

Civil Engineering - UK - January 2021

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This report looks at the following areas:

- The impact of COVID-19 on the civil engineering construction sector
- The impact of government policy and regulatory changes on the market
- Key drivers for growth across the civil engineering construction market
- The performance of key industry players
- Five-year market outlook

Partial year data for 2020 indicates a 6% decline in civil engineering construction output. This follows consistent annual growth in the previous three years. The downturn in 2020 is largely due to the impact of COVID-19, which has caused disruption to projects across the market.

Civil engineering firms were impacted by site closures at the start of the first lockdown in March 2020 and the additional measures and precautions required on reopening. Most contractors operated normally during the second and third national lockdown as construction sites remained open.

While activity in the rail transport sector is set to be strong over the coming years, the impact of COVID-19, which resulted in Network Rail reporting a financial underperformance in 2020, could curtail the operator's spending going forward. Network Rail has begun preparing a revised business plan, which could lead to the deferral of some projects.

The government's commitment to infrastructure spending as part of the economic recovery from COVID-19, the "levelling-up" agenda and the need to progress towards Net Zero Carbon by 2050 should ensure sustained growth in the civil engineering sector over the coming years.

Opportunities are set to be particularly strong in the rail transport sector, driven by HS2. Other major projects expected to drive output over the next five years include Hinkley Point C, the Thames Tideway Tunnel, major road schemes



"Infrastructure investment will have a key role to play in the economic recovery from COVID-19, both by maintaining jobs in the short term, and creating the conditions for long-term sustainable growth."

Claudia Preedy, B2B Senior Analyst

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as part of the Road Investment Strategy 2 (2020-25) and projects associated with the decarbonisation of the energy system.

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