



HbD

Housebuilder & Developer

January 2017

**Government's £1.7bn
fund for modular homes
on surplus sites**

**Planning department
cuts endanger
housebuilding target**

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Air Conditioning & Ventilation
Drainage & Plumbing
Insulation
Kitchens & Appliances
Sustainable Products

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Responses to major announcements on
garden villages and starter homes

Patrick Mooney on the dangers of more
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Editor's comment

James Parker



The housebuilding sector has certainly had a warm welcome to 2017, with a couple of trend-bucking results which offer reassurance as the UK embarks on what could be a bumpy ride in a changing climate.

First the ONS figures published a few days ago showed that although construction as a whole declined slightly at the end of last year, private housing rose by 0.5 per cent in November to reach its highest level since 2010. Perhaps more importantly, output in the sector was up 12.5 per cent compared with a year ago, leading commentators to point to the success of initiatives such as Help to Buy, low-interest mortgages and increased house prices.

This came on the back of the Markit/CIPS Purchasing Managers Index report, regarded as a bellwether for the economy, which showed that in December construction industry output growth reached an 11-month high. Housebuilding was the best performing sub-category and enjoyed its sharpest growth rate since January.

However commentators such as the Construction Products Association suggested that with the current economic and political uncertainty, coupled with rising inflation, the positive growth in private housebuilding is far from likely to be sustained through the year. Fortunately public housing – perhaps less prone to being blown by economic winds – also increased in November, pointing to more stability coming from PRS and other areas in what was a turbulent sector.

The big question is what is driving the demand that has led to this increased activity in housebuilding. If it is in the main high end investment (the average deposit in London

now being over £100,000) and from the older generation, then we have a sustainability problem going forward.

The Government's recent well-intentioned announcements such as garden villages, which could indeed deliver 40,000 homes plus, or less headline-grabbing initiatives such as green belt swapping are all very well, but if schemes aren't affordable for younger buyers, there is unlikely to be a reverse in the increasing trend to rent.

Recently the Local Government Association revealed that only 20 per cent of 25 year olds now own their home, whereas 20 years ago it was nearly half of all people that age. In the current uncertain climate this trend is going to continue. Planning departments could work harder to ensure that smaller homes are being prioritised to enable younger people get on the ladder, but they have their work cut out just dealing with their current workload, having had their teams cut back.

Will the Government's White Paper provide any more solid endeavours to shift the industry from purely what works in the short-term to showing more foresight? If it and/or the traditional housebuilding sector doesn't look at ways to tackle the housing crisis there are forces massing who are ready to take over. The Chinese National Building Material Company has teamed up with housing association Your Housing to build six UK factories which will turn out modular homes at a speed and affordability which major housebuilders could only dream of.

Despite the recent successes, our fairly traditional industry may find itself out in the cold if it doesn't deliver the realistic, efficient solutions the market needs.

Government fund rolled out for fast modular solutions on public sector land

The Government has challenged local authorities to sign up for a new £1.7bn initiative which will use offsite construction methods for fast delivery of housing on surplus public sector land to tackle the housing crisis.

Publishing its prospectus for the Accelerated Construction Programme, The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) is offering local authorities various forms of support to deliver 15,000 homes including using offsite building methods to build at “up to double the speed of a traditional development.”

The HCA commented: “We want to provide a tailored package of support to ambitious local authorities who would like to develop out surplus land holdings at pace.”

Local authorities outside London have until 28 February to express their interest in the programme. They will then be selected on the basis of their ability to deliver housing starts during this parliament, to suggest sites not earmarked for housing development, to deliver “clear additionality,” while responding to specific local housing needs.

The HCA said: “The Government is committed to taking direct action to help fix the housing market.” It was keen to use the scheme

to avoid “selling land onto the market,” and approaches would include identifying suitable sites from within the Government’s Public Sector Land programme.

The HCA was keen to look “in particular at sites that are not currently in a LA’s Local Plan or 5 year land supply.” The HCA said it “could also help to broker conversations between local authorities in areas where there are parcels of land that could work as a package.”

To be considered for the Accelerated Construction Programme, councils need to describe in detail the land to be used for housing, as well as indicating what support will be needed from the HCA and how likely planning permission is to be granted.

Melanie Leech, chief executive at the British Property Federation welcomed the initiative last year, saying: “The move will help upscale the modular construction sector, meaning a more efficient industry and the faster delivery of homes.”

The HCA acknowledged that local authorities were “already taking a proactive role in developing out surplus land holdings, but added that they “face barriers to undertaking development activity such as a lack of capacity, funding or appetite for risk.”

The Government said the programme is designed to support “market diversification objectives by supporting non-major builders and help tackle the construction skills gap, including through greater use of Modern Methods of Construction (MMC).”

Government support for local authorities within the Accelerated Construction Programme could include the following:

- Obtaining outline planning permission and undertaking basic site preparation
- Selecting a development partner, and potentially offering indemnities in the event that homes constructed cannot be sold
- Profit sharing

Development agreements within the programme would include “a number of conditions to support our longer-term market diversification aims,” including specifying the speed at which homes are constructed, and “greater use of offsite methods in the construction of homes.”

The HCA confirmed that a separate “engagement process” was underway for London Councils and the Greater London Authority, “due to its unique housing market and organisational context.”

Green light for 2017 starter homes

The new year will see the first starter homes being built on brownfield sites across the country, according to a programme launched by Housing Minister Gavin Barwell.

Thousands of new homes will be built, exclusively for first-time buyers between 23 and 40 years old. At a discount of at least 20 per cent below market value, the homes will be backed with government funding.

The first wave of 30 local authority partnerships, selected on the basis of their potential for early delivery, will spearhead schemes. These partnerships have been established under the Government’s £1.2bn Starter Homes Land Fund, which supports the development of starter homes on sites across England.

Gavin Barwell commented on the schemes: “This Government is committed to building Starter Homes to help young first-time buyers get on the housing ladder.

“This first wave of partnerships shows the strong local interest to build thousands of starter

homes on hundreds of brownfield sites in the coming years. One in three councils has expressed an interest to work with us so far.”

The news followed on the heels of the Government’s announcement of 14 new garden villages and three garden towns, with the capacity to deliver more than 40,000 homes.

Julia Evans, chief executive of BSRIA, welcomed the recent announcements, which she said suggested that “tackling the housing crisis is on the Government’s agenda for 2017, and is clearly a top priority.”

She added a note of caution however: “Building homes is a matter of quality as well as quantity. The focus on more volume makes quality more important than ever, and an added emphasis on the status of the quality of homes is crucial to guarantee that in challenging the housing crisis we are not building the costly slums or soulless estates of tomorrow.

“Government rhetoric has been going on forever: the proof will be in the pudding.”

The Federation of Master Builders (FMB) so

welcomed the news, warning that greater challenges lie ahead in order to solve the housing crisis. Brian Berry, chief executive of the FMB, said: “These homes will help some first-time buyers get a foot on the housing ladder, and our small housebuilders are enthusiastic about delivering on that vision, but starter homes will not be a panacea.

“A wider set of measures aimed at increasing the capacity of the housebuilding industry are needed to overturn the long-term under-supply of new homes. Central to this must be getting SME builders delivering more new homes. For instance, the announcement of 14 ‘garden villages’ and more garden towns needs to be backed up by implementation plans which provide opportunities to SME builders as well as the large companies.”

The Starter Homes Land Fund was set up to prepare suitable land for quality starter homes developments, which can be built on by developers or through Accelerated Construction by 2020. The first sites are due to begin construction later this year.

Builders kept off sites due to council 'pre-commencement' conditions

The number of planning permissions granted for new homes in Q3 of this year remains high, according to HBF and Glenigan's latest Housing Pipeline report, but warned that few of those recently permitted will be buildable currently.

Permissions for 76,242 homes were granted in England between July and September, with the total number for the 12 months to September reaching 289,011, the highest since the survey began in 2006.

The number of actual sites these permissions are on however, have dropped, indicating Local Authorities are granting permission for an increasing number of large strategic sites as opposed to the mix of size and type of site needed to deliver more homes.

HBF representatives reported that this is an

"encouraging headline figure, but asserted that few of those permitted would be ready for construction." Permissions are recorded once one of the 'conditions' attached to them by the Local Authority is satisfied or 'discharged'. Many will have dozens of 'pre commencement' conditions attached, and so builders will not legally be entitled to commence construction until they are all discharged – a process which could take some months, and is dependent on the ability and capacity of the authority to provide this service."

While welcoming the Government's efforts through the Neighbourhood Planning Bill, the HBF has urged Ministers to go further in limiting the number of conditions and preventing authorities from imposing spurious conditions that could be dealt with later in the construction process.

Many conditions, according to the HBF, such as the Local Authority needing to approve a final children's play area design, shouldn't be holding up building work and could be agreed once work is underway through the imposition of a 'pre-occupation' condition.

Stewart Baseley, executive chairman of the HBF, said: "The housebuilding industry is committed to building more homes, but can only do so if it has the land on which to build them. It is encouraging that so many headline planning permissions are being granted, but we simply have to find a way to unblock the system and reduce the time it takes to get a permission to the stage where builders can actually start building.

"Our housing crisis is too serious a threat to our future for everyone not to be pulling in the same direction."

Planning department cuts make hitting housing targets impossible, says report

Nearly 90 per cent of local authorities believe that the Government's housing targets will be impossible to meet due to a lack of planning resources, according to a new joint research report from the Federation of Master Builders (FMB) and the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU).

The report, thought to be the first to draw upon the experiences of both local authorities and SME housebuilders across the UK, found

that 64 percent of builders and 45 per cent of local authorities see lack of planning resources as a barrier to developing more small sites. It also found that more than half of councils deliver fewer than 40 per cent of homes on small sites, and that builders and local authorities have called for councils to be allowed to raise planning application fees.

Brian Berry, chief executive of the FMB, said: "The Government aims to build one million new

homes by 2020 won't be realised unless more SME housebuilders can enter the housing market. That's why the barriers that SME housebuilders currently face need to be removed. We know that the availability of suitable small sites and the difficulty getting planning permission on them are two of the biggest barriers these firms face.

"In this research, both local authorities and SME builders identify under-resourcing as a key barrier to allocating more small sites and getting planning permissions in place on them. Too often small sites are dealt with entirely by inexperienced officers. There simply aren't enough senior and experienced planners to make the system work effectively."

He added: "Planning departments need a cash injection, and we therefore urge the Government to take on board concerns shared by both builders and councils and to allow local authorities the power to increase planning fees. Most small developers are so concerned by the level of service provided by planning departments, they would be happy to foot the bill, provided the raised fees are ring-fenced result is an improved service."

Berry concluded: "The Government deserves credit for the priority it is placing on housebuilding, but unless planning departments have enough experienced planners on the ground, our housing targets will be nothing more than aspirations."




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Scheme will 'unblock' infrastructure for sites

A new Government-backed pilot scheme has been launched, aimed at unblocking infrastructure hold ups that are delaying the building of new homes.

It has been reported that water companies can currently take between six months and a year to connect a property and still meet their regulatory targets.

Natalia Elphicke, chief executive of The Housing & Finance Institute, explained: "When we speak to housing developers, they often say it is water, electricity, gas, broadband and roads which are impeding their ability to build more homes faster.

"Water and sewage connectivity is a particular problem, with some water companies completely failing to deliver what housing developers require. This has been slowing down the rate of housing completions right across the country.

"Our hope is that this new pilot scheme, which brings together key players from the private and public sectors, will provide us with a blueprint for fixing these issues and facilitating accelerated housing growth."

The scheme has been set up by The Housing &



Finance Institute, who earlier this year published a report highlighting how water companies are "severely infringing the ability of private developers to build more homes."

The pilot scheme will run until May 2017, with its initial report due by the end of this month, and its findings being reported to Housing & Planning Minister Gavin Barwell MP and Stephen Hammond MP, who is chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Infrastructure.

Barwell welcomed the new pilot scheme and its

"focus on identifying ways of working together to overcome infrastructure barriers, and I look forward to seeing the initial report on its findings."

Taking place in the South East, the pilot is being carried out with the help of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership, the Home Builders Federation, Laing O'Rourke, Anglian Water, Kent County Council, Essex County Council, Keepmoat, the chair of the APPG for Infrastructure and the Department for Communities and Local Government.

UK house prices to increase by three per cent in 2017, RICS forecasts

House prices in the UK will see an average increase of three per cent over the course of next year as the number of transactions stabilises, according to the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) housing forecast for 2017.

East Anglia is likely to continue its upward trend during 2016, says the RICS, and alongside the North and West Midlands is likely to record gains higher than the national average. Meanwhile, prices in Central London look set to stabilise after recent drops, with support provided by the weaker exchange rate encouraging foreign buyers.

Following on from the 2016 forecast, the RICS said: "the supply pipeline (or lack of it) is at the forefront of its analysis," and is "dominating the residential market." It added: "While there is an improvement, the legacy of building on an insufficient scale has left the average inventory on estate agents' books close to a historic low."

Simon Rubinsohn, RICS chief economist, commented: "Although recent announcements by the Government on housing are very welcome, the ongoing shortfall of stock across much of the sales and lettings markets is set to continue to



underpin prices and rents.

"As a result, the affordability challenge will remain very much to the fore for many. Meanwhile, the lack of existing inventory in the market is impacting the ability of households to move and will contribute toward transaction activity over the whole of 2017 being a little lower than in the year just ending."

Looking forward, RICS has predicted that transaction activity will stabilise, saying it is likely

to come in between 1.15 and 1.2 million.

Jeremy Blackburn, RICS head of policy, said: "Before the EU Referendum, David Cameron said that 'if he could have found the button in No. 10 to increase housebuilding he would have pushed it repeatedly.' In truth, there are multiple buttons, and following on from housing being put at the top of Theresa May's priority list in 2017, the current Government need to demonstrate a plan of action."

Events & awards

Key upcoming events, conferences and awards

Housing Innovation Awards
8 February, London
www.housinginnovationawards.co.uk

CIH Housing Awards
24 February, Belfast
www.cih.org/events

CIH South East Conference
6 - 8 March, Brighton
www.cih.org/events

Ecobuild
7 - 9 March, London
www.ecobuild.co.uk

Housing Technology Conference & Executive Forum
7 - 9 March, Oxford
www.housing-technology.com/events

CIH Scotland Conference
14 - 15 March, Glasgow
www.cih.org/events

Housing Finance Conference and Exhibition
22 - 23 March, Liverpool
www.housing.org.uk/events

Materials 2017
25 - 26 April, London
www.materials2017.co.uk

UK Housing Awards
26 April, London
ukha.secure-platform.com

RESI Awards
10 May, London
www.resiawards.com

CIH South West Conference
10 - 11 May, Bristol
www.cih.org/events

Social Housing Finance Conference
11 May, London
www.socialhousing.co.uk/events

Plantworx
6 - 8 June, Leicestershire
www.plantworx.co.uk

The cutting edge of material solutions – revealed at Materials 2017



Materials 2017 is the new conference and exhibition focused entirely on the cutting-edge of material solutions for architecture, construction, and design. Offering a unique opportunity for professionals involved in materials procurement to meet face-to-face, engage in social conversation, and expand business relationships with top materials manufacturers, this event is a must-visit for all industry professionals.

Held at the ILEC Centre, London on the 25 and 26 April 2017, Materials 2017 is completely free to attend for delegates and competitive prices are available for sponsor and exhibitor packages.

A wide range of products – from ceramics, cement, stone, brick, and timber to glass, concrete, metal, and smart materials – will be featured, looking not only at their use in creating striking aesthetic designs but also at alternative functionalities beyond their common purposes within building structures, envelope, facades and finishes.

Seminar speakers from several of the industry's biggest actors have been confirmed to include names from Aecom, Arup, Tata Steel, and Saint-

Gobain. One conference and two seminar areas at Materials 2017 provide huge potential for knowledge-sharing in a highly tailored and intimate environment.

Strong support of the exhibition has been demonstrated by a variety of trade partners including the Alliance for Sustainable Building Materials, BSRIA, and the Association for Environment Conscious Building.

Event director David Schindler said: "Materials are developing so fast in terms of innovation, sustainability, and performance, it is vital that materials specifiers have the best possible and most up-to-date information to guide their design and construction techniques. This is the case both in terms of the educational content in the conferences and seminars at Materials 2017, but also engaging directly with the product manufacturers within the exhibition."

Materials 2017 has been developed to be the one-stop show for all construction materials needs, for both specifiers and manufacturers or suppliers. Register free now for this vital new event for construction professionals at: www.materials2017.co.uk/register

Study proposes 60,000 new social homes on London roofs

Building modular homes on existing roof-spaces could make inroads into London's housing shortage, according to research commissioned by Apex Airspace Developments.

The study, conducted by HTA Design, confirmed the huge scale of the opportunity and widened the debate on how social housing providers could use their roofs more innovatively to release new value.

Apex have challenged thinking in the sector about the huge amount of money being spent through planned maintenance budgets on replacing old roofs, without necessarily adding any value to the asset.

Val Bagnall, business development director at Apex, said that the research has demonstrated that, in London, there is the potential to create 60,000 new homes atop existing affordable housing assets. This could generate some £6bn for affordable housing providers to support their

housing objectives, while saving up to some £50m on roof replacement over the next three years," he said.

The money released from the sale of the roof could help contribute towards wider regeneration initiatives, such as improvements to the facade of the building, lift upgrades, new windows etc.

This may be especially significant for leasehold blocks where the sale of the roof can create the funds to upgrade the buildings in keeping with new build options on the rest of the estate. "The approach is welcomed by leaseholders," he said, as it "saves on contributions to sinking funds, improves the kerb appeal of properties, and may unlock a stumbling block for regeneration plans."

Apex are working with a range of providers to assist in unlocking this new value and save on planned maintenance expenditure.

25 year olds owning homes halved in 20 years

Homeownership rates among 25-year-olds have fallen by more than half in 20 years, council leaders have warned.

New analysis for the Local Government Association reveals that almost half (46 per cent) of all 25-year-olds owned their own home 20 years ago. The research showed only 20 per cent of 25-year-olds are on the housing ladder today.

With access to the housing ladder becoming increasingly limited to future generations, the LGA has insisted that homes for affordable or social rent are vital to help more families afford to save up for a deposit to buy a home.

The LGA has also warned that a drop in social and affordable rented homes is combining with rents rising above incomes, making it more and more difficult for people to get onto the housing ladder. As a result, the proportion of total homeowners of all ages across the country has fallen by 4.4 per cent since 2008, while private renters have increased by 5.1 per cent.

Alongside building more social rented homes to boost home ownership and a renewed effort to increase the incomes of those in need of affordable homes, council leaders say there is also an urgent need to provide more housing for older people.

Between 2008 and 2039, 74 per cent of projected household growth will be made up of households with someone aged 65 or older. An increase in age-friendly housing will be crucial in helping older people stay healthy and happy for

longer, in turn reducing pressure on NHS and care services.

Cllr Martin Tett, LGA housing spokesman, commented: "Our figures show just how wide the generational home ownership gap is in this country.

"There is no silver bullet and everyone must come together to meet the diverse housing needs in our villages, towns and cities. The Government's Housing White Paper is an opportunity to boost housing supply

and affordability.

He continued: "This means powers and funding given to councils to replace sold homes and reinvest in building more of the genuinely affordable homes our communities desperately need."

Analysis for the LGA, by Savills

- 6,550 social rented homes were built in 2015/16. This is a drop of 88 per cent from 20 years ago when 56,950 were built in 1995/96
- On average, private renters now pay 34 per cent of their total household income on rent and social and affordable renters pay 29 per cent
- In comparison, homeowners pay an average of 18 per cent of their total household income on their mortgage, and those that own outright have no housing costs
- Average house prices are now 7.9 times average earnings. The average size of a deposit needed to get a mortgage is 62 per cent of annual incomes, in London it is 131 per cent.



Construction: a beacon for social mobility

Construction plays a critical role in reversing the declining levels of economic and social mobility in the UK, according to a report published by the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB).

The report, *Social Mobility and Construction: Building Routes to Opportunity*, contains a specially commissioned survey of 1,094 working adults. Results show how, among the UK industries, construction ranks near the top for social and economic mobility.

While other industries, such as manufacturing, have shed skilled workers, the construction industry is responsible for a third of all employment in the industrial sector. These skilled trades not only provide social status and solid earnings in themselves, but provide many with an opportunity and a platform for progression within their career, from the trades through to

management and professional roles.

Commenting on the report, president of the CIOB, Paul Nash said: "Social mobility is fast becoming one of the defining issues of our time. This report highlights the importance of increasing social mobility and how the construction industry can work to promote greater equality of opportunity for all, particularly in a challenging social and economic environment."

The findings also demonstrate the links between the built environment and social mobility. According to the study, a better built environment, including schools, hospitals, homes and infrastructure, provides greater opportunity for economic and social progression.

The shaping of the built environment plays a big part in how these opportunities are distributed and how they impact on our well-being and life chances.



CIOB recommendations for more social mobility in the construction industry:

- Better human resource management
- Introduce or expand mentoring schemes
- Boost investment in training
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Investing in Norfolk

Agile Property Partners, a Norwich based property investment company, has launched its latest property report, looking at opportunities in the area.

Taking an in-depth look at the property market in Norfolk over the last 20 years, the report covers the period January 1996 to April 2016.

House Price Index highlights are featured, looking at Norfolk's coastal hotspots, and annual cash sales changes, as well as including

a summary of the Norfolk rental market.

The report also contains an in-depth view at local region level, including average prices, percentage annual change and total sales volumes across Breckland, Broadland, Great Yarmouth, Kings Lynn & West Norfolk, North Norfolk, Norwich and South Norfolk.

This insight into the best performing regions in terms of return of insight could prove invaluable to anyone considering investing in property in the county.

Late payment still a major industry issue

Construction companies are being hit hardest by late payments compared to other UK businesses, which is as a whole owed around £26.8bn as a result according to figures from the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

The recent Euler Hermes Quarterly Overdue Payments report revealed that late payments in the construction industry rose by 27 per cent during 2015. Firms were being forced to wait 82 days for invoices to be paid, it found.

Late payments within the construction industry are showing little signs of abating, but

according to TenderSpace, hope is on the horizon. The company has developed a new platform, intended to help businesses quickly and easily check the credit risk rating and payment trends of potential partners and notifies subscribers if there is any change to a credit rating.

TenderSpace CEO David Stapleton said: "Unless you do a credit check, you just don't know whether they're capable of paying you." He stressed the need for getting invoices out on time and chasing up late payments: "You have to chase late payment, no matter how busy you are."

Kier secures £41.9m HCA contract

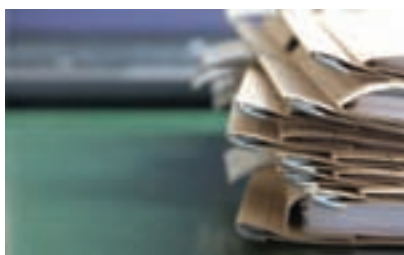
Kier living has been allocated £41.9m of funding from the Housing and Communities Agency, with the intent to build just over 1,700 new shared ownership homes in England over the next four years.

The contract is as part of a £1.28bn first round allocation from the Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme 2016 to 2021 (SOAHP), which is now worth £7bn in total, having received a £1.4bn boost in the Autumn Statement in November.

John Anderson, executive director at Kier Living, said: "We welcome the opportunities that SOAHP brings. It is an encouraging indicator of what we may look forward to in the Housing White paper over the coming weeks."

SOAHP now supports the building of more

'shared ownership' homes, offering access to home ownership for those struggling with affordability, as well as new 'rent to buy' homes, enabling first time buyers to save for a deposit to buy while renting at discounted rates, and 'affordable rental' homes for those renting in the private sector.



Indian housing developer to launch in UK



Xrbia, one of India's fastest growing residential property developers, is to launch in the UK.

The company is seeking joint venture opportunities with UK property developers with social housing experience to leverage their local market expertise.

Xrbia founder, Rahul Nahar, explained: "We have been researching Western markets in depth and, given the extent of the housing crisis in the UK and dearth of affordable accommodation, feel our low-cost and technology-led construction model could have a very positive impact on the volume and type of homes being built."

Initially, Xrbia will focus on building homes in London, where the housing crisis is most extreme. Using a hybrid of steel framing and concrete form work, the company has managed to lower build times to just six months.

In India, Xrbia's standard product is a seven-storey building with apartments of 40 square metres. In London, the company is setting out to deliver these 'micro' homes at a cost of around £80,000 and will support them with finance packages, including a rent-to-own facility.

Founded by 41-year-old entrepreneur Rahul Nahar in 2012, Xrbia's first project consisted of 3,500 houses forming a 120-acre 'future-ready' city in India. It has already built over 15,000 homes, has a pipeline of 100,000 and aims to deliver 100 future-ready cities in India by 2030.

Nahar concluded: "To build the number of homes the UK needs is not just about bricks and mortar, but fundamental changes in philosophy and process."

Dementia scheme awarded

Ashford, Kent's first fully dementia-friendly housing scheme has received an award at the 2016 Kent Design and Development Awards.

Farrow Court was named a joint winner of the Residential-Major category. The first phase of the £15.4m project was completed earlier this year, with two phases in total. This provided the scheme's existing residents with 33 new, more energy efficient homes built to the council's space standards and lifetime homes standards.

Careful consideration was taken in the design of the build to incorporate colours and visual signs, such as 'memory shelves' outside front doors and plenty of natural light. The gardens are also

securely designed to enable residents to enjoy them safely.

As well as these design features, the scheme includes Age UK's day centre, communal facilities, a restaurant and an on-site hair salon. A resident-run shop is also in the pipeline.

Tracey Kerly, chief executive of Ashford Borough Council, said: "With an increasingly ageing population, it is imperative for us to prepare for the growing demand on housing schemes.

"We are looking ahead to phase two of Farrow Court, which will see a further 71 homes and eight recuperative care units being built on the site."



Stone sculpture shapes development

An impressive stone sculpture has been placed at the entrance of Heathe Meadow, a William Davis Homes development in Leicestershire.

Designed and hand built by Harrogate-based stone mason Johnny Clasper, the sculpture sits on the bank at the development's entrance. Measuring 10 metres in length by 1.8 metres high, the sculpture took Johnny six weeks to create and used over 15 tonnes of materials.

Johnny explained his creation: "I spent time driving around the local area to get an idea of the stone styles but it seemed that decorative brickwork was more prevalent.

"Using this idea as the basis for my design, I created a drawing for a sculpture that would deliberately stick out as a feature for the development. The finished sculpture uses a combination of sandstone from Barnard Castle in Durham, house bricks, and locally sourced pink granite, and



it's all traditionally built with cement and mortar."

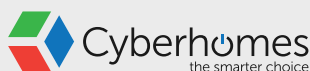
Heathe Meadow is situated on the edge of Rothley Village, close to Charnwood Forest.



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Miller Homes helps students build careers

Students at a number of colleges and universities across the UK are being given an opportunity to lay the foundations for a career in the housebuilding industry with Miller Homes.

Design students at Edinburgh College, Teesside University, the University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN), South Staffordshire College and Oxford Brookes University will have the opportunity to take part in a competition to create a design for a room within a local Miller Homes development.

The students will be provided with technical drawings for the selected room and tasked with thinking about every aspect of the design, including lighting, decor, furniture, soft furnishing and accessories, and must also consider the budget and style in relation to the target demographic. They will create a mood/theme board and a floor plan, and present their ideas to a member of the Miller Homes team and the interior design for the

region. As well as gaining valuable experience from a professional already working in the sector, one winner will see their ideas turned into reality in a show home.

Miller Homes is also running a scheme with second year construction students from Leeds Beckett University to enhance their resumes and gain on-the-job experience.

The students are being challenged with a project that will see them visit a local development during its construction phase and make assessments on-site against NHBC criteria. The criteria include technical requirements, performance standards and guidance for the design and construction of a new home, essential skills for any construction professional. A test house will also be set up on site so students can gain experience identifying potential issues and present their findings to the team at Miller Homes.

Chris Endsor, chief executive of Miller Homes, commented: "By providing a real insight into the



industry and hands-on experience, we hope these initiatives will highlight the many opportunities which are available, and inspire the students who are taking part to consider a career within housebuilding."

Crest Nicholson raises £1m for children's charity from campaign of events

Crest Nicholson has now raised over £1m for Variety, the Children's Charity. The developer has supported Variety for many years in order to provide practical, tangible help for sick, disabled or disadvantaged children and their families, across the UK.

Money has been raised for the charity by employees, sub-contractors and suppliers,

through numerous awards ceremonies, golf days, sporting events and even 'dress down Fridays' at Crest Nicholson's divisional offices.

Throughout their long-running support of the charity, Crest has funded the donation of 27 Variety 'Sunshine Coaches' to schools across the South of England.

Helen Saunders, group marketing director at

Crest Nicholson, said: "To have raised over £1m for Variety is an outstanding achievement, and I would like to thank all of those who have helped us achieve this milestone.

"We look forward to continuing to work with Variety over the coming years and raising even more vital funds for this extremely worthwhile cause."

Barratts gets a pair of sustainability awards

Barratt Developments recently received two major sustainability endorsements for performance in 2016.

The company was named as a Sector Carbon Leader for 2016 in the annual ET Carbon Rankings. The ET Index Research ranks the world's largest companies according to greenhouse gas emissions and disclosure.

Chris Huhne, co-chair of ET Index Research and former UK Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, commented: "Carbon and climate-related risk are increasing. With global corporates responsible for up to 70 per cent of GHG emissions, our ability to keep warming to a manageable level will depend on strong leadership

from the world's largest companies.

"One of the key purposes of the ET Carbon Rankings is to highlight those companies that are leading the field and taking action today."

Barratt was also ranked as the top national housebuilder in the year's Next Generation Sustainability Index, and third overall. The Index benchmarks the sustainability performance of the UK's largest housebuilders and, for the third year running, Barratt received a Gold Award.

Next Generation was launched in 2004 as an industry led initiative to "drive best practice in sustainability into the heart of the UK's residential sector."

In its six-month trading update to December

2016 Barratt Developments said that "overall market conditions are healthy with strong demand in the period for new homes," and confirmed that the company's completions outside of London were at the highest level for nine years.

However this was offset by lower completions in London, "primarily reflecting the planned HY1/HY2 build programme on wholly owned sites." Total completions for the period (including joint ventures) were down on the same period of 2015 from 7,626 to 7,180.

Barratt said that profit before tax for the period was expected to be around £315m, 7 per cent higher than in 2015. Total forward sales (including JVs) were up 15.8 per cent.

Industry movers

The latest movements and appointments within the housebuilding industry

Bovis Homes

Bovis Homes has announced the appointment of a new operations director for its East Division.

Paul Soutar joins the company with more than 30 years' experience working in the housing industry, with more than 10 years as a director in roles with Crest Nicholson and Barratt Homes. In what is a newly created role for the business, Paul will report directly to divisional managing director James Watson, and will be tasked with further strengthening the relationship between Bovis Homes' Strategic Land Team and the division's four operational regions.

BBA

Jon Denyer has been appointed chairman of B/540 Performance of Materials Components and Buildings – a key committee within the UK National Standards Body, set up to standardise thermal performance within the construction industry.

Jon, who has worked for the BBA since 1986, will help establish committee agreement on various standardisation issues; in particular, ensuring the UK's stance on European and international standards remains well-represented.

CITB

CITB chairman James Wates has announced that Adrian Belton has resigned as chief executive of CITB. Sarah Beale, previously chief financial officer and corporate performance director, has become acting chief executive. She has worked at CITB for 11 years, holding a range of senior management roles.

Mr Wates said: "I would like to thank Adrian for his dedicated service to CITB and to our industry. In the past three years he has led the development of key organisational reforms that have enabled and shaped CITB's future offer to industry."

BSRIA

BSRIA has announced the appointment of Krystyna Dawson B.Sc (Hons), MBA, MA as its new business manager of Worldwide Market Intelligence (WMI).

Krystyna is known within the industry and with BSRIA members since she was previously team leader – Heating & Renewables within the WMI Department. She worked successfully in this role for eight years and is well respected among colleagues across BSRIA.

Prior to joining BSRIA, Krystyna had built up her career in the publishing industry and has substantial international experience. In her time at BSRIA, Krystyna has written many articles, reports and papers on a myriad of worldwide heating and renewable topics.

Krystyna's appointment comes after the announcement that BSRIA's current WMI business manager Andrew Giles has retired after 31 years' service.

Krystyna said: "I am very excited about and looking forward to my new role and the challenge therein. It is a wonderful opportunity. I know that I have 'big shoes to fill' with the departure of Andrew. He will certainly leave



quite a legacy behind him.

"BSRIA is a great organisation and has an amazing depth of expertise and knowledge. The WMI team is at the cutting edge of industry trends and new technologies.

"I am especially eager to enhance BSRIA's reputation and support its client base – both nationally and globally: it is certainly an exciting time."

Persimmon

Persimmon Homes West Wales is continuing its growth with the addition of two new sales trainees and a commercial director.

Danielle Richards and Amy Daniel have been brought in as trainee sales advisers, while Jason Martin is the newest face at the Penllergaer office at director level.

Danielle has joined the business straight from school and is learning the ropes at the Cae Hendre site in Bridgend. Amy has joined having worked previously at a pub, with the aim of carving herself a career within the industry.

Jason has been promoted to Persimmon Homes West Wales' new commercial director, moving over from the East Wales region where he was head of commercial for three years.

He also previously worked for 24 years with other housebuilders and said he was relishing the challenge ahead.

"It's good to see that we're in a strong position from a sales perspective, customer



satisfaction surveys are on the rise and we have the makings of great commercial team.

"We have a healthy land bank with a number of new outlets coming in the new year. In 2017 I'm looking to bolster the contractor base and to put steps in place to control costs more effectively moving forward."

Home is where the heat is as Ecodan features in new Buckinghamshire development

When Matthew Homes - an experienced building company based in Potters Bar, Hertfordshire - announced that it was constructing a small development of two and three bedroom homes in Hazelmere, Buckinghamshire, it took the decision to offer a renewable technology option to potential home buyers in the form of air source heat pumps from Mitsubishi Electric.

Not only was Ecodan the natural choice as a proven, reliable form of renewable heating, the ability to provide Matthews Homes with an in-built remote maintenance and technical support was a key part of the decision.

Growing up

Hazelmere started out as a small hamlet in the ancient Desborough Hundred but it has since become a thriving community, boasting a variety of shops, pubs and restaurants and even an 18 hole golf course.

The new development consisted of eight two and three bedrooms homes backing onto woodland. Matthew Homes were on the lookout for a hybrid system that would run alongside a gas boiler and quickly identified Mitsubishi Electric's Ecodan heat pump range as an ideal solution.

In with the renew

Mitsubishi Electric is well known for its development of pioneering heat pump technologies and its Ecodan system is one of the most efficient solutions on the market.

Offering an affordable alternative to traditional heating systems, Ecodan features a modern, inverter-driven heat pump compressor which converts free energy from the air and upgrades it to higher temperatures, providing reliable heating and hot water all year round. The heat pumps only require a small amount of electricity to harvest, upgrade and move the heat to areas that it is needed.

Installation company AP Faulkner was handed the job of fitting the heat pumps, having had plenty of previous experience in dealing with renewable technologies.

Kim Faulkner, Managing Director at the company, comments: "Heat pumps are an efficient and effective way of heating a property and the cost of implementing a heat pump solution in either small scale or larger projects is dropping all the time. We expect to see plenty more of these installations in the short-term future."

As well as the obvious requirement to meet building regulations, Matthew Homes was particularly interested in offering a heating solution that was simple to use and required little maintenance. Being easy to install and maintain, The Ecodan met all of the specified criteria. On top of this,



the system is capable of significantly reducing running costs and CO₂ emissions - helping to meet renewable energy targets - and is fully scalable and able to work in conjunction with other systems.

Under control

In order to provide the homeowner with additional peace of mind, Mitsubishi Electric's MELCloud was installed as a simple Wi-Fi adaptor. MELCloud enables the user to control the Ecodan system either locally or remotely via a tablet, smartphone, PC, Mac or other Internet enabled device.

MELCloud is simple to set up and gives the operator complete control of their Ecodan system over a wireless Internet connection. Residents at the new Hazelmere development will then have the ability to view and control their heating and hot water from anywhere in the world, keep an eye on energy consumption and heat energy produced, set up a seven day weekly schedule and run a holiday mode, get temperature history reports, take in a live weather feed from the Ecodan's location and share or restrict access to the Ecodan system.

The added advantage of the MELCloud system is that it automatically includes access to the MELConsole remote maintenance and technical support available from Mitsubishi Electric.

This means that in the event of the new homeowners having any issue with their heating and phoning Matthew Homes, the company can get straight on to Mitsubishi Electric's technical helpline. Staff here can then interrogate the system remotely and in the vast majority of cases resolve any issues - without the need for a site visit.

Ready to go

With the Ecodan system in place, both Matthew Homes and Mitsubishi Electric are confident that residents in the new family dwellings will enjoy years of stress-free, efficient heating.

Stevie Byrne, Renewable Solutions Consultant at Mitsubishi Electric, concludes: "Ecodan has been optimised to operate flawlessly whatever the weather throws at it. The system has proven itself as a viable alternative to traditional heating systems and I have no doubt that its low noise levels and running costs will be warmly welcomed by the new Hazelmere residents."



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Comment

Comments from leading experts from across the sector.



The industry advocate

Brian Berry looks at the crisis in planning departments which is threatening the industry's ability to meet housebuilding targets – but also highlights some possible solutions.

I've written in this column before about the importance of small sites to SME developers. The Federation of Master Builders' (FMB) previous two housebuilder surveys have shown that a lack of available land is the number one barrier to SMEs being able to increase their output of new homes.

Nearly half of FMB members are engaged in housebuilding in some form or another, so it's been a long-standing policy priority for the FMB to find a way of unblocking the system and empowering SME developers to start building at the levels we saw in the 1980s, when most new homes were built by smaller firms. This was the rationale behind our major research report of 2016, produced in partnership with the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU), on how to deliver more new homes through small sites.

The report research, entitled 'Small is beautiful', is based on evidence gathered via a survey of local authorities and a survey of SME housebuilders, roundtable discussions between these two groups, and interviews with local planners from right across the UK. What this meant was the breadth and depth of the research was extensive and, crucially, it facilitated proper dialogue between builders and planners. Our conclusions were informed by the perspective of both groups, which gives the report a unique level of insight.

One of the most striking aspects of the research is that, for all of the disagreements between developers and planners on apportioning blame, they are in agreement that a lack of resources in planning departments is a major barrier to bringing forward small sites.

45 per cent of local planners and 64 per cent of SME housebuilders feel that the lack of resource in planning departments is a major barrier to enabling small scale development through the planning system. Damningly, nearly 90 per cent of local

authorities report that the Government's housing target of one million new homes by 2020 is impossible unless we increase the resource available to planners. Consequently, one of the report's main recommendations is that local authorities should be allowed to set their own planning fees, provided the extra revenue raised is ring-fenced for planning departments and delivers an improved service.

Cuts to local government funding have

"One of the most striking aspects of the research is that developers and planners agree that a lack of resources in planning departments is a major barrier to bringing forward small sites"

undoubtedly hit planning departments particularly hard. However, in the face of financial pressures, some councils have recognised the importance of continuing to facilitate SME development, and our report draws upon some fascinating case studies of local authorities which are innovating in what can certainly be described as challenging conditions.

Take for example, Birmingham City Council, which has introduced an online planning portal and a dynamic purchasing system, and prioritised de-risking small sites to encourage smaller developers to deliver the types of homes they wanted to

see on these sites.

In a more rural context, the partnership between West Somerset District Council and Taunton Deane Council, two councils which share key planning staff and resources to help counter resource gaps, is a great model of how even smaller councils are able to overcome financial pressures. Barnet Council's creation of a specialised pre-application team, which provides premium, fast-track planning support for developers willing to pay a little more, is another example that could be followed by a greater number of local authorities.

We would like to see these kinds of inventive responses to resource pressures rolled out more widely across the UK. An element of inducement may be required to prompt this, which is why we have called for local planning authorities to be required to include within their local plans a strategic consideration of the contribution that small sites can make to local housing delivery, and how they can enable this to come forward. This could build upon and utilise some other key Government policies about to come into place, including the Brownfield Register and the new 'permission in principle' status designed to de-risk smaller sites. Having to make small sites a strategic consideration could act as the powerful incentive needed to focus minds and spark further innovation that will help revitalise the small scale development sector.

Ultimately, it is damaging to both SMEs and local authorities if smaller developers are hampered from building more new homes. The cumulative potential of small sites is enormous and, as our report demonstrates, this potential is eminently achievable with the right reforms. For us, the hard work begins now, as we try to raise awareness of our recommendations with councils across the UK, ranging from the very largest to the very smallest.

We don't need more tinkering in the housing sector

As we embark on another new year, so the housing sector braces itself for yet another piece of legislation from a Government which seems obsessed in tinkering with housing.

The promised White Paper is expected to be wide-ranging and Housing Minister Gavin Barwell has said it will tackle planning, housing supply, tenure mix and investment. But are these really the most pressing housing problems to resolve in 2017?

Most people would probably agree that the supply of new housing needs to be greatly increased and while Communities Secretary Sajid Javid has promised to take on the volume builders over their alleged land banking and other dodgy practices, the Government appears unwilling to allow local councils to play a more direct part in constructing new homes.

This is despite the fact that whenever the country has been most successful at building new homes, our local authorities played a significant role in this, building between a third and a half of all new homes built each year in their heyday.

These days councils in England are selling six times more homes than they are building as shown by official figures for the first nine months of 2016. Figures from the Office for National Statistics show that 9,500 local authority homes were sold under the Right to Buy from January to September, while just 1,670 new council homes were completed in the same period.

Solutions

But what about the other great housing ills of modern life? What about the insecurity of many private renters, the poor conditions and high cost of housing, the scourge of homelessness, the thousands of unoccupied homes standing empty and the huge disparity between families who are living in over-crowded homes, while many more hundreds of thousands under-occupy their homes.

The Communities Secretary promises decisive action but meanwhile the housing sector heaves a collective sigh, while also thinking



Patrick Mooney of Mooney Thompson Consulting questions whether the current Government initiatives to fix housebuilding amount to more than tinkering in the wrong places.

Continued overleaf...

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"Here we go again". The Government should either leave us well alone for a while or perhaps they should do something really big and bold to make a positive difference to peoples' lives. Well alone for a while or perhaps they should do something really big and bold to make a positive difference to peoples' lives.

Instead the Government has decided to fix a problem which either doesn't exist or if it does, it's a relatively small and trivial problem. It has decided to break up the Home & Communities Agency and to move its regulatory powers to a new stand-alone agency.

It says this is necessary to resolve a theoretical conflict of interests at the HCA. Really? Or is this in fact a cunning tactic to distract the social housing sector's attention from the introduction of regulatory fees in April?

Cosmetic

We have already been told the regulatory rules, systems and processes are not going to change, so what is this 'cosmetic' and organisational change really all about? That's a hard question to answer, but I expect housing associations will expect to exert greater influence over their regulation now they will be paying for it and they will also demand greater transparency.

However, a number of regulatory reforms would make this latest change much more palatable. A simple three-step reform would cover the following:

1. Beef up the regulator's role in protecting the interests of tenants;
2. Clarify and extend its remit over council housing; and
3. Extend its regulatory role to the private rented sector.

Having a single regulator for (all) rented housing would certainly make things a lot clearer for the public and it could make a real impact in tackling the rogue landlords that Government ministers say they are keen to clear out of the sector. It might even help implement parts of the Housing & Planning Act that appear to be stuck in some glutinous Westminster quagmire.

Politicians have a habit of thinking they can change virtually anything with a new piece of legislation, but history also tells us something different, that the promise of big reforms often fails to deliver and there are often unintended consequences to their actions.

Single regulator

Governments of all persuasions have failed to introduce effective regulation of the private rented sector, but as it now houses more people than the social housing sector, the time is probably right to introduce such a measure. More housing associations are moving into the PRS market, so the transition might not be such a great shock.

The giant social landlord, Clarion (formed from the merger of Affinity Sutton and Circle Housing) owns and manages over 120,000 homes and surely has more in common with the private landlord Grainger, than it does with the local Abbeyfield. Regulating Clarion and the new breed of 'super sized' social landlords formed from mergers will require a fresh skillset and approach if the new agency is to succeed.

The new regulator could learn lessons from the rental sector in other countries and bring in measures to improve security of tenure, to intro-

"While Communities Secretary Sajid Javid has promised to take on the volume builders, the Government appears unwilling to allow local councils to play a more direct part in constructing new homes"

duce minimum acceptable standards of accommodation, to stop retaliatory evictions and to bring some control over rents as well as helping to bring empty homes back into use.

The previous Chancellor George Osborne threw billions of taxpayer pounds at the new build and mortgage markets to stimulate more house-building, provided it was housing for sale. Many thousands of people have benefitted from the subsidies and inducements on offer, but what about those who can only access the rental market?

Theresa May's Government appears almost equally fixated on housing for sale although some flexibility has crept in via the recent Autumn Statement. The new housing White Paper will probably fail to deliver on all of its ambitions just like the last Housing and Planning Act. Parts of the last act appear to be unravelling (thankfully) but only after huge amounts of time, energy and resources have been wasted.

The pantomime over 'Pay to Stay' and the enforced sale of larger council homes caused a huge amount of worry for thousands of tenants and has only been called off at virtually the 11th hour.

Standards

The Decent Homes investment programme was great for improving the condition of social housing in this country in the 90s and 'noughties.' Is now the right time to try something similar in the private rented sector, which has grown significantly in the past 10 years but is also providing some of Britain's worst housing?

Remember there are at least 4.5 million people living in the private rented sector and almost one third of privately let properties fail to meet the 'old' decent homes standard and can be considered unfit for occupation.

According to Citizens Advice, the landlords of 'unfit properties' are raking in billions of pounds in rent payments each year – £5.6bn in 2015 and rising, for homes that do not meet current legal standards. Essentially the taxpayer is subsidising law breaking on a massive scale!

The CAB report also reveals a whopping 740,000 households in the UK presented a "severe threat to tenants' health". And yet, Ministers appear reluctant to intervene.

Overcrowding

Positive solutions for dealing with overcrowding and under occupation in the private sector could include encouraging owner-occupiers to down-size after their children have grown up and left home, while avoiding the mistakes of the bedroom tax, which penalised social housing tenants for not moving.

The overall number and proportion of under-occupied households in England increased between 1995-96 and 2014-15 from 6.2 million households to 8.2 million households. This was driven mainly by an increase in under-occupied households in the owner occupied sector, from 5.3 million households in 1995-96 to 7.3 million households in 2014-15.

The overall rate of overcrowding in England in 2014-15 was much lower at three per cent, with 675,000 households living in overcrowded conditions. It would only take one in 10 under-occupiers to move house to resolve this problem, if only there were the smaller homes for them to move to.

To facilitate this we probably need to encourage local councils to employ more planners and environmental health officers, to approve new developments (for sale and for rent) and to inspect existing rental properties.

We also need to increase budgets for Disabled Facilities Grants, so that homes are fit to live in by all members of society and we continue with programmes to improve the insulation of our draughty homes so that we can turn down the thermostat and save on heating costs and greenhouse gases.

Government data shows there are over 200,000 homes that have been empty for over six months. Many of these homes are empty because their owners are holding on to them hoping for a rise in their value before selling them. Should this be allowed when the country is facing the current housing shortage?

Perhaps the new housing regulator could have a role in bringing many of these homes back into use, either through sales or for use as rented properties even if only on the basis of short leases. Now if the new White Paper included measures like this, it would be a cause for celebration and political intervention would be welcomed.

Swapsies, anyone?

By Peter Tooher, executive director at Nexus Planning

There has been much speculation on the likely contents of Communities and Local Government Secretary Sajid Javid's forthcoming planning White Paper, with the prospect of green belt 'swapping' catching much attention. The appeal to Government is certainly clear; a development here, a new local plan policy there, and bingo – no net loss of green belt land – press release here we come. However, the jury is still out as to whether this initiative represents the positive action needed to solve the housing crisis.

The term 'green belt' has without doubt become a politically loaded term in recent years and a response is certainly needed. To paraphrase the fictional Sir Humphrey Appleby of 'Yes, Prime Minister', successive Governments are in danger of sitting on the fence on this issue for so long that they become one.

Although the green belt policy has without question been invaluable in focusing development in urban areas and prioritising the use of brownfield sites, it has often meant that sensible debate on how to sustainably tackle the housing crisis, particularly in areas of high demand, has been killed off before it can start. This has frequently led to expedient decisions rather than robust solutions.

The challenge we are now facing is in large part down to the over-use of green belt as a designation and the subsequent lack of rigour in its application and review. In many cases, this 'green-wash' of local plans has stored up issues that are now coming to the fore. In contrast, the option of safeguarding land outside of the green belt for long-term development requirements has been underused. At a time of substantial housing need, local councils and housebuilders increasingly have no option but to consider greenfield development, which often means turning to the green belt. Birmingham, Greater Manchester, Oxfordshire are just some of the areas on an ever-increasing list.

To add to this increasingly troublesome mix, there exists a popular misconception around how green belts are supposed to work. The interpretation, often held by local politicians and the electorate, is that they are supposed to be permanent and impregnable. In 'exceptional circumstances' however, they are not; although few outside of planning circles are able to decipher this reasoning. It's no surprise therefore that almost all plans to open up the green belt for development engenders a forceful local response. Perhaps understandably, this has become a recurring headache for policy makers within Government; not



least in their Tory heartlands.

So can green belt swaps help? It is foreseeable that in many cases, where it may be proposed, local authorities would be swapping a piece of green belt land for another that serves little purpose as green belt and which is probably already protected to a significant degree as open countryside. Locals peering over the garden wall at the building contractors 'tearing up' their green belt are unlikely to be comforted by the knowledge that another green belt site down the road will be coloured dark green in the local plan.

Whilst a complete review of green belt policy would be unproductive, a re-evaluation of its use

Continued on page 23...

CRL shines the spotlight on the restoration of a Grade II listed mansion

A renovated Grade II listed mansion in the Cliviger Valley has been crowned as a winner of a campaign that shines the spotlight on small developers and self-builders.

CRL is delighted to announce that Holme Hall Manor in Cliviger, Lancashire, is one of three winners selected to take part in its *Venturous Builds* campaign – a new web series that will showcase Britain's inspiring self-builders and their construction achievements.

Berkshire Homes, the developer behind the stunning transformation, has been selected by the structural defects insurance specialist as being truly venturous of spirit.

The campaign, which saw CRL launch its logo into space, aimed to inspire those who have dared to be venturous, brave and unorthodox to share the details of their venturous builds. Winners will have their project filmed and featured on the online show.

The second episode of *Venturous Builds* now live on the CRL YouTube channel.

Holme Hall Manor has been sympathetically

converted into stunning apartments. A family home for more than 200 years, and former retirement home and nightclub, the building was gutted in an arson attack in 2004.

It was derelict for more than 10 years before being bought at auction by Berkshire Homes. The heritage site has now been transformed into 10 one and two-bedroom apartments with impressive views over the Cliviger Valley and a wealth of character.

Harrison Kiely, Berkshire Homes, said: "Holme Hall has been an incredible project. It was previously owned by four experienced property developers who gave up on restoring this ruin.

"The rebuild took us six months to complete from start to finish. Local residents, who have a lot of memories of this magnificent 400-year-old building, were thrilled to see Holme Hall restored to its former glory."

The filming of these unique projects is now underway, with the first episode of *Venturous Builds* going live in the coming weeks. The



Venturous Builds web series is hosted by English designer and regeneration expert Wayne Hemingway.


The construction insurance experts recognise that every opportunity is different. With CRL there is no set criteria – just an appetite for adventure.


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should certainly be considered. Local plan green belt reviews should be firmly placed with the development of a 20 year-plus local plan strategy for the delivery of genuine sustainable growth in our town and cities – this would go beyond the currently narrower site-specific debate around population growth, new homes and land needed.

This is clearly part of it, but there remain some

significant questions that are yet to be answered. Where are the most sustainable locations for growth at regional and sub-regional level? What size should some towns be more self-sustaining and what critical mass is required to support local services and effective public transport? How far should towns and their communities be challenged to meet their own housing needs rather off-loading the requirement to less challenging or

less politically savvy areas?

In order to adopt a long-term strategy to spread housing need and demand more evenly across the country, it is clear that any local and sub-regional approach should be backed up with an effective brownfield strategy with real funding and a continued emphasis on the Northern Powerhouse and other regional initiatives. A plan perhaps worth getting off the fence for?

A smarter approach to site Health & Safety

Nick Wilkinson says that as demand for construction increases, regrettably so are health & safety incidents, and highlights priorities for action.

Construction has always had inherent dangers, but recent stories in the national and construction press have highlighted growing concerns of an increase in deaths and injuries on UK building sites as the industry continues to experience an upturn in work.

Coupled with Health and Safety Executive blitzes of sites that found nearly 50 per cent of those visited failed spot checks due to material breaches, it is clear there is a need for decision-makers to implement policy at an enterprise level, so they roll out ensuring immediate improvements.

Baroness Donaghy, who wrote the landmark report *One Death Too Many* for the last Labour Government, highlighted the need for a consistent method of checking workers' identity and competency before allowing them access to sites.

As she told *The Guardian* however: "Now there is an upturn in work, with skills having been lost during the recession there is a danger that people who are insufficiently skilled will be taken on. And that's when the deaths and accidents will start taking place."

Stephen Ratcliffe, former director of the former UKCG, echoed this, saying contractors had to ensure they employed qualified people – and provide appropriate inductions – which will also avoid negative impacts on performance.

"We must not take shortcuts because the skills are harder to find," he said.

Data collection

The first priority should be to collect workforce data effectively.

There are many challenges when collecting information however, often aggravated by the use of time-consuming paper-based systems. These can include ensuring data is secure, easily accessible from multiple sites, and kept up-to-date to reflect changes in worker permissions.

The standardisation and integration of data from various locations via The Cloud minimises

risks. By keeping track of key site and workforce data, such as the Right to Work in the UK, penalty points or past Health & Safety incidents, site safety is boosted and the capacity for employee error or negligence is reduced.

The second priority is implementing safety policy at a company-wide level.

Without an enterprise-level system to run this against, it can become increasingly difficult to manage policies and enforce them across multiple sites.

While the sector has been quick to implement hardware solutions, these are often combined with site-centric applications, creating Health & Safety implications and restricting visibility of associated reporting.

For example, the fact that an employee has received multiple yellow cards across several different sites, or has a history of accidents using a certain type of machinery, may never be picked up at the site level but is instantly flagged when considered at enterprise level.

The third priority is to deploy a proven identification and accreditation solution such as the Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS), already in use on many UK sites, with almost 1.8 million cardholders.

Cloud-based construction-specific biometric technology can accurately identify members of the workforce and manage their access rights and site activities in accordance with company policies and procedures. These include:

- The level of access an individual has been granted
- Ensuring the appropriate inductions and Health & Safety briefings have occurred
- Appropriate restriction of access

Examples include when the Health & Safety penalty points limit has been breached or an individual has not accessed a site for a defined period.

Construction companies using advanced identification solutions can also drive cost savings and demonstrate greater levels of transparency or

compliance as required by site inspectors. Most importantly these companies can reduce risks and ultimately save lives.

As Heather Bryant, the Health and Safety Executive's chief inspector of construction, has warned: "Larger organisations have a better record but they are still not good enough. Nobody can be complacent, they have to be very vigilant."

Residential building sites differ in many ways from commercial building sites but one commonly recurring factor is that due to their very nature, residential building sites often do not have a secured physical perimeter.

However, residential construction sites still have the same H&S, sub-contractor management and workforce reporting requirements as commercial sites. They still need to ensure the right people with the right skills are on site. They still need to ensure their sub-contractors are on-site when they claim to be and they still need accurate time and attendance reporting on their own workforce.

Tech solutions

Biometric access control solutions have been used for some time but such systems typically require a physical perimeter to enforce turnstile access. However, recent developments in biometric technology have seen the emergence of lightweight desk or wall-mounted clocking stations.

Now time and attendance can be recorded for direct employees and trade or sub-contractors without using turnstiles, ensuring and prove only properly accredited and inducted staff have been allowed on site.

Health & Safety can also be monitored in the form of roll call reports, incident audits and employee spot checks, in addition to sustainability performance – in fact, such systems can perform as a 'virtual site perimeter'.

Nick Wilkinson is sales director at MSite

materials 2017

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BT centre redevelopment gets green light

Plans to redevelop the British Telecom (BT) Training Centre in Harrogate, North Yorkshire, have been given the green light at a recent planning committee.

Designed by local architectural practice WCEC, on behalf of owners and developers Telereal Trillium, the training facility on St George's Road will be transformed into 88 private dwellings. The new development will comprise of one, two, three, four and five-bed houses. A percentage of the development has been allocated for affordable housing, as agreed with the council.

Nick Fenton, associate director at WCEC, explained more about the project: "We have worked collaboratively with Harrogate Borough Council and the project team, Carter Jonas, WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff and Turner & Holman to achieve the right balance on this exciting new development."

He continued: "The site's immediate surrounding is characterised with properties of the late 20th Century and protected nature reserve. It was crucial to sympathise with the site's context by creating a residential development that would be



deemed an enhancement, making a positive contribution to the existing town settlement."

Mark Kelly, disposals and development director at Telereal Trillium, said the company was "delighted" that the scheme has received approval, believing the development will "help support Harrogate's housing need."

The scheme has been granted outline approval

with access landscape and layout fixing the sites infrastructure, plot locations, green verges, landscape buffer and ecology enhancements.

The development is intended to move forward in Joint Venture, and will be going to market in the new year to seek proposals. It is anticipated that commencement of construction on site will be in late 2017.

Plans submitted for 74 luxury homes in Cheshire park

Detailed plans have been submitted for a luxury development in the grounds of Alderley Park, the former Cheshire headquarters of AstraZeneca.

Developed by PH Homes, the plans includes 74 distinctive new homes in detached, semi-detached and mews styles. This is alongside sport and leisure facilities, a gastro pub, a boutique hotel, and a farm shop.

Following their purchase of the land from Alderley Park's owners, Bruntwood and Manchester Science Parks, PH Homes engaged Robert Adam, director at Adam Architecture, to design the properties. Each of the bespoke classical house types has been created to complement the historic surroundings, including the park's original listed walled garden, arboretum, water garden and serpentine.

Robert Adam commented on the project: "Working closely with the local planning authority, we believe we've created an outstanding scheme with architecture that will do justice to these exceptional surroundings."

Although the site already has outline planning consent, consultants HOW Planning have

worked with PH Homes on the preparation of the reserved matters application.

Connor Valley, associate at HOW Planning, said: "A lot of time and effort has gone into the pre-application process and in consulting key stakeholders to ensure it meets the Council's objectives and sets a benchmark for the wider Alderley Park master plan."

Following the submission, PH Homes are hopeful the application will be determined in February, with construction works commencing in the Spring.



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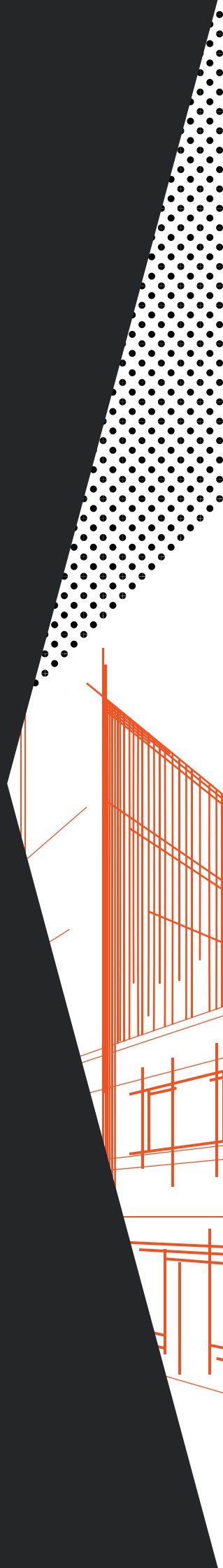


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Vandersanden Group acquires Hoskins Brick

Belgian brick and pavers manufacturer, **Vandersanden Group**, has announced its acquisition of Hoskins Brick Limited, the company's exclusive UK distribution partner. Vandersanden Group is one of the largest brick manufacturers in Europe, with a total annual production capacity of approximately 370 million bricks. The company consists of Vandersanden Belgium with two factories in Spouwen and Lanklaar employing approximately 210 employees, and Vandersanden Netherlands with two factories in Hedikhuisen and Spijk, employing approximately 120 employees. There are also five members of staff working at a sales office in Northern France (Halluin). Both companies are family-owned, share a mutual respect and hold similar values and philosophy for doing business. Both also strive towards excellent results for customers, with an emphasis on honesty and integrity and the importance of maintaining a positive attitude at work.

01954 268075 www.vandersandengroup.co.uk

Enq. 108



Johnson Wright drives away with top prize

Mapei UK ran a "Win a Van" competition over the summer to promote their popular range of Eco Adhesives. This week the winners, Johnson Wright Flooring from Tyne & Wear, were presented with their new dual branded Ford Transit van. The competition ran during the UEFA Euro 2016, with entrants collecting football stickers from each purchase of a tub of Eco Adhesive. Johnson Wright Flooring entered the competition with two fully completed football cards and a winning Portugal bonus sticker. Greg Wolfe from Johnson Wright Flooring commented "Collecting the football stickers was great fun, so we are delighted to have won! We are very pleased with the van and the dual branding, which further cements the longstanding relationship we have with Mapei." Participants also had the chance to win one of 10 runner up prizes of Home Nations Football Tickets. Contact Mapei for more information on how Mapei Eco Adhesives can be used in your project or visit www.mapei.co.uk to view the full product range.

0121 508 6970 www.mapei.co.uk

Enq. 109



Bracknell Roofing invests in future talent

With the ongoing shortage of skills in the construction industry, one national roofing contractor is celebrating after one of the company's apprentices has become the youngest to achieve an NVQ Level 2 in Roof Slating & Tiling in the company's history. Harry Flatt was just 16 when he joined **Bracknell Roofing** as an apprentice. Over the course of two years he has worked to successfully complete the company's Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) partnered apprenticeship programme, becoming the youngest fully-qualified member of the company's extensive nationwide roofing team. Investing in future talent is something Bracknell Roofing has long championed as an effective way to overcome the ongoing skills shortage facing the sector, with the business launching its current apprenticeship and training scheme in 2013. Since launching its current scheme Bracknell Roofing has already seen more than 30 people enrol, with plans to expand the programme by a further 20 places in 2017.

0870 562 6800 www.bracknellroofing.com

Enq. 110



From concept to completion

Brexit has pushed the UK Government into new and uncharted territory, and until Article 50 is triggered the housebuilding sector may stay in limbo. On the other hand, a record half a million homes in England now have planning permission granted, so for many housebuilders it's business as usual. As a leading PVC-U & PVC-UE building product manufacturer **Freefoam Building Products** is committed to providing help and support with a comprehensive package of specification and supply to ensure projects run smoothly from concept to completion. Freefoam manufactures and supplies the ultimate fit and forget low maintenance PVC-U & PVC-UE product range. From fascia and soffit guaranteed to last for 50 years to rainwater systems designed to give leak free performance, Freefoam products offer life-long benefits and peace of mind for housebuilders and clients alike.

01604 683862 www.freefoam.com

Enq. 111

New products for 2017



Building on its established ranges and launching a number of brand new products, **Natural Paving Products (UK) Ltd** is encouraging customers to order its 2017 brochure for their first chance to see its new offering. The brochure showcases the company's entire range of products, as well as useful information about installation best practice and technical

specification guidance. Professionally presented with a large variety of inspirational in-situ photography, the new brochure provides the perfect reference for all landscaping projects.

0330 333 8030 www.naturalpaving.co.uk

Enq. 112

BES 6001: 3.1 certification awarded



The impact of our purchasing decisions has never been more critical. **Comar Architectural Aluminium Systems** are pleased to announce that they are certified through BRE's new BES 6001:3.01 Responsible Sourcing of Construction Products, receiving a 'Good' rating. This ensures that their partners can rest assured, that in contracting with Comar

their aluminium windows, doors and curtain walling systems have been sourced responsibly with a company that holds the ethics of good supplier management at its heart.

020 8685 9685 www.comar-alu.co.uk

Enq. 113

Call for entries for the Roofing Awards 2017



Hosted by the **National Federation of Roofing Contractors**, and taking place on 19 May at the Park Plaza Westminster Bridge, the UK Roofing Awards are the highlight of the roofing industry calendar and serve to recognise and reward outstanding standards of workmanship and technical excellence across the roofing industry. Entries can be submitted

through an improved online system. Aimed at making the experience more user friendly and seamless for busy contractors, architects and others, there is also an instructive video providing top tips.

020 7448 3187 www.nfrc.co.uk

Enq. 114

Vent-Axia shortlisted in CIBSE Awards



Vent-Axia is delighted to announce that it has been shortlisted in the CIBSE Building Performance Awards 2017. The company's award-winning Sentinel Kinetic Advance has been named as a finalist in the 'Energy Efficient Product or Innovation of the Year' category. Vent-Axia's Sentinel Kinetic Advance is a new breed of Mechanical Ventilation with

Heat Recovery (MVHR) unit. With best in class performance and offering near silent, energy efficient and high pressure operation, it is perfect for new build residential properties.

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Enq. 115

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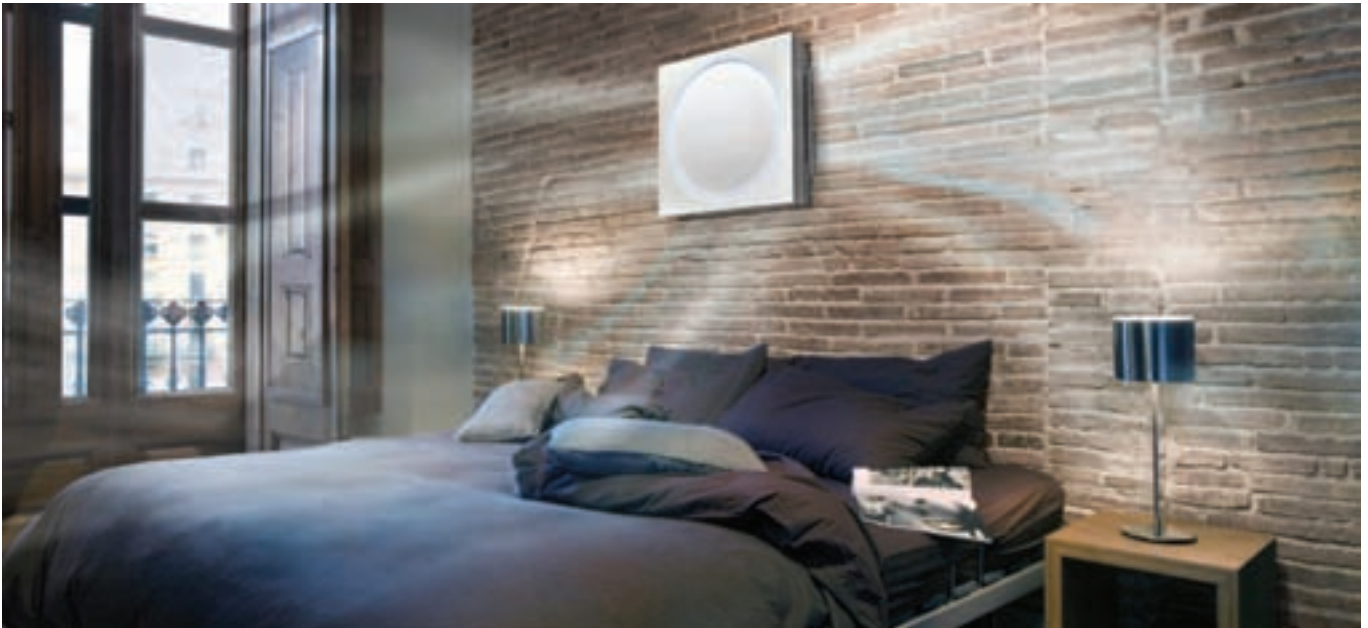
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Enq. 116



Clearing the air

Air conditioning equipment is, like most technologies, advancing in leaps and bounds, with ever-greater functionality and performance. Andy Slater of LG explains how increasing ease of installation and use is being paired with environmental progress.

Domestic air conditioning is still a relatively small marketplace in the UK, and while many individuals still associate air conditioning with cooling only, today's home air conditioning systems also offer highly energy efficient heat pump technology. In turn, bedrooms, conservatories and loft conversions that are typically too hot to be comfortable in the summer and difficult to keep warm in the winter, can provide a constant, comfortable level throughout the year.

Growing demand

Much of the demand for air conditioning in UK homes is for higher end, new build properties. However, there is equally demand from people who are not necessarily looking just for cooler air. Consumers often seek better air quality, the removal of moisture from the air, a reduction of the humidity levels associated with warm spells in the UK and filtered air devoid of the allergens that cause havoc for hayfever and asthma sufferers. It can also offer peace and safety for people living in urban areas where opening windows to cool down lets in noise pollution and provides a security issue.

There's a real choice of domestic air conditioning equipment now available in the UK, from designer wall-mounted systems through to bespoke whole-house systems. Demand for air conditioning units is on the rise,

particularly in upmarket properties where the majority of domestic air conditioning systems are installed. In a new build or refurbishment project for a luxury end property, the owners will be happy to see as many value added features included as possible, and a quality air conditioning system certainly qualifies. As with many items in a building project, if you incorporate the air conditioning system at the time of the build you will considerably reduce the cost of the installation over retrofitting it at a later date.

There is also growing demand for air to water heat pumps, with all year round cooling, heating and hot water, where COPs (coefficients of performance) of up to 4.5 can be found. That means 1 kW of input power generates up to 4.5 kW of output power, even with outdoor ambient temperatures of -2°C.

VRF

Commercial applications of air conditioning can include larger scale housing and apartment developments, student accommodation, or new build nursing and care homes, where the air conditioning system also doubles up as the heating system. Products are now available with an especially efficient way to recover waste heat from a VRF (variable refrigerant flow) air conditioning system, which is both cost effective and energy efficient, while still able to provide

heating and hot water for properties.

VRF solutions are considered to be among the most versatile and powerful systems available. Providing exceptional comfort, energy efficiency and reliability, they are held in high regard by building managers, business operators and HVAC engineers. VRF solutions boast a number of other tangible benefits, including cost effectiveness and easier installation compared to modular systems.

Thanks to significant advancements in HVAC technology, VRF systems are now able to offer unmatched performance capabilities along with reduced energy consumption. Many projects utilising such systems have contributed hugely to Part L compliance due to the efficiency figures that are being achieved.

Reducing energy consumption

Inverter compressors are the main parts of the system to focus on in order to reduce energy consumption, leading to increased full and part load efficiency. Manufacturers look at the compressor for ways to reduce energy consumption as this is the 'heart' of an air conditioning system. Some companies have achieved compressor speeds of up to 150 Hz, providing rapid operation response and making the unit capable of reaching the required temperatures quickly, increasing the part load efficiency.

Looking at the oil return within a compressor can always reduce the compressor's energy

“There’s a real choice of domestic air conditioning equipment now available in the UK, from designer wall mounted systems through to bespoke whole house systems”

consumption by a small percentage – known as a hidden energy loss. This is may be provided by some companies in the form of ‘smart oil returns,’ which measure the presence of oil in real-time, only recovering oil when necessary, improving the efficiency of the system and prolonging the life span of the operation of the compressor.



Hydro kits

In VRF installations, hydro kits can extract heat from a heat pump or heat recovery system to provide domestic hot water. Seeing waste heat escape into the atmosphere is becoming a thing of the past. The capacity to recover heat and use it sensibly elsewhere in the building is part and parcel of today’s thinking when designing a building, and heat recovery has reached a level of sophistication where there is always a way of re-using the heat you have already paid for. These hydro kits provide hot water and floor heating

with far less energy consumption than a traditional boiler-driven wet system. In addition, a hydro kit requires no exhaust to the outside of the building as a boiler does, working on a closed circuit basis.

The hydro kit is compact and easy to install and can connect to multiple heat pumps for additional savings if required. As well as supplying hot water to a hot water storage tank within the home or commercial property, it can work alongside an underfloor heating system, as part of a system that incorporates solar PV, in a preheat

and reheat application or with fan coils.

These systems often benefit from cutting edge controls technology. Such controls ensure precise temperature control and no wastage. In addition, HVAC controllers have been developed to reduce systems’ overall energy load.

With modern technological advances allied to growing demand, there has never been a better time to invest in your air.

Andy Slater is technical research and development manager at LG

Enq. 117

Vent-Axia

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Enq. 118



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Enq. 119


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Enq. 120

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Enq. 121

Pure Air sets the benchmark for air quality



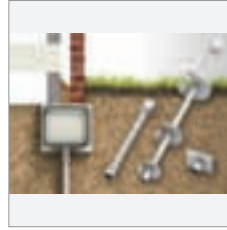
With a growing body of research pointing to the health implications of poor indoor air quality (IAQ) in our homes, leading British ventilation manufacturer **Vent-Axia** has set the benchmark for high-level filtration with the launch of the Vent-Axia Pure Air. Designed specifically to answer the needs of the new build residential market, this indoor air quality filtration

system has been developed to work in conjunction with Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR) units to offer the ideal indoor environment.

0844 856 0590 www.vent-axia.com

Enq. 122

Dixie for new build and temporary structures



A new brochure from **Helifix** gives details of how its versatile, high performance, Dixie micro-pile system can be used to provide reliable and economical structural support for new permanent and temporary buildings. Helifix circular hollow section piles are simply screwed vertically into the ground, to the required depth, and then topped with an

engineered steel plate. This plate is then either cast into reinforced concrete pile caps/ground beams, for traditional new build construction, or connected directly to the base of modular or temporary steel structures.

Enq. 123

Polypipe ducting proves a winner



Polypipe Ventilation, manufacturer of market-leading domestic ventilation systems, has been awarded a substantial order for its ducting systems for the new Glasshouse Gardens development in London's Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. In total, 1300 metres of Domus Supertube 204x60mm rigid ducting will be used in the first apartment block. Polypipe's

Domus 204x60mm ducting is the most popular domestic duct profile used in MVHR systems. It is recommended by specifiers and contractors because of its low pressure losses, light weight nature, ease of installation, low profile and precise joints.

Enq. 124

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comfort. The Merino Wool underwear is extremely lightweight and soft for natural warmth and comfort in really cold conditions. While the XTR garments are body-engineered for an effective combination of ventilation, insulation and protection.

Enq. 125



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Enq. 126

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Enq. 128



Lightweight Vertigo cladding for penthouses

Architectural practice Alexander Sedgley has specified a pioneering vertical fibre cement slate facade system for a luxury private mews development in London. The Vertigo slates, from manufacturer **Marley Eternit**, have been used to create striking projecting bays on the front and rear of the exclusive terraced and semi detached rental properties at William Mews, near Brockley. Built by Proctor Developments, the distinctive eco-friendly homes use timber frame construction, so the architects needed to specify a lightweight cladding material. They also wanted the bays to create a strong contrast against the yellow-flecked London stock brick required by planning. Although zinc or render were initially considered, Alexander Sedgley architects selected the new Vertigo system for its aesthetic and lightweight properties. Available in eight different colours, Vertigo slates can be used to create beautiful, distinctive and elegant vertical cladding solutions for a full range of building types.

01283 722588 www.marleyeternit.co.uk/vertigo

Enq. 129



Beat the winter building blues

Alumasc Facades' ST Mineral K render offers far quicker setting times than silicone during winter months, giving installers greater flexibility to apply the product in extended periods of bad weather. It is touch dry in just a few hours. Suitable for use across all Alumasc External Wall Insulation Systems and also for direct application onto solid walls, ST Mineral K Render is lightweight, yet highly impact and weather resistant, whilst also remaining vapour permeable. The product can be left with its original white finish without the need to paint, or alternatively can be overpainted with Alumasc's Silicone Facades paint which opens up a contemporary, wide-ranging colour palette. Ideal for both newbuild and remodelling applications, it provides a breathable, flexible, weather-tight decorative finish to any building. Alumasc's ST Mineral K Render is eco-friendly, manufactured using only natural materials (mineral aggregates, and white marble grain) and is available with a rolled texture in 2, 3 and 4mm grain sizes, boasting Class 0 surface spread of flame. The product is fully BBA approved.

Enq. 130



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Enq. 131

Window security – a clear solution

By Martin Oates – Commercial Director with SE Controls

Window security is a key design requirement with all market leading systems tested to the PAS 24 standard to meet the demands of the Secure By Design (SBD) initiative and Building Regulations Approved Document Q (ADQ).

Automated windows that are utilised for ventilation strategies will also need to comply to the standard, which requires the actuators to resist 3000N of negative force when the window is closed. This is becoming commonplace in applications such as school refurbishment where facade automation remains a popular and cost effective solution of providing improved ventilation performance over manually operated windows.

The SECO N 24 25 twin actuator from SE Controls has successfully passed the PAS 24 test and in addition to presenting physical resistance to intruders, it also provides a signal to the controller, should the window fail to close fully, to maintain the integrity of the security system,

as requested by the SBD schools standard. Two locking points in one neat enclosure with programmable gasket relief optimise weather performance and security to meet BS 6375 parts one, two and three in addition to the PAS 24 test.

Bespoke fixing brackets and reinforcement to the window is often required to provide sufficient strength for the fixing, which is usually the weakest point of resistance, as the actuator provides two x 4000N of resistance to forced opening.

The ability to manufacture bespoke body lengths allows SE Controls to locate the locking points on different size windows exactly as tested, relative to the corners, to maintain consistency of performance and compliance. Test conducted with an actuator located at the centre of a vent will either not pass the test or can only be utilised for different widths.

Similar to EN12101-2, the fabrication and installation solution requires a process that is audited by an independent notified body and



must be re-tested annually.

If you have requirements for SBD or ADQ certified automated windows, please contact the SE Controls team for further information.

01543 443060 www.secontrols.com

Enq. 132

NorDan windows to feature with Ardmore



NorDan has won a contract to supply its NTech range of Scandinavian timber windows, StormGuard three handled windows and glazed single and double balcony doors to Ardmore Construction for the £50m Phase 4 project – at Heathside and Lethbridge in Lewisham, South East London for Family Mosaic Housing Association. NorDan's three

handled StormGuard windows are ideally suited for high rise buildings and for open corridor areas where the windows cannot open outwards, but still have that functionality for facilities managers.

01452 883131 www.nordan.co.uk

Enq. 133

First to introduce large scale press fittings



Pegler Yorkshire, a leading global plumbing and heating manufacturer, has extended its stainless steel XPress Press Fit range of fittings to included sizes up to 168mm – a first for the UK market. The two new additions complement the XPress range offering a complete system from 12mm through to 168mm. The XPress stainless steel range is a world class

fitting that can now be fitted up to 25 bar, subject to application submittal and prior approval. It boasts a myriad of advantages including; no requirement for threading machinery or grooving which is labour intensive and costly.

Enq. 134

'Belgium doors' soar in popularity



Steel windows have remained an enduring element in both domestic and commercial buildings for centuries due to their slim sight-lines combined with rugged performance; yet they, like many building products, are subject to trends in styles and application. Most recently, members of the **Steel Window Association** have reported a resurgence in the popularity of

steel framed entrance screens and partitions; normally featuring a pair of double doors flanked by fixed lights, and referred to as Belgium Doors. Offering excellent weather protection while admitting the maximum amount of natural light.

Enq. 135

StoneMaster adds visual appeal to projects



StoneMaster masonry blocks from **Aggregate Industries** provide a revolutionary walling product with the inherent beauty of indigenous stone. Designed to add value and visual appeal to any traditional or contemporary commercial or residential building project, StoneMaster is available in two finishes, smooth for a classic finish, and washed,

which gives a sparkle for outstanding aesthetics. Both finishes are available in a pencil chamfer edge profile. StoneMaster is ideal for all commercial buildings. For more information, please contact Aggregate Industries directly.

Enq. 136



Putting efficiency at the core

In recent years, the devastation caused by flooding has completely changed the perception of drainage – from mere building materials to being an integral part of UK housebuilding. Terry Hill of JDP explains.

The challenge for housebuilders and developers in creating effective water management systems represents a complete cultural change, which moves the goal posts from mere statutory compliance to excellence in design.

Meeting the need for change

Successive governments have grappled with the question of how to manage flood risk, and in many cases the changes in legislation, guidance and Building Regulations have simply added to the confusion. A lack of certainty caused by the delays in a revision of The Flood and Water Management Act 2010, the side-lining of The Code for Sustainable Homes, and variations in legislative requirements which apply dependent on whether the development is in England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, have all placed increasing pressure on housebuilders to get it right.

So, how can developers and groundworkers achieve best practice, the right solution for each specific development, and comply with regulations? Some water management specialists have a dedicated technical design department, able to offer expert design advice and support for housing projects involving water management systems and groundworks, providing developers with guidance on compliance with all current

legislative requirements. Using cutting edge technology, accurate rainfall data can be calculated for each area, helping developers to design bespoke systems for each project.

Government initiatives have focused on Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs), and the need for effective management of surface water run-off. The design of effective SuDs solutions is best achieved where this follows the approach of going with the flow of natural drainage, with the objective to design a system to deal with the flow at source, rather than transferring the problem further down the watercourse. This demands a completely integrated approach from design to installation.

Effective design

When designing and constructing sewers in England, Wales and Scotland, housebuilders face the challenge that different legislation and standards apply. The latest plastic inspection chambers enable housebuilders to be fully compliant with all of these and with the latest Sewers for Adoption 7th Edition (SfA 7) and the Confined Spaces Regulations 1997.

Published in 2012, SfA 7 provides design and installation standards for all adoptable drainage, including manholes and inspection chambers. Every sewer and lateral drain serving two or more properties and connected to the public sewerage

network must be adopted, becoming the responsibility of the relevant Water and Sewerage Company.

Drains serving individual properties remain the responsibility of the householder, and are subject to Building Regulations Part H1 as non-adoptable drains. All new housing projects that require a Section 104 agreement will need this in place with the water company as part of the planning application, which includes a detailed design of the foul and surface water systems. No planning permission will be granted without this.

Plastic inspection chambers

Achieving compliance

Under SfA7, plastic inspection chambers are authorised for use in adoptable areas provided they comply with BS EN13598-1 or 2, or have the equivalent independent approval. Part 1 is for installations down to a maximum invert depth of 1.2 metres, Part 2 for installations down to a maximum invert depth of 3 metres.

Delivering savings

Plastic inspection chambers are lightweight, reducing the need for mechanical tools and offering groundworks savings of up to 50 per cent in time and material costs. Traditional use of

concrete chambers will require a larger excavation and heavy plant equipment, leading to increased cost and time on site.

Safer on site

One of the key drainage issues which contractors must always consider is that of the health and safety of employees and operatives. In past years, the need for access to drainage systems for inspection or on-going maintenance in confined spaces has resulted in serious and, in some cases, fatal injuries. Plastic inspection chambers enable housebuilders to comply with the legislative requirements of the Confined Spaces Regulations 1997 and provide greater health & safety protection for their employees.

Adaptability

The ability to adapt to individual site conditions is a challenge frequently faced by ground workers. Inspection chambers, which offer the flexibility to connect with a range of diameters for standard pipes, are an essential choice in good design, saving time and cost, and ensuring high quality performance.

Products have been developed which comprise a base unit, available in varying channel configurations, shaft, sealing ring and restrictor cap. Shafts can be finished at ground level with a cover slab in trafficked areas. Differing pipe

systems and sizes can often be accommodated for with the use of adaptors or inlet reducers. Integrated deflection sockets can provide the flexibility to adapt to site conditions, accounting for angular movement.

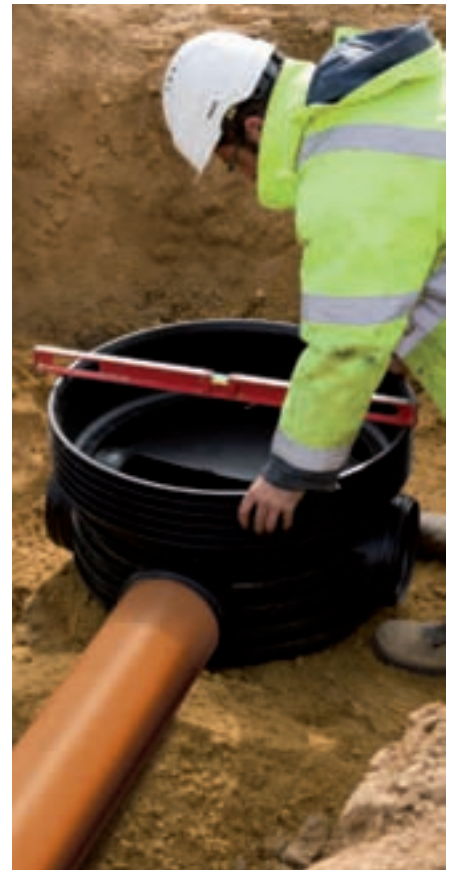
Leak tightness

The leak tightness of drainage structures is a major requirement for the design and construction of the systems, the objective being to prevent the pollution of soils and water tables and the infiltration of clean water likely to disturb the operation of purification systems.

It is recommended that the materials used for inspection chambers should be resistant against certain chemical attacks in order to prevent failure. The inspection chambers should be able to withstand attacks from external issues, such as aggressive soils, or internal issues, including from the fluids conveyed – in particular hydrogen sulphide (H_2S) and sulphuric acid (H_2SO_4) which may be given off by the effluent.

As the UK continues to address the urgent need for more houses, with improving standards increasingly meeting the need for effective water management, excellence in the design of drainage has become an essential part of every housing development.

Terry Hill is technical support manager at JDP



Enq. 137



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Enq. 138



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Enq. 139

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Enq. 141

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Enq. 142



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Enq. 143

All the range

A quality range cooker can provide the deciding factor for a purchase on luxury development, but making the investment can be daunting. Mark Blewitt of ESSE offers guidance to make the task a little easier.

The first stage in choosing the ultimate high-end kitchen accessory – a range cooker – is to find out what is the most popular as well as reliable fuel type in your development's locality. Rural areas may not have easy access to mains gas, while older houses might benefit from an existing oil tank. Whichever fuel type is decided upon, it is important to research the most energy-efficient cooker models. Don't be afraid to ask the supplier about fuel consumption and efficiency ratings.

If gas is the fuel of choice, consider a flueless model. Some cookers are capable of cleaning the gases burnt by its atmospheric burner, removing the need for a flue to vent them outside. This means installation and servicing costs will be lower, there is no flue from which to lose heat, and there is greater freedom of movement when choosing its place in the kitchen.

Versatility

It is important to consider whether the range cooker is also intended to provide central heating and hot water, to ensure the most suitable model is chosen.

Make sure to enquire about oven temperatures and how adaptable a given model is for different types of dishes. There's no reason a homeowner shouldn't have a grill, and different ovens should be versatile enough to cook crispy roast potatoes as well as slow-cooked stews.

Look for small details that will make life easier, such as hinge stops to prevent the doors banging against the body of the cooker, or easy-close doors that allow homeowners to nudge them shut with their knee if they're carrying a hot dish.

For bigger kitchens, a range cooker can be extended with a companion model, providing additional fuelling options and cooking capacity. Companion modules might be teamed up with the main cooker with an extended towel rail, or used as a stand-alone appliance in another part of the kitchen.

Style

A stylish range cooker needn't be 'just another appliance'. Choosing the right shade can really make a feature of it. But, don't make any rash decisions – a quality range cooker can last a lifetime. Only a handful of companies still have the traditional skill to apply hard-wearing vitreous enamel in house. They are well worth considering however, with models available in a wide range of colours. The traditional enamel

"A stylish range cooker needn't be 'just another appliance' – choosing the right shade can really make a feature of it"



used on range cookers is usually glass enamel, which is what gives them their distinctive shine.

Saving energy

Think carefully when specifying electric appliances. Induction hobs, for example, help to save money and energy. Models are available which heat up in minutes, so they don't need to be left on all the time.

One of the latest innovations available in ESSE electric models is its patented 'power share' system. This means energy is 'pulsed' around the cooker to where it is needed most, making sure that heat-up times are minimal and effectively

making 3 kW act more like 5 kW, so residents can benefit from complete fuel economy. 'Wrap-around' elements ensure even oven temperatures so homeowners don't need to turn dishes and they can even cook in trays placed directly on the base of the ovens.

It is possible to reduce a project's carbon footprint by choosing a wood-burning range cooker which is carbon neutral (meaning it only gives out as much CO₂ as is taken in by a growing tree). With a personal wood supply, some wood-burning models can virtually take a property off the grid, providing not only meals, but also piping hot water and all heating for a house.

If the property doesn't have a working

chimney, a flueless gas or electric model might be the answer. Flueless gas products offer a versatile and energy-efficient option.

Size matters

When planning a new kitchen, there are a number of sizes to choose from depending on the project's requirements.

Some manufacturers offer 500 mm wide models which can be used as stand-alone models, or as 'companions'. Larger three-door models can be around 905 mm wide x 900 mm high, while four-door models are around 990 mm wide x 900 mm high.

There is then the option to pair one of the 'standard' cookers with a companion model, for a much more imposing cooker with a width of up to 1,490 mm. Many specifiers choose to team an electric main cooker with a smaller wood-burning model, allowing end-users to enjoy two very different styles of cooking which may (or may not) be used all year round.



Dispelling the myths

A common misconception about range cookers is that you have to change the way you cook. Well-made, modern range cookers should be every bit as versatile and controllable as any other

cooker, with the extra benefits of style and size. Some people still assume that range cookers take forever to warm up, and that's why they are left on all the time. In fact, modern models can heat up in just minutes.

Historically, people have believed that range cookers are expensive to run, but leading models

can include a whole host of features to ensure absolute efficiency and minimal running costs. Truly efficient range cookers can in fact be run for as little as £1 a day with normal use, making them a very cost-effective option.

Mark Blewitt is sales director at ESSE

Enq. 144

A twist in time with Tuscany ceramic sink



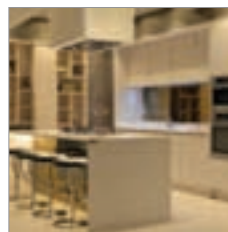
Reginox's new Tuscany ceramic sink is manufactured from traditional fine fireclay, yet features a contemporary minimalist, slimline design. This perfect combination of 'old meets new' ensures that the sink will look equally at home in either a classic kitchen setting or a modern penthouse apartment. With a beautiful high gloss finish, the 1.5 bowl Tuscany

features clean lines and angular styling that create a feeling of low key elegance. Suitable for undermounting and available at a highly competitive price point.

01260 280033 www.reginox.co.uk

Enq. 145

BLANCO supplies in new inspirational space

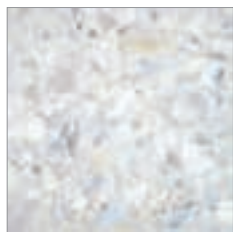


The Home Space from Express is a unique 27,000 square foot showroom space featuring three full-sized display homes along with inspiring room sets. As the leader in sink, tap, and waste technology and design, **BLANCO** was a natural partner. Included in the BLANCO products on show in eight kitchen displays are undermount sinks, the BLANCO

ELON and CLARON sinks and the CARENA tap, along with innovative waste solutions. Each customer, however, has the option to choose from BLANCO's entire range of sinks, taps, hobs, lighting, hoods and waste.

Enq. 146

Inspirational marble from COMPAC



COMPAC has just launched new marble colours to complement its inspirational range of interior and exterior technological marble for use on walls, floors and vanity tops. Classic colours offer four stunning designs with a coarse grain pattern – Classic White (featured), Classic Grey, Classic Beige & Classic Brown. New Greys colours feature three

on trend designs, each with a fine grain pattern – Aluminium which is suitable for interior and exterior use, Palladium & Anthracite for interiors. COMPAC offers a range of finishes including polished and matt and thicknesses of 12, 20 and 30mm.

Enq. 147

GROHE shortlisted for kbbreview Awards



GROHE is delighted to announce that it has been shortlisted for the kbbreview 2017 Retail & Design Awards. Once again, GROHE is up for a key industry accolade, and this time, it is for its range of FootControl kitchen taps. GROHE is competing for the Kitchen Product Innovation of the Year Award. The FootControl kitchen tap showcases

innovative tap technology, which allows for greater flexibility in the kitchen. A gentle tap on the base unit with your foot will activate the tap, so no hands are needed. The product also incorporates EasyTouch technology for added comfort and convenience.

Enq. 148

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Enq. 149



ESSE's 990 EL

The British-built 990 EL is a beautifully balanced electric cast iron range cooker; perfect for the modern kitchen. Easy-shut doors and precision hinge stops illustrate ESSE's absolute attention to detail.

The 990 EL has three large ovens for melt-in-the-mouth meringues and slow-cooked stews or deliciously crispy roast potatoes. You don't need to worry about turning your dishes or swapping shelves thanks to wrap-around elements which ensure even temperatures.

Along with a full-width grill, the 990 EL combines traditional cast iron and induction hobs. It takes just minutes to heat up and is available in a choice of 20 colours.

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Enq. 150



Safe as houses?

Stephen Wise of Knauf Insulation explains why housebuilders should be taking a closer look at the true fire performance of the insulation materials they specify.

When it comes to choosing an insulation material, it shouldn't just be a box-ticking exercise. With the intense focus on thermal performance in modern builds, there's too often a silo approach to the specification of insulation, with scant consideration given to a material's other characteristics, such as combustibility.

The recent fires on sites in Spateston and Gorton are timely reminders of the devastating effect a fire can have on a housing development under construction, yet still, too little thought is given to the contribution insulation could make to such an incident. During construction, insulation that has been installed may not be covered with final finishes such as plasterboard, and stored insulation could be within or adjacent to the building under construction.

How an insulation material will impact on the outcome of a fire will depend on the material's reaction to extreme heat, and the fire resistance of the construction in which it is incorporated. Both these characteristics have a critical importance on how the fire safety of a finished building is achieved. However, they are often confused, meaning the safest solution is overlooked.

Reaction to Fire

Reaction to Fire (RTF) applies to products and relates to their combustion characteristics. RTF tests are used to evaluate the contribution of a specific material to fire growth, or as the BRE states, "measure the contribution of a material or system to fire, particularly at the early stages when this is crucial to safe evacuation."

RTF classification is now largely based upon the European Standard EN 13501-1. Products are classified according to Euroclasses and there are seven levels – A1, A2, B, C, D, E and F, with A1 being the highest performing (non-combustible) and F being the lowest.

The reaction to fire characteristic is a mandatory declaration on the CE Mark for all insulation products, so this information is readily available. Euroclass A1 is defined as non-combustible with Euroclass A2 deemed a material of limited combustibility.

With RTF classification, it is important to consider the nature of the testing. Insulation that has been classified Euroclass A1 or A2 has

undergone testing to prove non or limited combustibility. Any insulation that has been classified Euroclass B or below has been tested to determine to what degree it is combustible.

Fire resistance

Fire resistance is the ability of building components and systems to perform their intended fire separating and/or loadbearing functions. Building components and systems with specified fire resistance ratings are based on application or element specific fire tests. These ratings, expressed in minutes and hours, describe the time duration for which a building component or system maintains specific functions while exposed to a specific simulated fire event.

The test methods for fire resistance are defined in BS standards, which determine the conditions of the test as well as the preparation of the test element. The classification is carried out according to the BS 4376 suite of standards (or BS EN 13501 Part 2), which closely defines how to interpret the test results and arrive at the period of fire protection provided.

"There is too often a silo approach to the specification of insulation"



Because of this, different building elements (purposed for the same application) may include insulation materials with different RTF characteristics and yet still achieve the same fire resistance classification.

'Perfect world' tests

Critical to a true understanding of the fire resistance of a building component or system is an awareness that the tests are based on a 'perfect world' – where the product or system must be installed and maintained as per the original test conditions, in order to achieve the performance. These tests do not take into account poor installation or fire risk during the construction and deconstruction phase of the building's life, when structures and elements are not fully assembled. Nor do they consider the impact of alterations or damage to the element during the 'in use' phase. The tests are also only valid up to the period of tested fire resistance, e.g. 60 minutes, and do not provide any data on how an element may react after this period or if the fire re-ignites.

In all of these circumstances, differing insulation materials will behave differently, as a system's fire resistance rating does not reflect the combustibility of individual elements, instead demonstrating how the system will maintain its integrity for a certain amount of time. Therefore, if the insulation is combustible, this may have an impact for site management and processes in the construction and deconstruction phase. In the event of a fire in the 'in use' phase, this can also impact the resultant level of insurance loss once the period of fire resistance has elapsed and all occupants have been safely evacuated. Understanding the RTF of any insulation product is vital for those that want to design and construct a building that will inherently reduce risks across all fire scenarios, at all stages of construction.

In housebuilding, one area where it would seem clarity is crucial is fire performance. In terms of insulation, there is a very clear way to ensure the safest option has been chosen. By opting for Euroclass A1 (non-combustible) materials, housebuilders can reduce the risk of fire spreading during all phases of a development, through construction to occupation.

Stephen Wise is product manager at Knauf Insulation

Enq. 151



The invisible force

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Image of Steel Farm Passivhaus (www.leap4.it/Steel-Farm-Northumberland-Passivhaus). Designed by Leap Architects using Knauf Insulation.

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Product Focus

JT Pumps

JT Pumps' sewage pumping station and grey water pumping stations are ideal for use in areas where gravity flow is not available. At JT Pumps, the company supplies packaged pumping stations for small extensions, garden annexes, basement flats going up to houses, schools, pubs, caravan sites, and supermarkets (Vortex or Macerator pumps). All the systems comply to building regulations. Most pumping stations are held in-stock for next day delivery. For more information about JT Pumps and to see the full range of products, please call 0844 4145800 or visit the company website at www.jtpumps.co.uk.

Enq. 153



Glendining Signs

Glendining Signs concentrates its efforts on providing high quality, affordable signage. It specialises in supplying housebuilders, construction and civil engineering companies. If Glendining Signs doesn't supply the signs you require as standard, in-house designers can produce exactly what you need. Deadlines are often tight, that's why the manufacturing facility has the staffing levels along with the printing & production equipment needed to deliver great products on time! So, if you want health & safety, directional, sales, marketing or any other variety of site sign, come to Glendining Signs – Specialists in construction site signage.

Enq. 154



Designer Contracts

Designer Contracts are a UK's flooring contractor working with New Build, Social Housing, Local Authority and Public Sector organisations providing cost-effective flooring solutions. It is a nominated supplier on EU compliant frameworks and offers contract rated and domestic floor coverings. Designer Contracts also offers free on-site survey for single rooms to entire refurbishment programmes and advice/guidance on health and safety floorcovering compliance. Every floorcovering is supplied to the right specification and professionally installed achieving a safe/inclusive environment. Designer Contracts is CSCS registered, DBS checked staff and fitters.

Enq. 155



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Enq. 156

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Enq. 157

Bracknell Roofing helps rebuild and restore



The rebuild, restoration and transformation of a house within a conservation area into 11 apartments, retail and office space has been completed using the expertise of roofing experts **Bracknell Roofing**. As part of the roof replacement, Bracknell Roofing faced the challenge of installing 650m² of Welsh slate from the Cwt y Bugail quarry in

North Wales, chimneys and Velux windows on the properties. The team also used a combination of Marley Eternit capped angle ridge and hip tiles and traditional lead, with GRP on the flat surfaces.

0870 562 6800 www.bracknellroofing.com

Enq. 158

Upping the pressure



The latest generation of pressure boosting sets from **Wilo** can be specifically tailored and equipped with two to four pumps. Wilo Si-Boost Smart Excel is the perfect solution for secure water supply and needs based pressure provision. Driven by high efficiency EC motors and meeting all volume flow requirements without resulting in oversupply or undersupply,

this solution produces energy savings of up to 70 per cent for reach individual pump compared to conventional uncontrolled devices. See more information on the website.

01283 523000 www.wilo.co.uk

Enq. 159

Glass balustrade for contemporary style

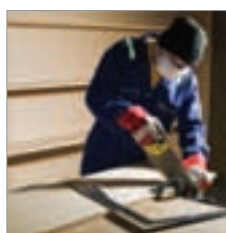


Neaco have supplied a major balcony and balustrade specification for a stunning development of 58 luxury apartments overlooking the River Trent in Nottinghamshire. Handrails and balustrade have been precision-engineered in aluminium featuring a powder coated finish in one of Neaco's standard metallic colours which combines superbly with

tinted toughened glass infills to bring a stylish modern aesthetic to balconies and communal terraces enjoying spectacular views across the river. Neaco's product range also includes structural glass, adaptive bathing facilities and aluminium grilles.

Enq. 160

Norbord's CaberWood MDF



Norbord's CaberWood range of Medium Density Fibreboard (MDF) is one of the most versatile modern building materials. Norbord boasts one of the widest ranges of MDF products currently available with key features and benefits of the board including finish, routing capability and screwholding. Five grades are available from the basic lightweight general

purpose grade, CaberWood MDF Trade, to the top-of-the-range, CaberWood MDF Industrial, a hard-working, deep routing, moisture-resistant product with uniform density all the way through the board. For more information contact Norbord directly.

Enq. 161

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Enq. 163



Going off-grid, sustainably

Liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) can help new developments not only meet SAP ratings, but also offer a sustainable alternative to other off-grid fuel choices. Ian Digby of Calor Gas explains how.

Developers building off the mains gas grid not only have to contend with choosing a fuel that is cost-effective and quick to install, but also one that offers a sustainable and environmentally friendly solution.

Approximately 143,500 new build home projects were started in 2015, and most of these will be able to connect to a mains gas supply, using this as the primary source for heating and hot water. However, for new rural housing developments built off the mains gas grid, making the connection may not be an option due to the high costs and waiting times involved. Many housebuilders also want to install a fuel source that is in keeping with the rural environment in which the estate is being developed.

In these circumstances, there is a range of off-grid fuels to consider, including oil and electricity, as well as a number of renewable alternatives, such as air source heat pumps. However, each of these options can create

additional challenges for the housebuilder, due to the modifications and expenses required to accommodate these fuels in a property.

In the first instance, most of these familiar fossil-based fuels will require additional energy-saving measures to meet the desired SAP ratings (Part L1A Building Regulation Compliance), such as solar PV, triple glazing or extra insulation. Not only could this result in extra expense for the development, but also additional pressures and extra work to ensure the site is meeting its environmental obligations.

“LPG has established itself as the lowest off-mains carbon emitting fossil fuel available on the market, emitting 20 per cent less CO₂ per kWh than oil”

While proven in many off-grid applications, oil-fired central heating systems generally require a large, unsightly oil tank to be installed in the rear garden of each property, which can be detrimental to the overall aesthetics of the house and a turn-off for many potential buyers. Oil boilers will need to be sited externally or on the ground floor of a property, and as they are larger in design than LPG boilers, costly redesigns of the internal layout will be required. As a result, many housebuilders are now moving away from specifying oil heating technology on new build homes.

For other, alternative energy sources, such as air source heat pumps, developers may need to install larger fixtures. Such fixtures can include radiators or potentially underfloor heating, which not only increase capital costs but can also result in expensive deviation from a standard house design. LPG does not require the same level of energy-saving measures as other off-grid

fuel options to reach the desired SAP ratings, often requiring only low-cost modifications, such as the addition of hi-therm lintels or waste water heat recovery, to achieve compliance.

As a result, LPG has established itself as the lowest off-mains carbon emitting fossil fuel available on the market, emitting 20 per cent less CO₂ per kWh than oil.

As most new build homes of less than four bedrooms are designed around a mains gas combination boiler, LPG offers an ideal substitute. When considering boiler sizes, an LPG unit is generally the same size as a conventional gas combination boiler, meaning there is no need to change a property's internal layout. Technologies such as air source heat pumps require a hot water cylinder to be installed, as they are unable to produce instant hot water. As a result, the implications of fitting a hot water cylinder in each property are clear: design layouts will have to be changed, potentially resulting in smaller bedrooms and living spaces for the homeowner.

Another key advantage to LPG is that the tanks can be stored underground. This means no unsightly individual gas tanks in homeowners' gardens. It can be easily installed as a communal system, with the gas stored centrally in tanks and then distributed through a network of pipes, creating a metered estate. Not only does this improve the overall aesthetic of the estate, it all makes maintenance easier as it can all be managed away from the houses, in a central location.

"LPG can be easily installed as a communal system, with the gas stored centrally in tanks and then distributed through a network of pipes, creating a metered estate"

Improved SAP ratings – Bloor Homes

Kinton Meadows is a large, off-grid development in Warwickshire. Due to its size, there is a high demand for a reliable fuel source in order to accommodate the heating needs of its 105 homes.

Having investigated the cost of piping mains gas to the homes – which would be around a million pounds for every half-mile – Bloor Homes soon discounted this as a financially viable option, and so had to go in search of an alternative fuel solution.

Geoff Hibbert, engineering manager at Bloor Homes Midlands, explained: "After reviewing alternative fuel options, it soon became clear that LPG was an ideal solution. Choosing LPG allowed us to build the house types and layout we had planned. If we had gone for any of the other alternative fuel options, such as oil, electricity or renewables, we would have had to significantly modify the layout of the 105 homes, which



would dramatically add to costs.

"The SAP ratings are also much better for a property fuelled by LPG in comparison to oil, meaning we don't have to add any extra energy-saving features such as solar PV or triple glazing."

LPG in action – Bimminster Homes

It was a similar story for Bimminster Homes. When the company began developing the 'Woodlands' site at Edney Common in Essex on behalf of William Thompson Homes, mains gas was not available in the village, meaning the developer had to consider the range of alternative fuel options available for providing home heating and hot water.

Emma Allen, project manager at Bimminster Homes, described the options the company considered: "Our primary concern was the aesthetic of the homes – we needed something that wasn't going to affect the look and feel of a property's interior and exterior.

"Initially we considered using ASHP, but found the outside units were quite noisy and made the exterior of the homes look cluttered, which we felt could put off potential buyers.

"It would also mean we would have to add hot water cylinders on some plots, affecting the design and layout of the property, which would be costly and impact on the interior of the home.

"In addition to this, we had some concerns

about the long-term reliability of ASHP, and wanted to offer our clients a fuel source that they would be familiar with, and which was both dependable and versatile.

She continued: "We looked at oil, but this would require a large, ugly individual oil tank in each garden, which we felt did not lend itself well to an exclusive luxury development – and electric was just too expensive.

"Gas has a proven track record of providing heating and hot water to homes, so we had no doubts that LPG would be a trustworthy option that was hassle-free to install.

"With LPG, we could have a communal supply with underground tanks that could be sited away from houses, which would improve significantly the overall development aesthetics. There were no restrictions on how far away the tanks had to be positioned, so we could place them at good distance from the site, which would also make it easier for refuelling."

LPG offers an ideal alternative for developers seeking a sustainable solution for an off-grid, rural development, while still delivering impressive cost and installation efficiencies. Supported by the fact that it requires fewer additional energy-saving measures in order to meet the required SAP ratings, there is an extremely strong case for developers investing in LPG.

Ian Digby is specification manager at Calor Gas

Triton's Fastcoat delivers fast track elastomeric waterproofing

Triton's elastomeric, liquid applied TWS-Fastcoat, has provided a rapid drying waterproofing solution for the floor slabs of the subterranean light wells at the Material Store housing development in Hayes.

The material Store development is part of the £250 million regeneration of The Old Vinyl Factory in Hayes, West London, where thousands of people worked for EMI, pressing and packaging vinyl records and making everything from radio sets to bicycles.

The slabs were constructed approximately 1.5m below ground level and although the new concrete incorporated a watertight concrete admixture would have remained gas and vapour permeable. Two coats of Triton's TWS-Fastcoat, (which can be applied effectively in ambient temperatures even when substrate temperatures are as low as 0°), therefore provided an impervious barrier which will also lower the potential risks of corrosion of the steelwork in the slabs as well as protecting the outer surfaces.



TWS-Fastcoat is a single pack, moisture curing, elastomeric resin. The membrane cures in a continuous and elastic form, as a totally adhered layer. It guarantees total water tightness and withstands minor building movements and vibrations. TWS-Fastcoat can be used as a base coat, a reinforcing layer or a top-coat. Other typical applications include podium decks, low pitch and flat roof areas with pedestrian traffic, wet rooms, lightly trafficked flooring, water

channels and ponds. In green roof applications, the addition of Triton's geotextile fleece between the two coats of TWS-Fastcoat provides an effective root barrier and waterproofing layer.

At the Material Store development, as part of the preparation for the application of TWS-Fastcoat, Triton's Fillet Seal was applied in 25mm beads to all internal angles that eliminates 90° angles at wall/floor transitions and minimises the risk of leaving gaps or holes unsealed. It was also important to ensure that the concrete surface was clean and dust free. On porous or friable surfaces, Triton's TWS-PU Primer should be applied before the application of TWS-Fastcoat.

The slabs will receive raised access floors over the TWS-Fastcoat layer, allowing any potential water/rain ingress to enter the drainage systems of the individual dwellings beneath the raised floor.

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Enq. 165

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Multi-Tight 2K from **Remmers** is a new, flexible, mineral based waterproofing product which has all the performance properties of older technology polymer-modified thick bitumen emulsions, whilst being 'bitumen free'. Using unique rubber granulate filler technology Multi-Tight 2K has a crack-bridging capacity which is five times more effective than standard

flexible mineral-based waterproofing systems. The versatility of the product allows it to be used to waterproof below ground offering excellent resistance to ground or water pressure.

01293 594010 **www.remmers.co.uk**

Enq. 166

Vita ECO offers energy saving



The new **Stelrad Vita** series of radiators has provided housebuilders and specifiers with a new concept in radiator buying options, with six selected radiator ranges under the Stelrad Vita branding that includes an entry level Stelrad Vita Value range, right through to the beautifully designed Ultra product with colour options. The Vita series has already

revolutionised the radiator market. One of the ranges is the Vita ECO range which offers energy savings of up to 10.5 per cent on energy bills. To take a closer look or for more information please contact Stelrad directly.

Enq. 167



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