
CTI media release 23 November 2016

CTI broadly welcomes the Chancellor's Autumn Statement

The Confederation of Timber Industries (CTI), a representative body for the £10 billion timber supply chain in the UK broadly welcomed the **Chancellor's Autumn Statement** today.

Speaking on behalf of the new umbrella body for the Timber Industries, **David Hopkins**, Managing Director of the Timber Trade Federation (TTF), stated: *"The conditions next year are challenging, especially considering the continued uncertainty and the £122 billion loss that the OBR expects from Brexit. In light of this, we welcome the switch in focus from austerity to fiscal stimulus and opportunities in the real economy. "*

"Setting housing and infrastructure at the heart of our economic policy is good news and will have a positive effect on the timber sector. The Business Rates reduction package on the surface will give a boost, especially for our rural members though it may not adequately address the challenges that they face - we will be analysing the detail carefully."

"The emphasis on productivity throughout is paramount and we very much welcome the National Productivity Investment Fund and initiatives to drive growth through LEPs and devolved administration and look forward to seeing more detail on how these plans will be enacted."

Iain McIlwee, CEO of the British Woodworking Federation (BWF) added: *"The key word in the statement is Productivity and we need to drill into the detail here. The danger is that in the macro headline we lose some of the important micro drivers - we must remember that we are not always comparing apples with apples and I think herein the Chancellor has set a challenge to industries to do more to benchmark our own productivity."*

"That aside, if we look at the key components of productivity, the Chancellor was quiet on Skills. Management Skills had some attention and we also heard heralded that there is a growing number of graduates - this is no doubt a good thing, but unfortunately used in this way we are reinforcing an emphasis on academic options. Part of the growth plan is to focus attention on quality apprentices and it is disappointing that this did not get highlighted in the same way."

"The other notable omission was the whole natural capital agenda and given our recent pledges to the Paris Agreement we cannot let this take a back seat. Resource efficiency goes hand in glove with productivity. We welcome the opportunity to work with the Chancellor and his team to demonstrate that effective carbon accounting can drive productivity and set the UK apart as a true global leader."

For further enquiries please contact:

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Notes to the editor:

The Confederation of Timber Industries was formed to give a single voice for the timber supply chain. It acts as a “trade association of trade associations” covering the diverse interests of timber producers, processors, importers, wholesalers, manufacturers and merchants.

The inaugural CTI parliamentary conference will be held on Wednesday 30th November. For further details please see the CTI website: www.cti-timber.org