2024
[126] Major Projects Association, *Cancellation of Major Projects,* 2024
[127] Project X, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[128] APM, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[129] Amy Morley, *Inquiry Oral Evidence Session,* 10th June 2025
[130] University College London, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025

4.3: Reframing How We View Infrastructure

Infrastructure should not be seen as standalone projects but as a strategic programme of work to deliver economic growth, achieve net-zero objectives, and provide social benefits.[131] By changing how we view infrastructure and how it fits into the long-term ambitions for the country, it can be reframed as a public good.[132] For example, Acumen7 highlighted how infrastructure should be reframed as a core government function which creates *"a lever for delivering public value – not just economic output"*, including the benefits generated across health, net zero, resilience and spatial equity.[133]

Reframing can also reduce the risk of local opposition, support a stable pipeline and encourage investment in the UK's infrastructure.[134] For example, evidence received highlighted the success of Spain's high-speed rail (AVE), which is part of a culture that embeds individual projects within a broader vision of national connectivity, economic development and sustainability.[135] By shifting the focus of projects from cost to the value and benefits it can bring during delivery and operation — and embedding it into a national vision — the Government can improve the public understanding of current and upcoming infrastructure projects.

[131] Gianina Caballero, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[132] Acumen7, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[133] Ibid.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Gianina Caballero, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025

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Section 5. Learning from National Infrastructure Projects

The delivery of an infrastructure project, no matter whether it is a success or failure, can generate lessons and knowledge which will in turn support the delivery of future projects.[136] Our ability to share these lessons impacts our ability both to improve infrastructure project delivery in the future and also to learn from our experiences.[137]

5.1: Translating Lessons Learned to Actions

Evidence submitted to the APPG's inquiry found that lessons learned from major infrastructure projects are not being implemented in future projects.[138] Despite over 150 official reviews and reports, the UK has struggled to turn insight from lessons into on-the-ground change, with the same issues recurring.[139] Repeating mistakes can lead to avoidable delays and increase costs when previous lessons are not learned.[140]

One way to effectively improve the translation of lessons learned into action is through the use of Learning Legacies, which aim to share lessons from the delivery of a specific project for the benefit of future projects. There have been three major projects which have undertaken a Learning Legacy Programme: the London 2012 Olympics, Crossrail and HS2, and evidence submitted to the APPG highlights, in particular, the success of the Crossrail Learning Legacy, which continues to be of real-world use to those delivering similar projects.[141]

[136] Amentum, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[137] Ibid.
[138] Amentum, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025; Ridge Partners, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[139] Acumen7, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[140] Ridge Partners, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[141] Simon Bennett, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025

By consistently sharing lessons from projects — both successes and failures — we can capture important insights that can directly improve the delivery of future infrastructure projects. However, evidence revealed that, despite their benefits, learning legacies are neither mandated nor recommended, and their existence relies on the project data owner.[142] There is clearly a need to ensure that learnings are collated and saved through a framework that encourages lessons learned and knowledge gained to be shared in a way that drives improvements in the delivery of future projects.[143]

Hinkley Point C (HPC) and Sizewell C

Hinkley Point C was the first new nuclear power station in Britain since Sizewell B in 1995, this long gap between projects led to several challenges in the delivery of HPC. Relearning nuclear skills, creating a new supply chain and training a workforce were huge investments. The lessons learned, such as replicable design, supplier integration and long-duration financing, have enabled them to be passed on to Sizewell C.

[142] Ibid.
[143] IQ Property Services, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025

Photo credit: David Calvert/Adobe Stock

5.2: Treat Data as a Long-Term Asset

National Infrastructure Projects generate a vast amount of data. This data is a resource which, if harnessed, can unlock crucial insights to improve project delivery. However, much of this data is often discarded or underused, which hinders our ability to capture essential lessons and ultimately improve delivery outcomes.[144] For example, evidence outlined how Crossrail generated vast amounts of data which contained insight into delivery friction, forecasting errors and early signals of delay.[145] However, this data is now largely inaccessible, meaning we are missing out on information which could support improvements in predictive analytics, contracting strategies and delivery governance.[146] As one evidence submission wrote, *"by discarding data, we discard insight. Every new project starts from scratch, leading to avoidable mistakes being repeated. This is inefficient, wasteful and fundamentally unavoidable"*.[147]

From policy to delivery, the *"Golden Thread of Project Data"* needs to be preserved and reused for the public good.[148] To achieve this, there needs to be a cultural shift in how we view data, moving from data as a compliance burden or a reporting exercise to a strategic asset which enables smarter infrastructure delivery.[149] It also requires a more open and collaborative approach to project data, one which rejects the urge to lock data away and instead allows it to be turned into insights which can be captured for the benefit of future projects.[150] Evidence pointed towards the need for mandatory data strategies which outline the data needed, how it aligns with data standards, and how it will be organised, managed, governed and shared.[151]

Improving data could also produce wider benefits. For example, in one oral evidence session, we heard how better data could allow the Government to increase its ability to communicate its strengths in delivering national infrastructure projects.[152] Other evidence pointed to the ability of data to provide long-term analysis of costs and benefits of an infrastructure project by extending data collection throughout the infrastructure's lifecycle, even after the project has been completed.[153]

[144] Projecting Success, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[145] Ibid.
[146] Ibid.
[147] Ibid.
[148] Project Data Analytics Task Force, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[149] Projecting Success, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry*. 2025; WSP, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[150] The Project Data Analytics Taskforce, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025; WSP, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[151] Dr Juliano Denicol, University College London, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry*. 2025; WSP, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025
[152] Dr Paul Chapman, *Inquiry Oral Evidence Session*, 25th March 2025
[153] Dr Juliano Denicol, University College London, *Written Evidence Submission to Inquiry.* 2025

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Conclusion

Infrastructure projects are the thread running through nearly all of this Government's ambitions. Whilst there have been steps taken to improve how we delivery these projects, the Government can do more to become a true enabler of better outcomes. Delivering a radical cultural change to the way the Government and departments deliver projects is vital to achieving this. Whether it is securing political buy-in throughout a project's lifecycle, paving a roadmap to ensure the right skills are in place, fostering collaboration between the public and private sectors, or improving how we communicate major infrastructure projects, the evidence submitted to the APPG shows there is substantial scope to improve delivery.

As the APPG's first inquiry, the focus was on the big questions of infrastructure delivery. By shining a light on key challenges and opportunities, this inquiry has highlighted future areas of exploration within the realm of project delivery.

The APPG will be conducting a number of focused meetings and deep dives into the recommendations. We encourage parliamentarians to email **contact@appgprojectdelivery.org** to get involved.

Appendices

List of written evidence inquiry questions

1. What are the major challenges facing major infrastructure project delivery in the UK? How can these barriers be rectified?
2. What lessons can the UK learn from international approaches?
3. What lessons can the UK learn internally, from best practices in individual Government departments and arms-length bodies? What lessons can infrastructure projects learn from project management in other sectors?
4. How effective do you feel the Government's current plans are for improving major infrastructure project delivery? Do you have any comments or suggestions for the new National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority (NISTA)?
5. How can the Government work more effectively with the private sector to improve project outcomes?
6. What impact will technological advancements have on infrastructure delivery, and how can the Government better harness innovation?
7. Are there any other comments or recommendations the APPG should be considering?

List of organisations and individuals who submitted written and oral evidence to the inquiry

- Acumen7
- Amentum
- Amy Morley, Programme Management Senior Director, AECOM & Chair, Association for Project Management
- Association for Project Management (APM)
- Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers (ALGAO)
- Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA)
- Darren Colderwood, MACE, Programme Director of The New Hospital Programme
- Dr Alexander Budzier, CEO and Co-Founder of Oxford Global Projects
- Dr Juliano Denicol, Associate Professor in Megaproject Management at UCL and Director of the Megaproject Delivery Centre
- Dr Paul Chapman OBE, Academy Director for the Government's Major Project Leadership Academy
- EDF
- Elspeth Lees, Project Manager
- Gareth Pugsley
- Gianina Caballero, Independent Consultant
- Graham Black, Board Director at Pulse Consult
- Greg Gaiger, Director at Ferrer Projects
- Guy Hindley
- Historic England
- IQ Property Services Limited
- Jo Stanford, CEO, Healthcare Project and Change Association Ltd.
- Karl Fisher, Data Edge Analytics
- Laura Grimes, PMO Manager – Major Projects at Gateshead Council
- Local Trust

- Major Projects Association
- Niamh Mullan, Global Head of Project Management at Babcock International Group
- Paul Fisher, Portfolio, Programme and Project Management Consultancy Services
- Pinsent Masons LLP
- Professor Nicholas Dacre
- Project 13
- Project Data Analytics Taskforce
- Project X
- Projecting Success
- Simon Bennett, Associate Director and Expert Adviser, Stakeholder Engagement and Learning Legacy
- Team Animation Ltd
- Terry Meighan, Infrastructure Director, Rolls-Royce
- The Bartlett School of Sustainable Construction at University College London (UCL)
- The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport
- Timist
- Visible Dynamics
- WSP

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