

Research and analysis: Cement manufacturing: use of fly ash and blast furnace slag

The report models supply and demand for fly ash and granulated blast furnace slag up to 2030. It predicts a small shortage in the UK in 2016 and subsequent years, indicating that supply in the future may reduce further depending on operation of blast furnaces and expected closure of coal-fired power stations. It also notes a global over-production of these products, mainly in China, and recommends extending the current import route from China or other countries to minimise price increases in the UK.

Speech: PM speech at Commonwealth Leaders reception

Thank you very much to Angelique and to Leon for showing us what fantastic wealth we have in the people in the Commonwealth. And we'll be hearing more of that next year at [CHOGM](#) (Commonwealth Heads of Government). But thank you very much to all of you and I'm very grateful to all our speakers this evening. But can I first of all say that I know that our thoughts are with those affected by the recent hurricanes in the Caribbean, including our colleagues from Dominica and Antigua and Barbuda, who for this reason have not been able to join us in New York this week.

And we also keep in our thoughts all those affected by the devastating flooding in South Asia and in Sierra Leone. But this has been a wonderful opportunity this evening, to gather our Commonwealth family together and reflect on some of the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. And as we look forward to that Heads of Government meeting, which will be taking place in London and Windsor next year, we have an ambitious phase of work ahead of us. Because, as you have heard from the other speakers, together we have the chance to build a reformed and revitalised Commonwealth. That will not be the work of a single summit, it can only be built over time and by sustained effort, close partnership and positive collaboration.

The Commonwealth is indeed an organisation with deep roots and profound strengths. Over seven decades, it's helped newly independent countries develop their national institutions, make economic progress and share common experiences. Today it champions the interests of small island states, helps nations to deepen and strengthen their democracies, and enables us to work together in partnership through a common language, shared history and closely

related legal systems. But we know that to remain relevant to the aspiration of its citizens in a changing world, the Commonwealth needs to change too. We face new and unprecedented joint challenges: how to make the compelling case for free trade as the best way to promote higher living standards around the world, and so create a more prosperous commonwealth; how to mitigate the effects of climate change, especially as it affects small island states, and so create a more sustainable Commonwealth; how to address new security challenges, like cyber terrorism, and online extremism, and so create a more secure Commonwealth; and how to protect and promote the values we all share and so create a fairer, freer and more tolerant Commonwealth. And we all have a responsibility, working together as partners to ensure that the Commonwealth has the institutional strength to face these challenges effectively.

Now here this week at UNGA, we've heard UN General Secretary Guterres set out the wholesale institutional reform of the United Nations, which he is leading to maintain its relevance and effectiveness for the future. Commonwealth Secretary General, you are also leading a vital reform programme, and you deserve our support in delivering it. We in the Commonwealth need an agile and responsive secretariat, which focuses its efforts where it can best add value. All member states must ensure that the secretariat has a sustainable footing to equip it for the future. But meaningful reform cannot just be a question for government and the secretariat alone.

What makes the Commonwealth unique is not having member states and a secretariat. Human networks, people-to-people links are what define the Commonwealth. We need to recognise and nurture them. And they can reach far beyond the limits of the institution. As Angelique and Leon have reminded us, for the Commonwealth to have a future as vibrant as its proud past, it must remain relevant to its youngest citizens. Speak to the challenges they face and answer their ambitions for a better life. And that is why we will put young people at the heart of our [Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting](#) in London and Windsor next year.

The message of that summit towards a common future encapsulates our ambitions for the event. So I hope that we can come together as a Commonwealth family and seize the opportunity to drive forward the necessary reforms. The prize, if we succeed in this collaborative effort will be a rejuvenated Commonwealth, better able to answer the aspirations of its citizens, especially its young citizens. Malta started this important process in Valletta. The UK is determined to help carry forward that agenda for the long term. Thank you.

[Press release: £22.8 million boost to](#)

give power back to communities

Communities across England are set to benefit from a package of support worth £22.8 million to help them develop plans to give them a real say in the development of their area.

Housing Minister Alok Sharma confirmed how the cash boost will support communities, help build more homes and give locals more say over growth in their area.

The funding, which will be around £5.5 million per year until 2022, will provide communities with specialist support to help develop a Neighbourhood Plan.

Neighbourhood Plans gives local communities a real say in the development of their area including where homes, shops, green spaces and offices should be built and how they should look.

The announcement comes as more than 400 successful neighbourhood planning referendums have now taken place across England, driving local growth from Cornwall to Northumberland.

Housing and Planning Minister Alok Sharma said:

Neighbourhood planning gives communities a powerful set of tools to shape their area and drive local growth.

The government is committed to giving communities even more of a say in the development of their area, and that's why we're dedicating around £23 million between 2018 and 2022 to help groups create Neighbourhood Plans.

With over 400 now in place more people than ever are having their say on the location and design of new homes, shops and offices in their community. I congratulate the many thousands of community minded people across England carrying out this valuable work.

Trudi Elliott, Royal Town Planning Institute Chief Executive, said:

Having worked directly with over 274 groups to help them develop neighbourhood plans since their inception, the RTPI knows how much people care about these plans and how important they are in shaping places and building public trust in the planning system.

It's also clear from our experience that people need support to make the plan-making experience easier and worthwhile, so this latest funding is very welcome.

The government's [housing white paper](#) published in February 2017 set out measures to give local people more of a say over development in their area and build the right homes in the right places.

The white paper committed to continue to support neighbourhood planning groups so they can access essential support to allocate sites for housing and to plan for better designs in their area.

Following the housing white paper, a further raft of measures to improve neighbourhood planning will be implemented later this year, as the [Neighbourhood Planning Act](#) comes into effect. This includes new rules to speed up and strengthen the popular neighbourhood planning process by simplifying how plans can be revised as local circumstances change.

Since 2012, over 2,200 groups have started the neighbourhood planning process, covering areas of nearly 12 million people across England. Over 400 successful neighbourhood planning referendums have now taken place, with an average 'yes' vote of 88%.

The [Neighbourhood Planning Act](#) received Royal Assent in April 2017, and contains measures improving the planning system to help deliver the government's aim of making sure the housing market works for everyone.

In July 2017 Neighbourhood Planning Act reforms came into force to ensure the plans local people have worked hard to create are used as the starting point for determining planning applications up to 8 weeks earlier, following a successful referendum. The changes also mean that when local authorities are making planning decisions, they must respect emerging neighbourhood plans which have passed examination but not yet been agreed at a referendum.

[News story: Defence Secretary recognises UK efforts in the fight against Daesh with service medal](#)

Sir Michael met with personnel from the Mercian Regiment, Engineer Regiment, Intelligence Corps, and Medical Regiments at Erbil and Taji where they have been involved in training Iraqi Security Forces, Kurdish Forces and Ninewah police.

Speaking to the troops, he announced the Op Shader medal, recognising the valuable contributions made by many serving military personnel who have been tirelessly undertaking the UK effort as part of the Coalition fight against Daesh for the last three years.

Defence Secretary, Sir Michael Fallon, said:

It is only right that those who've performed above and beyond in this fight against the evil of our time get the recognition they deserve. This medal will do just that.

Our troops have made huge contributions to the fight against Daesh, helping end its tyranny in large parts of Iraq and Syria.

They have conducted over 1,500 strikes against Daesh terrorist targets and helped train nearly 60,000 Iraqi Security Forces. The campaign is not over but for those that have served we rightly honour the critical role they have played in helping keep us safe.

Taking a leading role in the Counter-Daesh Global Coalition, the UK has provided over 1,400 military personnel from all three Services as part of its three year involvement.

Following the recent uplift of 44 additional Royal Engineers who deployed to Al Asad Airbase in August, there are around 600 British soldiers on the ground in Iraq. They are primarily involved in training Iraqi security forces in battle winning infantry, engineering and combat medical techniques as well as providing courses on countering IEDs and other critical skills.

Current UK Operational Medals policy requires consideration of risk and rigour to qualify for award of a campaign medal. To date, risk has been defined in terms of requiring an individual to be physically exposed to danger to qualify for medallic recognition and currently there are approximately 3,600 personnel who will receive the medal from May 2018.

The Defence Secretary has directed that this approach be examined to consider how best to recognise the rigour and operational contribution of those outside the immediate theatre of operations.

He said:

The changing character of warfare provides new challenges – not just about how we fight but also how we recognise and support those who serve.

As fighting has evolved we have adapted, ensuring our troops have cutting edge equipment including unmanned systems operated from outside the battle space. Our recognition of service, the risks taken, and the long-term effects must therefore adapt too.

That is why we need to examine how to provide medallic recognition

for those making a vital contribution to Op Shader outside the battlespace, from Reaper pilots taking life and death decisions to those who ensure our planes can strike Daesh targets.

On his trip to the Middle East, the Defence Secretary also visited the Combined Air Operations Centre (CAOC) at Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar, where the UK is working closely with US as the two largest contributors to the Coalition's military campaign. As the command centre for the entire coalition's operations in Iraq and Syria, UK personnel, working alongside allies, are coordinating over 70 nations' activity including over 1500 air strikes and surveillance conducted by the RAF in the UK's three year campaign.

Research and analysis: Planning for the risk of widespread flooding

This project has developed methods and guidance to address the need for realistic planning scenarios that account for the risk of widespread flooding across England and Wales, flooding from multiple sources (river, surface water and sea) and the potential impacts.

The outputs of the project have:

- highlighted the scale of the risk of flooding to England and Wales
- changed the representation of flood risks for the public facing National Risk Register (NRR) and the Cabinet Office's National Risk Assessment (NRA)
- helped inform the National Flood Resilience Review (NFRR) and are being taken forward via that route.

They will allow central government, emergency planners and responders to review their planning assumptions, emergency response and mutual aid capabilities, to increase the England and Wales preparedness for widespread flooding.