

# HOUSEBUILDER & DEVELOPER

JUNE/JULY 2026



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### THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

Cornish housebuilder Legacy Properties blended its new high-end development into its rural surroundings, providing a combination of contemporary and rustic. Roseanne Field reports.



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James Parker

ON THE  
COVER

HOUSEBUILDER  
& DEVELOPER

JUNE/JULY 2026



**CORNISH BLEND**

Legacy Properties focused on providing a strong sense of place to blend its new 24-home scheme in Cornwall seamlessly with its rural village surroundings – while offering high quality living.



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# FROM THE EDITOR

Are you aware of the New Homes Quality Code, supposedly a better, more robust code of practice for homebuyers, which has replaced the failed Consumer Code for Home Builders? If not, that may illustrate one of the problems, i.e. its voluntary nature meaning that it hasn't been seen as a must-do across the sector. There is a self-selecting aspect to changing onsite practices this way, although the Code is established by the central body the New Homes Quality Board, and enforced by the independent New Homes Ombudsman Service. It is a fundamental cog in the new era of quality the Government is trying to use in, post-Grenfell, and now post-Future Homes Standard.

The Ombudsman, as represented by ex-HSBC man Nigel Cates and established three years ago, only covers around 60% of the new build market. But he reported at a recent Parliamentary Committee meeting that the body is now "getting around 200 complaints per month." So at least awareness of the body as a repository of snags on new builds is beginning to take hold among customers, But the builders signing up might be those more interested in getting it right first time, so may not represent quality levels across the board.

Cates said that one of the main issues behind the physical defects being reported was "breakdowns in communication," but also cited a wider problem that "substantial numbers" of SMEs were not signing up to the Code. With the industry undergoing one of its toughest times currently, it's hard to see how large numbers will volunteer for further sticks to be hit with. At the Committee, Chloe Fletcher of the Chartered Institute of Housing said the Code needs to be statutory, and also needs to cover all types of new homes, as currently there are several loopholes.

I wouldn't like to generalise, but is there a chance that more women coming into the industry could mean greater rigour onsite? For example, a greater focus on attention to detail, and less value engineering at the expense of quality, or perhaps I'm being overly optimistic. The slow move to offsite approaches, and more precise, factory-oriented delivery is another potential lever to see this potential demographic change coming to fruition, albeit one itself hampered by the culture change issues.

But to support a major move to more gender equality, for the good of quality builds as well as the industry in general, several other pieces need to move. For example, work-life balance with better childcare support for both parents, enforcing equal pay, and a commitment to eradicate the 'macho' culture of the past.

As skills continue to vie with cost and planning as the biggest issues in the sector, it's fantastic to see a Scottish apprenticeships endeavour really gaining traction with female recruits to the sector. Glasgow-based construction firm City Building has harnessed the power of apps (in this case jobs app yattle) to help achieve a 116% increase in women among its record-breaking 980 applications for apprenticeships. May this be a sign of things to come across the industry, to build a long-needed bridge across the gender gap – which remains colossal – with practical roles still 99% men in the sector. There's still a long way to go.

*James Parker*

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# Countryside Partnerships and L&Q to build 405 homes in Dagenham

Vistry, through its Countryside Partnerships brand and L&Q have received planning approval from Barking and Dagenham Council for Phase B of their ambitious Beam Park regeneration project in East London. Designed by architects PRP, this latest phase will deliver 405 high quality new homes, as part of the transformative, circa 4,000-home eight-phase masterplan.

Following this planning consent, construction work on the new homes, which will be delivered in a mixture of two-bedroom apartments to four-bedroom houses, is expected to commence in early 2027. These homes will be designed to prioritise sustainability through air source heat pumps, wastewater heat recovery systems and low energy lighting. A new green space with sustainable drainage features will also be delivered as part of the phase, in line with the 58% of the wider masterplan that has been allocated for open spaces.

This latest milestone follows the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's recognition of Beam Park as part of the New Homes Accelerator, and reflects how Vistry and

L&Q are focused on housing delivery on the 72 acre former Ford manufacturing plant site, which is one of London's largest active construction sites.

Beam Park is believed to be one of only three schemes in London with over 3,000 homes that are offering 50% affordable housing as well as 25% family homes – helping to meet the critical demand for high-quality homes in the area.

Construction is “progressing swiftly on the rest of the masterplan,” said Vistry, with 520 new homes due to be delivered in Phase C of the scheme in the coming months. The first two phases of Beam Park have now been completed, delivering 1,158 new homes and community facilities including a new health centre, nursery, primary school and green spaces including Central Park, a riverside open space that includes a range of play facilities for children.

When fully complete, the Beam Park scheme will have extensive facilities including two schools, retail spaces, a nursery, a multi-faith centre and two state-of-the-art energy centres, while 58% of the development has been allocated for open space.



## Dandara in the running for five housebuilding awards in 2026

Dandara has been shortlisted for five major accolades at this year's Premier Guarantee Excellence Awards, recognising outstanding achievements in housebuilding, site management and construction quality.

The independent housebuilder has secured nominations across four developments in the highly competitive Development of the Year categories. The shortlisted developments are:

- Old Sarum in Salisbury, Wiltshire — Social Housing (1-50 homes)
- Pearmain Place in Crowborough, East Sussex – New Homes (51-100 homes)
- Braeburn Fields also in Crowborough, East Sussex — New Homes (101-150 homes)
- Foxhall Gait in Kirkliston, Scotland — New Homes (101 -150 homes)

In addition, Scotland's Colin Watson has been shortlisted for one of the construction industry's highest honours – site manager of the year. Watson manages The Pines development in Wallyford, East Lothian, a thriving community that has proved hugely popular with buyers.

The finalists will represent Dandara at the awards ceremony, which will take place at London's Nobu Hotel on Friday, 25 September.

Designed to celebrate the very best the industry has to offer, the Premier Guarantee Excellence Awards recognise quality, consistency and dedication across the sector. Spanning 14 categories, the awards “shine a spotlight on inspirational people and projects throughout the property industry,” said Dandara.

With only four nominees shortlisted in each Development of the Year category, Dandara is proud to be recognised alongside some of the UK's leading housebuilders.



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# Bellway gold award places it at the top of PLC sustainability rankings

Bellway has achieved a gold award in the Next Generation Benchmark which assesses sustainability practices in the country's largest housebuilding companies.

The award recognises Bellway's achievements and ongoing commitment to sustainability across eight key areas. The survey ranked Bellway in third place overall, making it the leading PLC housebuilder for sustainability.

Bellway's sustainability strategy extends across all areas of its business. "There is particular focus on carbon reduction, caring for customers and communities, and being an employer of choice," said the firm.

The company has invested heavily in industry leading projects, including as a partner in Energy House 2.0, an initiative led by The University of Salford which is trialling low-carbon technologies for new homes in a climate-controlled chamber. Bellway built a full size house in the facility and has worked with academics and suppliers to the industry to prepare for the adoption of the Future Homes



Bellway's head of sustainability Simon Park and sustainability and innovation manager Emma Dickinson

Standard from 2027.

Bellway also opened a training facility at its Barton Quarter development in Bolton to help train staff, suppliers and SMEs in future technologies. The facility won a Next Generation Innovation Award.

The housebuilder's commitment to biodiversity "extends beyond Government requirements," and a native species focused showhome garden has been created in Nottinghamshire to encourage more people towards wildlife friendly gardening.

The Next Generation Benchmark assesses performance across categories ranging from company strategy and reporting through to communities and placemaking. Bellway achieved top five rankings in seven out of eight categories, including first place for health, safety and environmental management, and second place for energy and carbon and procurement.

## Jones Homes secures land for 235-home development in Middlewich

Jones Homes has acquired a 37 acre site in Warmingham Lane, Middlewich, where it has begun building 235 new homes and will create green open spaces.

The Cheshire-based housebuilder will also contribute more than £1.2m towards the planned Middlewich Eastern Relief Road. The development, to be known as Warmingham Park, will include one to five-bedroom houses, bungalows and apartments.

Around half of the site will become landscaped open space, featuring a children's play area, new wildlife habitats and a community orchard.

The contribution towards the relief road will be reallocated towards education or affordable housing if the road does not progress. The housebuilder is also providing 24 affordable homes for "people with a connection to the local area," as part of the planning agreement for the scheme.

Outline planning consent for the development was granted in 2019 and a reserved matters application showing the detailed layout was approved in December 2024.

## Avant to build 52 units in East Lothian project



Housebuilder Avant Homes is delivering 52 new homes for East Lothian Housing Association (ELHA) at Blindwells, near Tranent in East Lothian, after agreeing a £10.6m deal with the affordable housing provider.

The social rented homes will form part of the housebuilder's £48m, 174-home Althamer View development which features a range of three-, four- and five-bedroom properties. It is located one mile off the A1, and is less than a 30-minute drive from the heart of Edinburgh.

The partnerships deal is the first between the two organisations, and is a "further example of the housebuilder's multi-tenure strategy which seeks to maximise housing supply."

This has seen Avant Homes, which has its Scotland head office in Edinburgh, deliver its energy efficient, quality new homes for a range of affordable housing and private rented sector (PRS) providers.

All the homes typically have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of B or above, which is considered to represent an excellent level of energy efficiency.

Work is already underway on the 52 one-, two-, three- and four-bedroom homes which comprise bungalow, apartments, terraced and semi-detached house types. The first residents are scheduled to move in to the properties at the end of October.

Avant Homes also operates in the north of England and Midlands. Across its operating regions, the housebuilder has secured a near term pipeline of more than 900 additional affordable homes to be delivered across 15 developments.

Avant Homes is also responsible for the delivery of a further 550 Section 106 affordable homes which are currently under construction.

Headquartered in Barlborough, near Chesterfield, Avant Homes' ambition is to grow its multi-tenure business further across its existing regions and beyond.



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# City & Country recommended for approval to deliver 480 homes in Stansted



Stansted-based developer City & Country has been recommended for planning approval for two residential schemes in Essex, comprising up to 300 homes on the edge of Stansted village, and up to 180 homes adjacent to Birchanger.

The Stansted scheme includes a shop, cafe, nursery, care home and land allocated for a village hall, while the Birchanger scheme proposes extensive new cycle and pedestrian links between the villages, alongside significant landscape enhancements designed to improve biodiversity and ensure the settlements remain separate.

Planning officers at Uttlesford District Council have recommended approval of City & Country's proposals, highlighting the design quality, ecology and sustainable location of the schemes. The developments will also help address the shortage of affordable housing in the area, with demand expected to increase alongside the planned expansion of Stansted Airport and a new logistics park nearby.

The Planning Committee Report states: "The Council's Principal Urban Design officer describes the scheme as exemplary and exceptional, noting that it represents a genuinely place-specific and landscape-led response."

The report also welcomes the creation of a substantial habitat bank and green corridor between the two settlements, noting that this "not only reinforces the retention of a meaningful

and permanent landscape buffer between the settlements but plays a clear role in preventing their coalescence, thereby maintaining their distinct identities and the openness of the intervening countryside."

City & Country hopes to build a collection of one to six-bedroom homes, 50% of which will be deemed affordable through rent and affordable home ownership, exceeding the local authority requirement and helping to provide homes for the 1,400 households on the council's housing waiting list.

The plans also comprise 15 km of new and enhanced pedestrian and cycle links and a habitat bank with ecological enhancements. This includes a community orchard and the reinstatement of historic woodland and hedgerows lost over time. Under the current proposals, the developments will each achieve a Biodiversity Net Gain "massively in excess of 20%," said City & Country.

The proposed homes have been designed by Stirling Prize winning architect Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios, with a focus on architecture that draws from the landscape and culture of Uttlesford and the wider region. The developer added that the homes would be built to Uttlesford's "latest sustainability standards to have net zero operational carbon." The schemes would also provide "significant funding for sustainable transport, road improvements, education, health and emergency services."

## Keepmoat strengthens team with two senior promotions



Keepmoat is celebrating two senior promotions, as it "continues to strengthen its West Midlands regional office."

Martyn Grimes has been promoted within the land and partnerships team, to director of land and partnerships. And Emma Urie, who was formerly head of sales, now steps into the role of sales director.

Based at the Birmingham office, Martyn joined the team in 2024 and in his new role he will oversee "driving acquisitions, focusing on strengthening new and existing partnerships, advancing local opportunities and supporting the team in achieving further organic growth across the West Midlands."

Martyn recently spearheaded the region's collaborations with Walsall and Smethwick Councils on Locksmith Quarter demolition works and the Friar Park regeneration project, which will see more than 600 new homes created through the partnership, transforming derelict brownfield land.

Set to lead the sales strategy at the West Midlands division, Emma Urie has been promoted following two and a half years as head of sales. In her new role, she will oversee sales across a portfolio of developments including Mill Place in Upper Tean, Stallings Place in Kingswinford and Sketchley Meadows in Nuneaton, while also shaping the sales strategy for upcoming sites being brought forward by the Land and Partnerships team.

Working closely with the wider regional leadership team, Emma will play a key role in aligning sales delivery with the region's future growth pipeline.

Keepmoat is a top 10 UK partnership homebuilder with a track-record of delivering quality new homes across the UK. To date, almost 60 percent of its current developments are on brownfield sites.



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## COMMENT



Nicky Brock, partner at Carter Jonas

# How planning could stop BNG being a blocker

Nicky Brock of Carter Jonas argues that a small procedural change to biodiversity net gain approvals could unlock faster delivery without compromising environmental outcomes.



STREAMLINING  
DOES NOT  
HAVE TO MEAN  
WEAKENING  
BIODIVERSITY  
NET GAIN

**T**here is no question that the planning system requires more speed and more certainty – and much of what the Government has put in place in the last year is on track to achieve this.

But while, on a macro level, planning reform is heading in the right direction, for those of us dealing with planning applications day-in, day-out, it's the small procedural frictions that cause the biggest frustrations.

The requirement for local planning authorities to approve pre-commencement conditions for biodiversity net gain (BNG) is perhaps one of the most important to unpick.

BNG is doing exactly what it was designed to do: placing nature recovery at the heart of (almost) all development. The problem is how it is being sequenced. The current approach requires an extra post-consent approval step that can cause material delays.

If government wants a simple win that supports both nature recovery and delivery, it should focus on streamlining

the pre-commencement mechanics of BNG.

## HOW THE PROBLEM MANIFESTS ITSELF

I recently gained planning consent for a mid-sized greenfield housing scheme in Oxfordshire. Planning consent was issued within three months. The BNG solution, which was offsite, was straightforward: the units were purchased and the certificate submitted, yet eight weeks after consent we were still waiting for the BNG approval outcome. The knock-on effect is delays to housing delivery, including affordable housing, and to wider economic activity.

Where a scheme has already secured offsite units, the local authority is not being asked to weigh up competing habitat proposals or negotiate a bespoke ecological strategy; the developer is presenting a package that is designed to be compliant. Yet the statutory framework still requires a formal approval period before the condition is discharged and commencement can take place lawfully.

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This is not a theoretical scenario. Historically, I would work hard to avoid pre-commencement conditions and potential delays by submitting all necessary documentation at application stage so that technically, a development could start the day after consent. BNG is the outlier – and this sequencing is particularly hard to justify where the offsite gain is already verified and could be paid for.

#### WHAT MAKES BNG DIFFERENT

We are used to pre-commencement conditions. They are a routine feature of planning permissions, and they exist for good reasons. Contamination, archaeology, drainage strategies, construction management and ecological mitigation can all be controlled through conditions that must be discharged before works start.

The difference is that these conditions can usually be addressed either by providing the supporting information alongside the planning application or by discharging them swiftly following consent.

In the case of BNG, however, legislation requires a specific document, the Biodiversity Gain Plan, to be submitted and approved after permission is granted and before commencement, as a requirement of the statutory 'general condition' introduced through the Environment Act changes to the Town and Country Planning Act. There is no flexibility for LPAs to alter this process because the mechanics are embedded in the regulatory framework for BNG, the Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (England) Regulations 2024.

What's more, the Regulations (Paragraph 031) are explicit that the biodiversity gain plan must be submitted

no earlier than the day after planning permission has been granted.

#### THE BROADER IMPACTS

Not only does this issue cause delays to specific schemes, it also exacerbates pressures on local authority planning departments precisely when capacity is most stretched. BNG submissions are arriving at scale, while many authorities are still bedding in a new regime, and dealing with skills gaps that often include ecology and biodiversity.

It also produces inconsistency. Some authorities require a full biodiversity gain plan to be submitted as part of the application and then a post consent pre-commencement condition discharge, thus 'double counting,' while others are willing to accept an outline approach with details to be submitted post-consent. For developers operating across multiple authorities, that variability makes programmes harder to manage and increases risk.

Another important point is that BNG can become uniquely rigid in a system where other forms of planning gain are often subject to negotiation and viability testing. We may debate the right balance, but it is hard to defend a process where some obligations are revisited when viability is tight, yet BNG has so little flexibility, even when compliance is not in doubt.

#### THE NEED FOR A REVIEW

Defra has now published its response document to the consultation, entitled 'Improving the implementation of BNG for minor, medium and brownfield development.' The proposed changes focus on proportionality, particularly exemptions, the small sites metric, and access to the offsite market

All of that is useful, but it fails to

address the key question of how the requirement for BNG can be realised without significantly delaying the planning process.

#### WHAT A WORKABLE REFORM COULD LOOK LIKE

Streamlining does not have to mean weakening. A better approach is to align BNG with how we already manage other technical matters: clear principles at decision stage, with proportionate detail secured through staged approval and enforcement.

My recommendation is, where appropriate, to allow the required biodiversity gain plan to be approved prior to determination.

Crucially, this is a practical solution for projects; one that should not require primary legislation. The Environment Act sets the principle, but much of the operation is controlled through regulations and guidance. Government could amend the Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (England) Regulations 2024 and update Planning Practice Guidance to create flexibility around timing while maintaining enforceable outcomes.

#### CONCLUSION

Achieving the goal of Biodiversity Net Gain should remain non-negotiable in principle, but at the same time it should not be uniquely immovable in practice. If we want planning permissions to translate into homes and infrastructure quickly, streamlining BNG's pre-commencement mechanics is one of the most straightforward changes that could be made – and one that could improve both delivery and confidence in the system.

Nicky Brock is partner at Carter Jonas

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## SMALL DEVELOPMENTS PROJECT REPORT

# The best of both worlds

Cornish housebuilder Legacy Properties' latest high quality development, in the picturesque Pentewan Valley, combines rural amenity for residents with a contemporary edge, as Roseanne Field reports.

**T**he parish of Pentewan Valley in Cornwall stretches three miles from the southern edge of St Austell, down to the south coast village of Pentewan. The area is known locally for its wooded landscape and the Pentewan Valley Trail – a former railway line that brought China Clay down from north of St Austell to the harbour.

The parish also includes other small settlements, but combined these have a population of just 705. This means residents are offered a quiet and relaxed way of living, while still benefiting from the local connections in St Austell and the city of Truro, 15 miles to the west.

It's therefore no surprise that local housebuilder Legacy Properties viewed the area as an ideal location for their next development, given their focus on creating smaller developments of well-designed, luxury homes. The developer came across a redundant holiday caravan site near the hamlet of Tregorrick, only 10 minutes

from St Austell town centre.

The site benefitted from planning consent for 22 homes, with wider consent also allowing for holiday accommodation, a pool and other leisure features. "We took the opportunity to revisit the scheme, increasing the number of homes to 24 and significantly enhancing the overall layout, design quality and sense of place," explains Legacy Properties managing director, Nick Long. "The focus was on creating a low-density, well-considered development that responds to its surroundings while offering something distinct in the local market."

The team were confident the development – Kingswood – would be appealing to both local families looking to move from the surrounding area and retirees relocating to Cornwall for its idyllic landscape and lifestyle. "Many have chosen Kingswood for its picturesque location, yet close proximity to amenities and Cornwall's main business hubs –



including Truro and St Austell,” he says. St Austell’s train station offers mainline travel to Exeter, Bristol, London and the North, and the main transport route through Cornwall – the A30 – is 10 miles away.

#### **PARKLAND WITH AN EDGE**

The overall aim for Legacy Properties was to create a “deliberately low-density” scheme, to enhance the countryside feel they wanted the development to have. It comprises four- and five-bedroom detached houses, each of which is set within a “generous plot,” Long says. “The aim was to create a rural, parkland-style setting with a contemporary edge.”

The site itself is within a parkland area which boasts “incredible valley views,” Long explains. The convenient location means that while the homes themselves benefit from the surrounding countryside landscape and views, residents also benefit from the local connections. “It really blends the best of a rural location

with easy access to amenities,” he adds. “There’s lots for all ages.”

To add to the rural, quiet feel, the decision was made to include a shared surface road, meaning there are no traditional separations for vehicles and pedestrians such as kerbs or road markings. There are also grass margins throughout, and street lighting is subtle, to “contribute to a calm, cohesive environment,” explains Long.

The setting and desired overall feel, coupled with Legacy Properties’ luxury-style of building, meant the site naturally lent itself to larger, family homes – hence the decision to build only four- and five-bedroom properties. “The development has a private, gated feel,” Long says. “The sweeping entrance drive leads you into a well-manicured parkland and we thought this would be the perfect setting for families to enjoy the peace and tranquility without busy streets or adjacent distractions.” It’s been carefully designed



## THE DEVELOPMENT HAS A “PRIVATE, GATED FEEL,” SAYS LEGACY PROPERTIES MANAGING DIRECTOR NICK LONG

and laid out to have a “safe and secure feel” which is important to all buyers, and in particular families and retirees. “It’s perfect for modern living,” Long adds.

The site’s setting proved beneficial when it came to the planning process. “Its relatively secluded setting and the quality of the proposed scheme meant there was always a clear case for delivery,” Long explains, though adds that “planning was not without its challenges.” The timing of consent, coupled with the site’s history, means the development is open market only. Legacy Properties acquired the site in September 2022, with construction beginning in March 2023 and completed late 2025.

Before work could begin onsite, some minor works were required onsite following its previous use for static holiday homes. Disconnection or diversion of electrics, water and telecommunication services were necessary, “typical of a semi-brownfield redevelopment,” Long says, “but nothing overly onerous.”

### HIGH EXPECTATIONS

The overall brief when it came to designing and building the homes was never in doubt. The team wanted to create well-proportioned family homes suited to modern living. Design was also driven by

the desire to create a high quality, luxury feel, not only because the site demanded it but also to fit with Legacy Properties’ position as a high quality housebuilder.

The homes were designed to be “flooded” with natural light, with the layout centred around an open plan kitchen, dining and snug space, with a separate living room as an additional reception area. All bedrooms are well-proportioned, leaving no ‘box rooms,’ and principal suites also benefit from ensuite bathrooms.

Some plots were designed with a ‘reverse-living’ layout, whereby the reception rooms are on the first floor and the bedrooms on the ground floor, in order to “add variety and take advantage of the views of the valley and the surrounding countryside,” Long explains. Some plots are better suited to smaller families while others fit larger families better, “or those just looking for space and luxury.”

Ridge heights were intentionally kept low to maximise views across the surrounding countryside and parkland. This in turn “inspired a semi-vaulted approach to many of the rooms internally,” says Long. “This enhances volume and natural light, particularly on the reverse-living/upside down plots where views can be maximised from the reception areas.”

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## THE HOMES ALL FEATURE HIGH PERFORMANCE RECYCLED PVCU DOUBLE-GLAZED WINDOWS

The overall design of the homes externally was inspired by the locale, “rooted in a modern interpretation of the local vernacular,” explains Long. “Modern country living with a contemporary twist.” Natural materials were utilised wherever possible to reflect the surrounding landscape, such as stone, slate and timber; “while contemporary detailing ensures the homes feel current rather than pastiche,” adds Long.

The lower eaves and ridges on the homes have been designed to “melt into the landscape,” and occasional small windows were included to emphasise the rural cottage feel, as well as help frame the views of the surrounding countryside and landscape.

The homes all include contemporary Agate grey front doors and high performance recycled PVCu double glazed windows. Lindab zinc-coated gutters feature on every property, as does a video doorbell for added security and peace of mind for residents. Block paved driveways help add to the overall high-end feel of the development, and homes that include a garage feature an automated up-and-over door.

Internally, homes are finished to a high standard including British-built kitchens with quartz worktops, Miele appliances,

an integrated wine cooler, boiling water tap and built-in Bluetooth wireless ceiling speakers. Luxury carpet and luxury vinyl tiles are used throughout living areas, bedrooms, hallways and kitchen/dining areas, while bathrooms benefit from porcelain floor tiles. Even minor details have been well thought out, such as oversized skirting detail and brushed chrome fixtures and fittings on internal doors. “Carefully specified” sanitaryware is “both practical and visually refined,” adds Long. “Our spec is high in comparison to many new builds.”

A large portion of the existing green space on the development was retained, with other landscaping work intentionally designed to reflect the surrounding environment. Wherever possible existing hedgerows and trees were retained, protected and enhanced, and all homes feature biodiversity measures such as bee bricks made from recycled Cornish clay and bat and bird boxes. The measures have resulted in the required biodiversity net gain (BNG) being delivered onsite.

The homes have been built using traditional masonry construction, which took place with minimal disruption to the neighbouring holiday users, despite the site’s restricted access. “Careful planning and sequencing allowed us to maintain



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access while progressing the build efficiently,” says Long. “This meant we needed to work quickly, quietly and with the least amount of disruption to the single carriageway sole access road.” For a period during construction, this road had to be diverted into the site itself while utility diversion works took place.

#### SETTING THE BAR FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability and energy efficiency were key targets from the outset of the development – as they are on all Legacy Properties schemes. Homes are built using a fabric first approach and designed to achieve an EPC-A rating.

While renewable technologies are important, the developer views these as an enhancement to the individual plots rather than the sole focus of the development. “We take a more holistic approach and work as closely as possible with the principles of passive,” explains Long. “All plots are extremely airtight and well-insulated.”

All homes benefit from an air source heat pump and underfloor heating to the living areas (whether that be on the ground or first floor). They also all feature solar PV roof panels to power them with renewable energy, with buyers having the

option to add battery storage to reduce their dependence on traditional energy consumption. Aerated taps, showers and dual flush cisterns help reduce water usage by up to 50%, and EV charging points are included on every property. The windows and doors are all “extremely thermally efficient and high-rated,” adds Long.

While these kinds of sustainability features are both better for the environment and appealing to buyers, for the developer utilising them doesn’t come without its challenges. “The main challenge is balancing cost with viability,” says Long. “Increasing regulatory requirements combined with biodiversity and planning obligations, place pressure on build costs. For SME developers in particular, this can be difficult to absorb.”

For Legacy Properties specifically, working within Cornwall means providing compliant designs that match the requirements of Cornwall Council’s Climate Emergency Development Plan, with growing BNG requirements and an expectation of increased greenspace. “This means homes need to sell for more or land values need to come down,” explains Long. “Unfortunately, the pipeline from acquisition means that land is quite often fixed and the challenge is passed to us to



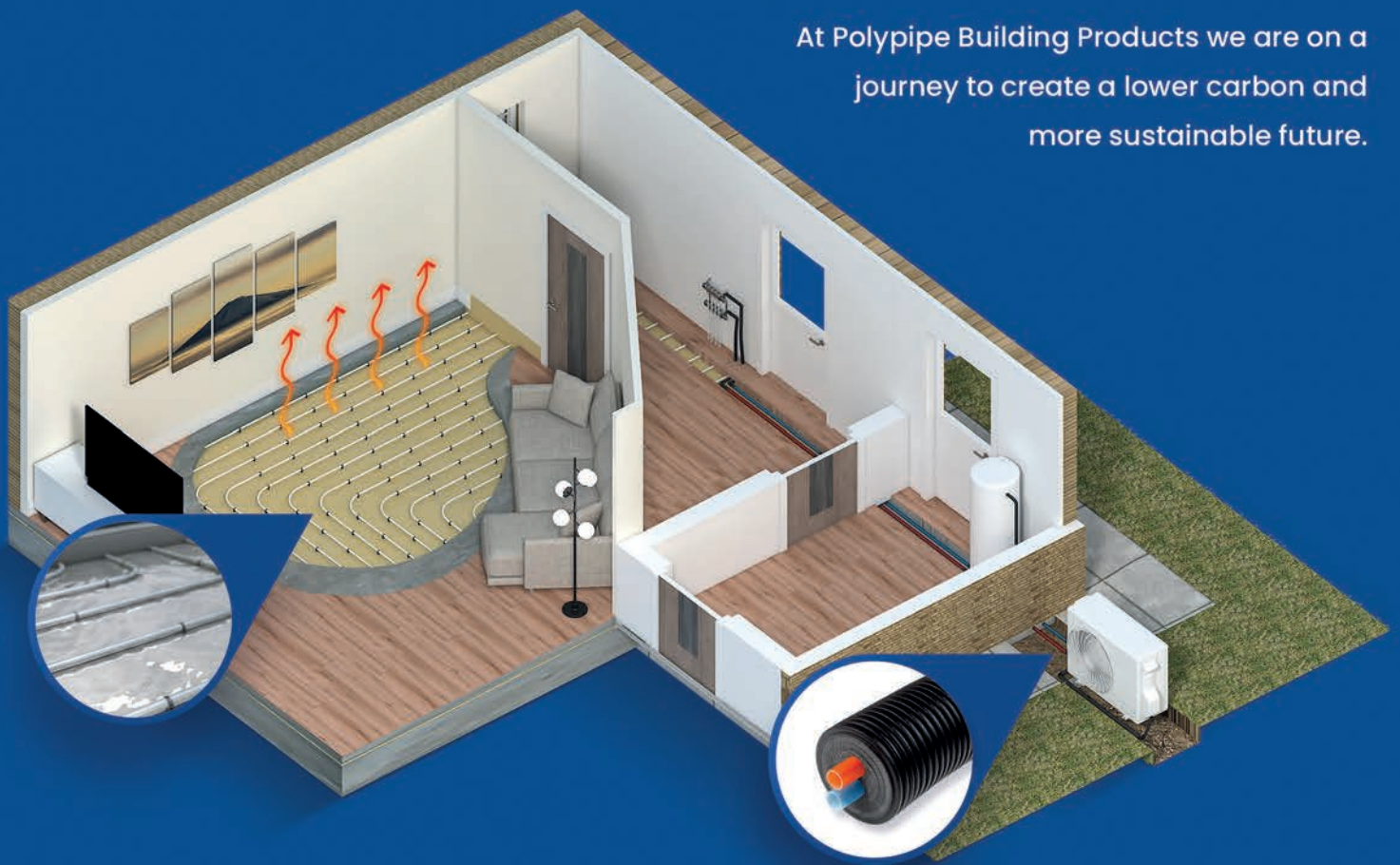
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produce super-efficient homes on a reduced build budget.”

This difficult balance is complicated further by the current expectations and demands of buyers, Long believes. “Buyers value energy efficiency and lower running costs, but purchasing decisions are still primarily driven by location, space and overall value,” he says. “There remains a gap between demand for sustainable homes and willingness to pay a premium to cover the additional costs for this delivery.”

These challenges are – at least in part – what hold other developers back from targeting high sustainability credentials and high quality finishes, particularly for SME builders. “Land values, build costs and increasing policy requirements all present significant challenges,” Long says. “SME developers in particular are under pressure, and the ability to consistently deliver both high sustainability standards and strong design is becoming increasingly difficult.”

In Cornwall in particular, Long says these challenges are also combined with a decline in customer demand for homes in the area due to restrictions on homeowners purchasing second homes. “All in all,” adds the Legacy MD, “SMEs are being increasingly pinched by policy and it’s proved extremely challenging for many

across the country, not just in Cornwall.”

#### REALISING THE VISION

Despite its challenges and the seemingly impossible balance, the development has been a success. Reinforcing what Long says has been its “overwhelmingly positive” response, the development has so far won two awards – ‘Best Residential Development 20+ Units’, and ‘Best Architects Multiple Residence for Cornwall’.

Winning these accolades “was a significant achievement and a recognition of the effort and attention to detail that goes into our developments,” says Long. “It’s always rewarding to see that approach acknowledged externally.”

In addition, response from not only the community, but also buyer demand, have been strong, which is a huge relief for the team – particularly given the challenging market conditions. In particular, the quality of the homes has been recognised by buyers, who also appreciate the setting and “overall approach to placemaking.”


“I think it’s safe to say we have not had one negative reaction to the development and all our customers have been delighted,” Long concludes. “It reinforces our ambition to continue delivering some of the most thoughtfully designed homes in Cornwall.” ■

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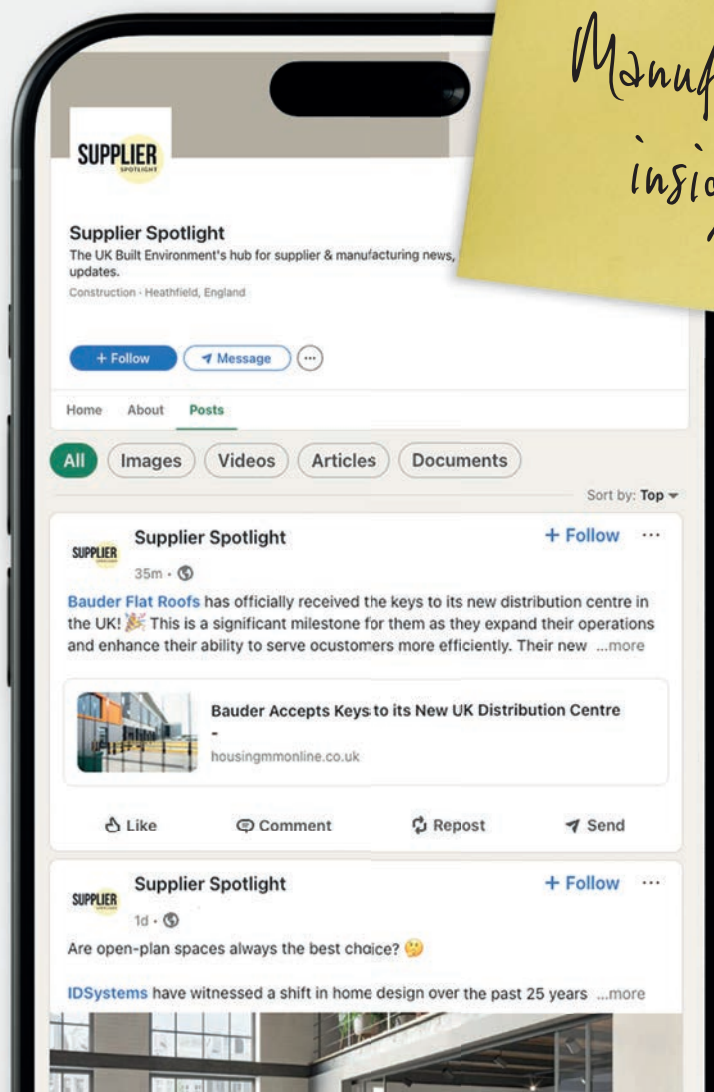
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# BUILDING-IN RESILIENCE: REVISITING FLOOD MITIGATION FOR NEW DEVELOPMENTS

**T**he UK housebuilding industry is facing growing pressure to respond to the increasing risks associated with flooding and climate change, principally the need to manage increased stormwater runoff on, or as close to development sites as possible. As housebuilding intensifies across urban and suburban areas, the challenge of balancing the delivery of more units with environmental resilience has become one of the defining issues facing planners and developers, but also architects, engineers, and policymakers.

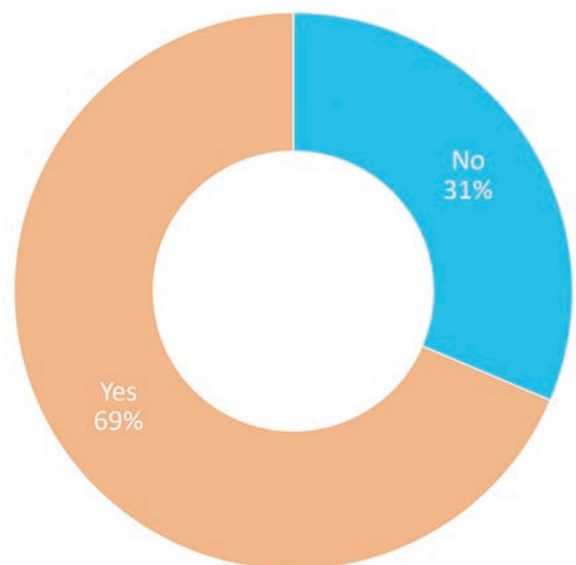
This research project, which was sponsored by drainage products supplier Burdens, was designed to examine how the industry is currently responding to these pressures through the specification, integration, and implementation of Sustainable (Urban) Drainage Systems (SuDS), and a series of wider stormwater management measures.

The headline finding was that despite a lack of mandatory regulation, a large proportion of respondents (41%) were using SuDS in projects. This will reassure the many advocates of the approach, however this usage figure had not increased since our 2022 survey on the same topic, and had in fact dropped by a percentage point. We also asked about their awareness of the Government's failure to implement Schedule 3 of the Floods Act, which would have mandated inclusion of SuDS in new developments, and the results were similarly revealing.

In recent years, extreme weather events have become more frequent and more severe across the UK. Surface water flooding, in particular, is increasingly affecting both existing communities and new developments, but the risk is also exacerbated by these developments. The issue is compounded by urban expansion, the reduction of natural drainage landscapes, and growing pressure on existing infrastructure. To combat and mitigate this increased risk, insurers, local authorities, regulators, and homeowners are demanding stronger evidence that new housing developments are being designed with long-term resilience in mind.

## THE SUDS TOOLKIT

SuDS have emerged as one of the most important tools available to the built environment sector in managing stormwater and



*Have you increased the use of natural water management features (e.g swales, wetlands) in recent years?*

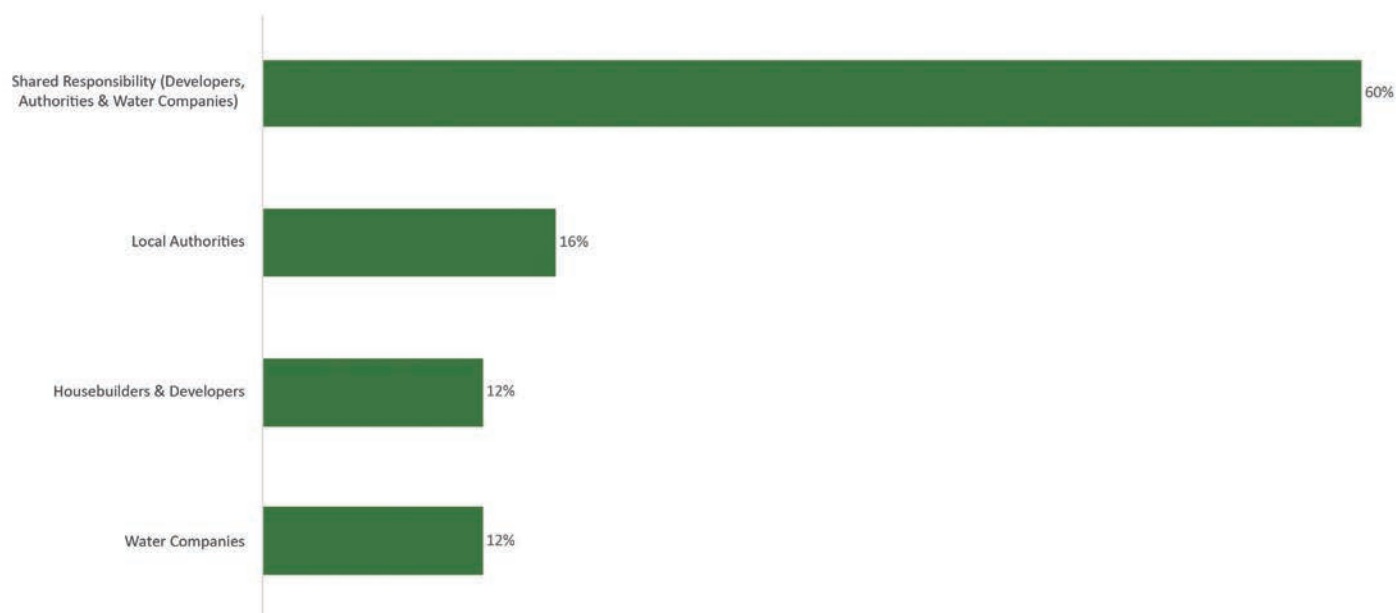
■ Yes ■ No

reducing flood risk. SuDS installations encompass a broad range of approaches and technologies, including permeable paving, swales, attenuation systems, rain gardens, wetlands, tree pits, green roofs, blue roofs, and rainwater harvesting systems. Designed in a sequential 'hierarchy' in projects, SuDS aim to slow, store, filter, and manage surface water in ways that mimic natural drainage processes while also delivering wider environmental and biodiversity benefits.

## HOUSEBUILDERS' VIEWPOINTS

This research sought to understand housebuilders' views on approaches to stormwater management, and which of these

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"Where should responsibility for maintenance of SuDS features lie?"

Where should responsibility for maintenance of SuDS features lie?

technologies and strategies are currently being adopted across the housing sector. It explored not only which systems are being used, but also how they are integrated into planning, design, construction, and long-term maintenance strategies.

The research also investigated the barriers to implementation, including cost pressures, planning requirements, technical knowledge gaps, and uncertainty around responsibility for maintenance and adoption.

A key objective of the research was to compare current industry attitudes and practices against the findings of an earlier survey we conducted, in 2022. By revisiting many of the key questions from the previous survey as well as introducing new currently relevant themes for 2026 and beyond, the study aimed to identify how industry understanding and implementation of flood mitigation measures has evolved over time, while reflecting current thinking. This part-comparative analysis helped reveal which technologies are gaining momentum, where innovation is occurring, and what challenges continue to present barriers to widespread uptake of resilient drainage solutions.

Both the original 2022 survey and the new study explored housebuilders' attitudes towards the context of climate change, and whether respondents believed it would increase both awareness and the need for SuDS in the UK over coming decades. Revisiting this question was particularly important given the increased public and political focus on climate adaptation since 2022.

Most respondents in the original survey (83%) agreed that climate change 'will increase the need for SuDS systems in the UK in the coming decades.' In this year's study, this had increased to a resounding 89%. However, the key question is whether this conviction on the direction of travel is translating

into greater commitment to resilient design strategies.

Our cohort of developers reported they were in general looking at new builds rather than retrofitting SuDS or other water management features to tackle stormwater, with only 31% saying they have retrofitted them to existing developments. Most respondents said they were not aware of the Government's failure to implement Schedule 3. But, of the 38% who were, the vast majority said that this didn't mean developers can ignore the requirements for considering the approach.

Motivations for integrating SuDS into developments were also analysed. Participants were asked to assess the strength of various drivers, including regulatory compliance, insurance considerations, buyer expectations, long-term operational savings, and climate change adaptation. This helped determine whether resilience is currently viewed primarily as a regulatory requirement or increasingly as a commercial and environmental necessity.

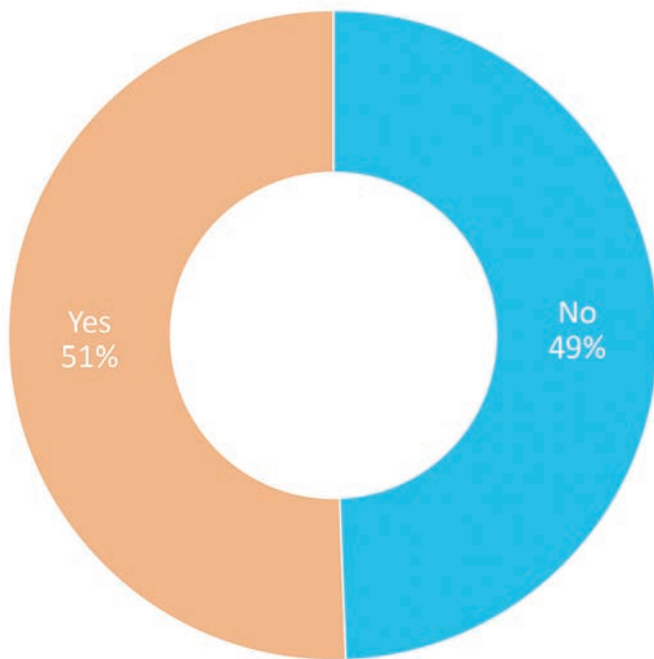
Unsurprisingly, regulatory compliance was said to be the strongest motivation (29% picked this option). Conversely, buyer expectations of stormwater management in projects was at the bottom of the list at 8%, showing there is a major job to be done to persuade buyers of both the resilience benefits, and the possible amenity for their neighbourhood, of such installations. But the key finding of this 'motivation' question was probably the fact that 'climate change adaptation' was the second highest driver, at 26% again showing that climate change was arguably the biggest 'non-regulatory' motivator in projects.

## DESIGN APPROACHES

The survey began by revisiting several core questions from the 2022 research. Respondents were asked how frequently

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Do you stay up to date on recent advances in SuDS-related products (e.g. improved permeable paving, modular water storage, green & blue roofs)?

Yes No

they utilise Sustainable Drainage Systems in their projects, ranging from ‘always’ to ‘never.’ This provided a benchmark for understanding how embedded SuDS have become within current development practice.

Participants were also asked which flood mitigation approaches they have used in completed developments. The list includes permeable paving, grass paving, swales, rainwater harvesting systems, green roofing, infiltration trenches, storage tanks, permeable conveyance systems, and other engineered or natural drainage features. These responses will help identify the prevalence of specific technologies and systems across the industry.

We found that the most popular solution for our cohort was permeable paving (67% saying they have used it in SuDS schemes), with the more general option of ‘stormwater management’ picked by 66%, with the fact permeable paving was placed higher than this umbrella term showing it’s likely the established, ‘no-brainer’ choice. However, below-ground attenuation tanks were also popular with 57% picking this option.

Our survey showed that artificial or engineered SuDS were the most used option, as the most popular natural SuDS technique (swales) was only in fifth place overall, with 45%. While many respondents will opt for a hybrid approach combining natural and engineered SuDS, our findings show that the assumption that many sites are constrained in terms of area, leading to a preference for more compact engineered solutions for controlling water, may be bearing out for our cohort.

The survey also examined whether developers and construction professionals have increased their use of natural

water management features such as wetlands and swales, in contrast to engineered systems, bearing in mind the challenges for doing so. This was a broadly positive result for proponents of natural features, with their abilities to add diversity and resident amenity, with 69% saying they have increased their use in projects.

**PLANNING & DESIGN**

Integrating stormwater management measures effectively often means ensuring they are included at the outset of projects’ designs. Respondents were asked whether systems were considered from the earliest design stages of developments, and reassuringly, 63% said they were. However, when asked what specific stage of the development process they were incorporating SuDS solutions, most said that this was done at the ‘planning submission’ stage (56%), and only 6% were including the measures at detailed design. A significant minority (36%) were including SuDS design only at construction stage.

Planning policy remains one of the strongest influences on drainage design and implementation. The questionnaire therefore investigated whether local planning requirements are actively encouraging, or requiring the inclusion of, flood mitigation measures in housing developments.

**DEVELOPMENT AMENITY & STAKEHOLDERS**

The survey also explores the commercial dimension of flood mitigation, in terms of the intrinsic value that SuDS schemes can add for buyers. Participants were asked whether high-quality SuDS installations, including natural features, increase the appeal of developments, and whether they are actively promoted as selling points to prospective buyers. The research further investigated whether homebuyers are beginning to ask specifically about sustainable drainage systems, green roofs, or other resilience measures during the purchasing process.

Did our cohort think that SuDS strategies added value and amenity to developments, not only for customers, but for them as developers? We didn’t get a definitive answer, although 47% did agree that ‘high quality SuDS features increase the appeal of developments.’ Somewhat cryptically, a substantial segment of 43% said that whether that social value could be attributed ‘depends on the market.’

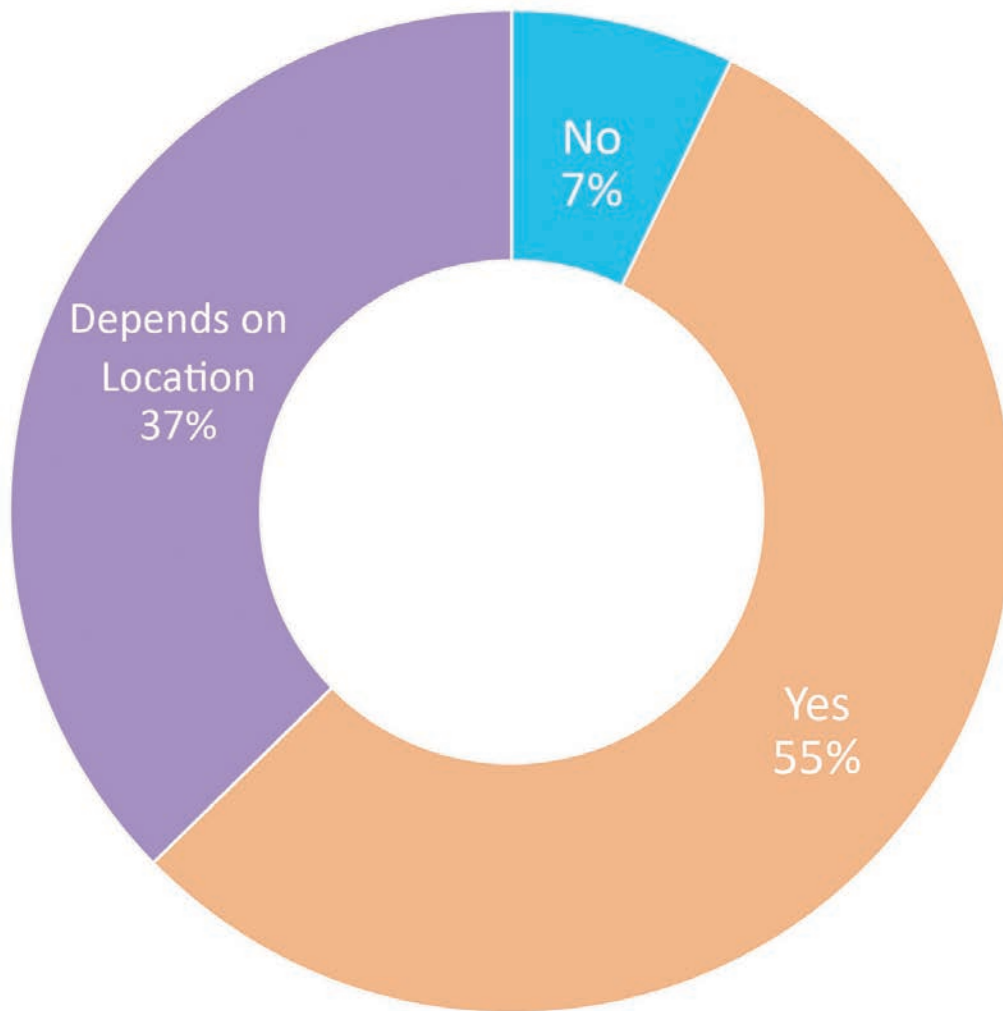
This was a likely outcome from the following question response, which saw only ‘occasional’ promotion of the features as a customer selling point as the preferred approach (for 41%). This could be something of a ‘chicken and egg’ argument, in that more promotion and information could possibly lead to more value being placed on the installations, including for the resilience they bring to schemes against future climate risks. The most salutary finding in the whole study, perhaps, when it comes to consumer perceptions, is that precisely none of our respondents said their buyers had specifically asked about sustainable drainage features on projects. We can reasonably assume that they are unlikely to be in many customers’ mindset at present when looking at purchase decisions, based on the survey findings.

**EDUCATION**

The survey also focused on how developers inform themselves

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Do you think future housing standards should require specific SuDS or stormwater management features?

Yes No Depends on Location

on emerging products and technologies for flood and surface water mitigation approaches. Participants were asked whether they stay up to date with advances in SuDS-related products, including improved permeable paving systems, modular underground storage, smart rainwater harvesting technologies, and real-time flood monitoring systems. The inclusion of these questions reflects the increasing role of technological innovation in delivering smarter and more adaptive water management infrastructure.

Respondents were asked to assess their confidence in the performance of various stormwater management systems, including permeable paving, blue and green roof systems, modular storage systems, swales, wetlands, non-return valves, and tree pits. Some of this confidence (or lack of it), could stem from a lack of experience, or received ideas, and potentially greater education will have a large role in tackling this. The established standard solutions of permeable paving and modular underground storage saw good figures (35% and 32% of respondents 'very confident'), however blue and green roofs only garnered 7%, and even swales and wetlands only managed

20%. Clearly, there is more to do to educate the sector on their respective merits.

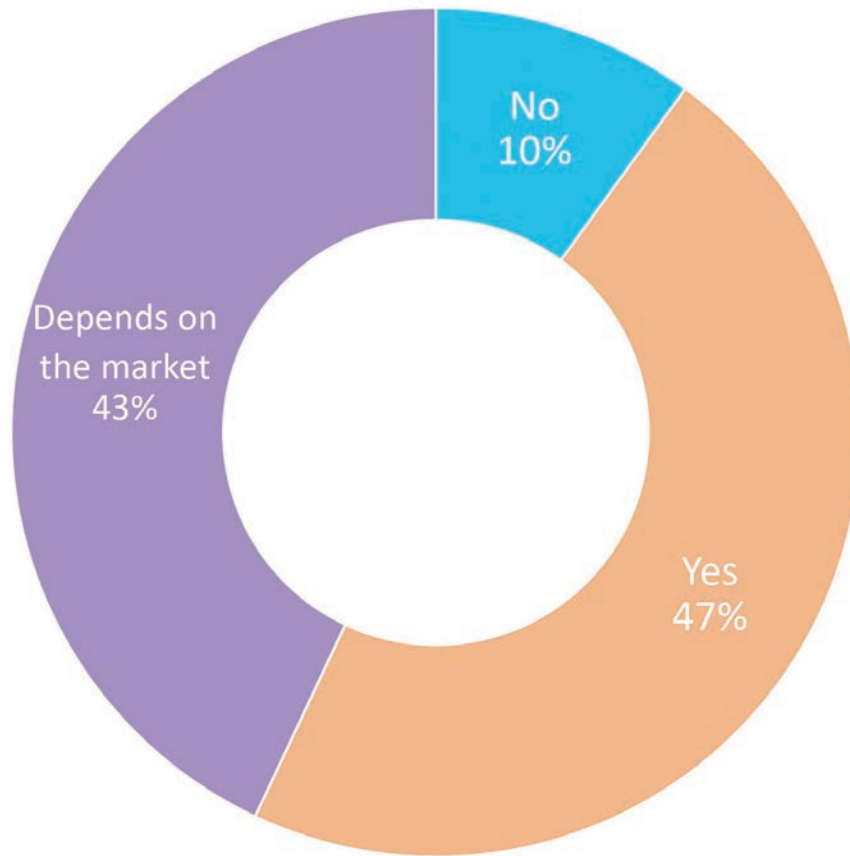
#### DESIGN & INSTALLATION CHALLENGES

Installation challenges remain a major barrier to widespread uptake of resilient drainage measures. The survey therefore investigated which systems respondents have installed in practice and what aspects they found most difficult. Common challenges include maintenance responsibilities, upfront capital costs, design integration, space constraints, and navigating planning approval processes. Unsurprisingly, upfront costs were out in front with 62%, but available space was a major blocker for many, with 52% choosing them, as well as planning approval (48%), maintenance requirements (45%), and integration of products into designs (39%).

Participants were also asked how frequently they encounter a selection of perceived barriers such as lack of client interest, limited supplier availability, or conflicting planning requirements. Client interest was an issue, but 'high capital costs' were cited by 17%, as well as 'insufficient long-term

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Do you think adding high-quality SuDS features increases the appeal of developments?

Yes No Depends on the market

maintenance responsibility.’ Concerningly for the market, ‘limited supplier options’ was a not inconsiderable issue, with 53% saying it was a factor obstructing their progress.

Understanding design priorities was another important objective of the research. Respondents were invited to rank the features they consider most important for effective stormwater management, including permeable surfacing, rain gardens, attenuation tanks, tree pits, swales, rainwater harvesting systems, and green walls with integrated water capture. These rankings will help identify which approaches are currently viewed as the most valuable and effective across the industry.

To better understand what support mechanisms would encourage greater implementation, respondents were asked what forms of assistance would be most valuable. Options include financial incentives, technical guidance, training workshops, peer case studies, clearer regulation, and stronger market demand. The survey also investigated whether current Building Regulations are viewed as sufficient in supporting SuDS adoption and whether future housing standards should mandate specific stormwater management measures.

Our respondents in the main thought that Building Regulations did not adequately support the adoption of SuDS and stormwater measures (72% said they did not), and that ‘future housing standards’ should require specific SuDS or stormwater management features, (55% agreeing). This was despite the straitened conditions many developers were

operating in currently, and the difficulties around passing on extra costs to customers in the current market. However, possibly reflecting the latter two factors, 37% said it ‘depends on location.’ Again, on whether they would adopt a ‘national SuDS design standard,’ the jury was out, with most only saying ‘maybe’ (52%), and 40% saying ‘no.’

## CONCLUSION

The research provided a comprehensive snapshot of how the UK housing industry is responding to one of the most pressing environmental challenges of the coming decades. It is part of the evidence that will help identify best practice, reveal barriers to implementation, and support greater collaboration between industry stakeholders, policymakers, planners, and designers.

Including a look at how SuDS in particular contributes to social value of development, the study helps give a broader understanding of approaches to making new housing developments more resilient, sustainable, and adaptable in the face of a changing climate.

We are grateful to Burdens for sponsoring this study.

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 Round table chair,  
James Parker

# Approaches to Heating & Renewables for Future Homes Standard Compliance



With the publication of the Government's final consultation response for the Future Homes Standard (FHS) only 24 hours old, we staged the first of two Building Insights LIVE round tables in London, to look at the realities of heating and renewables compliance with the new standard. The event was sponsored by Panasonic Heating & Ventilation, WMS Underfloor Heating, Garo Electric, Recoup Energy Solutions and Envirovent, and heard valuable contributions from all firms' representatives as well as a broad range of other expert attendees.

They are collectively tasked with delivering low carbon heating as well as general energy efficiency on new homes, and the standard poses several challenges. Housebuilders gave key viability insights, leading academics shared research, and consultants and industry bodies offered their own perspectives and expertise.

The standard (in the form of the consultation response – the full FHS will not be implemented until March 2027) was launched on 24 March after a long delay. But delegates were finally able to

assess its actual provisions for the industry, as well as the revised Building Regulations Parts L and F. One concern for the heating and renewables side was the 'functional' requirement for 40% of new homes' ground floor area to be delivered by roof-mounted solar PV. There was some consternation that this cannot be traded off against other elements in designs, compromising design flexibility around balancing the other elements in the chosen Option 1 (mechanical ventilation, higher air-tightness and waste water heat recovery).

Battery storage of PV-generated electricity is conspicuous by its absence in the consultation response (like embodied carbon). Our delegates were broadly critical of both omissions, and other key flaws within the long-awaited FHS. There were a range of views on the PV issue, including on whether kilowatts should instead be used as the target measure, not a percentage, and exemptions to the 40% area functional requirement. Some suggested that this would need to be further revised before the introduction of the Home Energy Model, due to eventually replace SAP, in 2027. Delegates said the lack of

battery storage requirement was a major missed opportunity for bringing resilience in an uncertain energy security context, including the ongoing Iran conflict.

The two-year ‘dual running period’ of SAP 10.3 alongside HEM was a cause for concern, as were inaccurate assumptions on energy and water consumption built into HEM (in comparison with SAP). Further issues were highlighted around the ‘notional building’ model such as using the ‘target emissions rate’ (TER) rather than the more detailed ‘energy use intensity’ (EUI) metric.

The chair, *Housebuilder & Developer* editor James Parker asked whether HEM as it stood needed to be evolved further to be fully workable for the industry. Could incorrect assumptions lead to more performance gaps between as-designed and as-built homes? Jonathan Cheng of housebuilder Dandara said that while the FHS had brought some clarity, “the uncertainty is around the SAP software side of things; that’s the next step in terms of giving us answers around forms of heating and hot water generation.” He said that in the meantime, as the industry waits for HEM, Dandara had been “preparing different scenarios.”

While HEM will be introduced as an iterative process, it was currently flawed, said attendees. Ian Pritchett of Greencore Homes said it was “the elephant in the room.” While the nascent software will “learn over time,” he said it is “likely to be a little inaccurate and underestimate unregulated energy, and could lull us all into a false sense of security, thinking we’re hitting low energy use intensities.”

HEM is currently thought to assume people shower around 2.5 times per week – reportedly based on old data from one manufacturer. Ellis Maginn of sponsor Recoup commented: “Occupancy and frequency of showering are absolutely key for [carbon] impact. The HEM model doesn’t look representative currently, even less so than SAP, which we would argue wasn’t fully realistic based on a lot of studies.” He criticised the “narrative” from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, who “said that they’ve been speaking with industry” but that from Recoup, plus competitors’ Showersave and Triton’s perspective, they “have not had any engagement.” He said “it feels like the user point of view has been overlooked.”

Jaydeep Bhadra, representing CIBSE, said they had raised concerns in the consultation around “asking people to put MVHR in, when the notional building doesn’t account for air permeability or air tightness,” and it should be closer to Passivhaus.

Larry Soper from sponsor Envirovent focused minds on the performance gap, saying that in the case of air permeability, the designed and as-built “can be two totally different things.” He said it is “key” that if MVHR is being included and the permeability is below three, the as-built “needs to be as close to that as possible.”

Continued use of SAP 10.3 could create another possible mismatch between overall design and built performance, as the minimum Seasonal Coefficient of Performance of heat pumps in SAP is 2.5, which is far below the potential of current units. This could mean that while waste water heat recovery is nominally required under Option 1, in reality with higher performing heat pumps, it won’t be a necessary measure within the HEM ‘notional building.’

Abigail Woolf of UKGBC, and others, said the 40% of ground floor area PV requirement in the notional building was an obstacle which was hampering specification of innovative solutions. She said that putting the functional PV limits “slightly less” than the notional

## CHAIR

**James Parker**, Managing Editor, Housebuilder & Developer

## ATTENDEES

- **Dr Jaydeep Bhadra**, Domestic Sector Technical Manager, CIBSE
- **Richard Lupo**, Managing Director, Shift Environment
- **Prof Lubo Jankovic**, Professor of Energy and Buildings, Energy House Labs, University of Salford
- **Jonathan Cheng**, Sustainability Manager, Dandara
- **Dan Jestico**, Director, Sustainable Design, Savills
- **Mike Leonard**, Visiting Professor, Birmingham City University, Centre for Future Homes
- **Abigail Woolf**, Senior Energy and Carbon Advisor, UKGBC
- **Greg Jones**, Residential Sector Lead, Hoare Lea
- **Ian Pritchett**, Co-Founder, Greencore Housing

## SPONSORS’ ATTENDEES

- **Mike Jones**, National Specification Manager, Garo Electric
- **Nathan Tranter**, Head of Heating, Panasonic Heating & Ventilation
- **Ronny Reeves**, Business Development Director, WMS
- **Ellis Maginn**, Technical, Design & Specification Solutions, Recoup Energy Solutions
- **Larry Soper**, Technical Services Manager, Envirovent

limits would be a possible remedy to incentivise “energy demand management or heat pump efficiency.”

Dan Jestico of Savills said that further clarity was needed, based on the chair’s question around the ambiguity of including a “reasonable” amount of PV as the criteria for whether it is viable on a development within the Standard, with the loophole of no PV being accepted, if this isn’t possible. “What is deemed an acceptable level of mitigation or compliance is the kind of detail that everyone will be looking at.” He added: “If what is a reasonable amount is kilowatt hour production, and you can’t get enough PV to get over a certain threshold, I presume that will be the exemption, rather than the 40% figure.”

## Solutions & sponsors’ question time

The second half of the debate was given over to exploring five crucial areas of specification which were represented by our sponsors – namely electricity supply resilience, air source heat pumps (ASHPs), underfloor heating (UFH), wastewater heat recovery (WWHR), and ventilation. All asked pertinent questions to the group, including around the resilience challenges on electricity. Mike Jones of Garo Electric posed the core issue for future proofing schemes against electricity grid constraints: “how are housebuilders rethinking electrical infrastructure design – particularly consumer units, protection devices, and spare capacity?” given homes are now to be equipped with heat pumps, PV, battery storage, and EV charging.

He added that he was “shocked to know that there’s no specification whatsoever [in the Future Homes Standard] for what battery storage goes into a home – manufacturer, size, anything.” He warned that currently, installers will put in a 4 kW battery; but “really each house takes more than 5 kW a day.” The group



#### HEATING SOLUTIONS FOR ALL NEW HOMES

The varied experience of delegates (with representatives from academia, the product supply chain, housebuilding and industry bodies) helped provide a rich set of perspectives on strategies for complying with heating and renewables requirements of the new Standard

critiqued the lack of focus on battery storage in the document, Jones' asserted that future proofing was essential for example to tackle future demands on the grid. "If the Government decided it needed all electricity generated on sites, in that scenario somebody has to go back and change things."

Nathan Tranter, of sponsor Panasonic Heating & Ventilation, said that the solution to balancing demand was for "everything to speak each other – the heat pump speaks to the tumble dryer." This Internet Of Things-based 'Home Energy Management Systems' approach is already happening, he said, adding that the industry was awaiting energy providers releasing an API (Application Programming Interface) "which will speak to the grid, and say 'we are producing too much electricity, let's dump some in the batteries.'" He said it was already happening in Germany, and "wasn't far away."

Mike Jones of Garo Electric said that "every new build should have battery storage," however this sort of prescription was currently absent in the Future Homes Standard. Ian Pritchett of Greencore Homes said that the "challenge with future proofing is the future keeps changing, and it's changing quite fast at the moment." He gave the example of exported energy prices being substantially higher for some homeowners selling back to the grid than the 13p per unit commonly quoted.

Pritchett added: "We've got to think about houses completely differently, it's not just about load shifting and storing energy, they will become income generators as well." Meanwhile, Mike Leonard of Birmingham University said that the long view on PVs for homeowners meant looking at "what's the product's life span, does it

have to be changed – and what is the embodied carbon of that?"

#### Underfloor heating

Ronny Reeves of sponsor WMS asked the group whether, if the Standard was "genuinely about reducing carbon emissions and cutting energy bills for homeowners," not just hitting a "target number," the sector should be looking to move to specifying lower temperature water for heating homes. "If air source heat pumps deliver a far higher SCOP (Seasonal Coefficient of Performance) at 35-45°C than at 55°C, should we be designing and building to lower temperatures?"

Reeves said that his firm's goal was to work with the sector to drive up efficiency, and added that the 'buildability' of the UFH solution for volume housebuilders was evidenced by Barratt Redrow having recently adopted it on ground floors in many of its developments, following testing at Energy House 2.0 in Salford. A report from the Energy House chamber test countered ideas that lower water temperatures necessitated oversized radiators upstairs (the UFH increased the temperature on the level above too).

Jonathan Cheng of Dandara offered the potential hiccup for mainstream adoption, that people still "view underfloor heating as a premium product." He added: "In one sense that's a good thing for the housebuilder, because the homeowner expects to pay more for it, but the cost to the house builder has become more comparable."

Ronny Reeves said the cost of UFH was coming down as volume of spec increases, while asserting that the cost of radiators was increasing. He asserted the cost was offset by "added benefits for the



#### HOT OFF THE PRESS: REVIEWING THE STANDARD'S IMPACT

(Left to right), round table Chair & ADF Editor, James Parker; Abigail Woolf, Senior Energy and Carbon Advisor, UKGBC; Dr Jaydeep Bhadra, Domestic Sector Technical Manager, CIBSE; Mike Jones, National Specification Manager, Garo Electric (event sponsor), Greg Jones, Residential Sector Lead, Hoare Lea

housebuilder in terms of saving time on installation, and reduced maintenance,” citing particular relevance for housing associations.

Cheng said that there was still general “reluctance in the sector to say, ‘let’s go in this direction,’ fuelled by worries about “a lot of aftercare.” Mike Leonard cited a positive case study by Keepmoat of heat pumps plus UFH at Gedling Green, saying customers were happy based on overall comfort, and lack of radiators.

#### Air source heat pumps

Nathan Tranter of Panasonic framed his question simply around the need to grow heat pump knowledge: “How can we help educate our existing network of installers onsite to now install new technologies such as ASHPs when they have only been focused on gas boilers?”

Tranter pointed out that with a “lot of new technology coming online for new homes, electricians haven’t really fully looked into how to install them.” He wondered whether a “whole ‘certificate matrix’ was needed for installers,” so they fully understood how to install but “most importantly how to commission them,” and if warranties should be dependent on such certificates. This was a point echoed by Greg Jones of Hoare Lea, who added that there might be “a different solution altogether” for urban high-rises. There was extended discussion of training approaches for installers, including Jaydeep Bhadra of CIBSE who said the Building Safety have recently formed a working group on heating and heating controls, which has the aim of “developing a training course which every institute can follow.” He said CIBSE and the Heat Pump Association were collaborating with the Regulator to “streamline this training and get it accredited.”

Dan Jestico of Savills said there was “probably a huge amount

we could learn [from countries like Germany who have widely embraced heat pumps], in terms of installers and commissioning, and persistent problems and things to look out for.” He added: “The knowledge exists.”

The debate around heat pumps also ventured into the potential to run at lower temperatures than the common 55°C, which would not only reap carbon savings for developments but better EPC scores for homeowners. Our delegates emphasised it would not harm performance for end users either (the average shower temperature is between 37°C and 41°C).

Nathan Tranter commented that on new builds, Panasonic was generally designing at 45°C, but said “the lower, the better.” He said the UK would do well to follow Europe on designing for lower water temperatures for higher pump efficiencies. He admitted that radiator size “has always been a barrier, but cited initiatives Panasonic had been pursuing using standard 15 mm pipe connected to fan coils: “I can drop to 35°C and the radiator’s smaller than it would be for a gas boiler.” The panel also looked at the potential for heat pumps to work in reverse in future, when overheating will “become dominant,” said Lubo Jankovich, and using heat pumps for cooling with light fan coils was the preference rather than “larger and larger radiators.”

#### Waste water heat recovery

Ellis Maginn of Recoup Energy Solutions reviewed the uptake of the simple method for recovering heat from showers, given that heating water is set to become the biggest source of emissions in new homes. He asked whether the FHS plus the move towards electrification “prioritised hot water demand reduction sufficiently? And, does the



#### MULTI-DISCIPLINARY

The round table was held in the historic surroundings of Asia House in London, and featured five sponsor representatives offering real-world insights

current policy pathway allow for innovation in hot water production and demand reduction?”

He said manufacturers were launching sophisticated ‘modulating’ electric showers, but Recoup’s new product had been languishing in the Appendix Q process with DESNZ for around 18 months, with “no definitive end date.” On the plus side, he confirmed that WWHR was being adopted by housebuilders large and more SME-scaled, from Bellway Homes to Greencore (who were present at the debate).

#### Ventilation

Larry Soper of Envirovent asked the pertinent question, in the light of our warming environment and increasingly air tight dwellings: “How will the Future Homes Standard change how we ventilate dwellings?” He said robust ventilation strategy remained the “forgotten service,” as it was “easier to put a cheap fan in or trickle vents.” The new version of Part F launched alongside the Future Homes Standard was a mixed bag, he said: “It will push a lot more in the competence.”

Richard Lupo said that claims against social housing providers were a risk as overheating became more prevalent, in the wake of the new Part O. “We’ve had clients with residents doing disrepair claims because their apartments are too hot and they can’t cool them down.” Mike Leonard from Birmingham City University shared the view that the Future Homes Standard was in fact the ‘Current Homes Standard,’ and that in 20 years, “overheating will be as big a problem as underheating is today,” while Prof Jankovich suggested this timescale was optimistic, and that Part O “needed evolution.” Leonard agreed ventilation was the “Cinderella of the industry,” and a “different approach was needed from developers, whether it’s market-led or regulation led.” He said: “We need to be thinking about centralised systems, whole house systems; we owe that to the public really, because air quality has a big impact on health and wellbeing, and we should be producing not just energy efficient homes, but healthy homes.”

Larry Soper attempted to manage industry expectations on the potential of cooling using heat pumps combined with mechanical ventilation on some domestic sites, due to noise impacts.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INDUSTRY & GOVERNMENT

- **Abigail Woolf, UKGBC:** Include and regulate embodied carbon. The functional PV limits could be slightly less than the notional limits to allow innovation.
- **Dr Jaydeep Bhadra, CIBSE:** Revisit the metric used; energy use intensity is a better metric.
- **Ronny Reeves, WMS:** Keep the homeowner at the heart; and would love to see us designing to 40°C flow.
- **Richard Lupo, Shift Environment:** Post occupancy evaluation; housing associations have really good data.
- **Mike Jones, Garo Electric:** It would be great if we could futureproof power distribution more.
- **Prof Lubo Jankovic, University of Salford:** Embodied carbon needs to be regulated, PV efficiency instead of floor area, and constant set temperatures instead of intermittent temperatures. Also, consider positive health consequences of MVHR, and use hourly assessment of performance not monthly average.
- **Jonathan Cheng, Dandara:** Focus more on quality; of design, install, commissioning, and delivering a system that works with the occupier, and is not so complex.
- **Nathan Tranter, Panasonic Heating & Ventilation:** We want one heating zone for properties over 150 m<sup>2</sup> – more water value, more efficient.
- **Dan Jestico, Savills:** Retain the ability for local authorities to go beyond FHS in the new NPPF.
- **Mike Leonard, Birmingham City University:** Put the customer at the heart of this journey.
- **Larry Soper, Envirovent:** Ensure whatever’s specified in the design is what’s in the completed house.
- **Greg Jones, Hoare Lea:** Be very cautious about predicting energy use, and have scenario testing so users understand likely product performance.
- **Ellis Maginn, Recoup Energy Solutions:** Integrate innovation better into modelling: the Appendix Q pathway doesn’t feel fit for purpose currently.
- **Ian Pritchett, Greencore Housing:** This is not the last set of regulations that we’ll see; so try to encourage a holistic approach and legislate outcomes, rather than technologies. Also, correct issues and update as quickly as possible.

#### Conclusion: getting buyers on board

Delegates homed in on the need to educate homebuyers on new technologies, and manage expectations. This would be crucial not only for building the reputation of tech such as heat pumps, but also helping counter a lack of trust in the industry among the public.

Jonathan Cheng of Dandara said we had to design around consumers’ needs: “We can upskill people to use their homes in a different way, because the technology is different; it’s more complex, there’s more to understand.” However, he added: “Should we take a step back and try to understand users’ expectations?”

With the Department having expressly stated its will to “re-engage with industry,” our round table showed why they need to pay attention to such groups. As we look forward to HEM’s eventual launch, the centre needs to hear candid cross-industry views on real-world impacts, if it hopes to get it ‘right first time.’

## Biggest household energy use, warns WWHR sector



As the Future Homes Standard (FHS) approaches implementation, the WWHR sector, led by **Showersave** and **Recoup**, warns that SAP 10.3 may reduce the compliance value of Waste Water Heat Recovery Systems (WWHRs), despite domestic hot water being a major

energy demand. Since 2024, over 160,000 homes have been fitted with Showersave and Recoup WWHRs products. While WWHRs remain in the FHS notional dwelling, SAP 10.3 examples suggest compliance can be achieved without them. The sector argues this misaligns with policy intent, undervalues proven demand-reduction measures, and limits housebuilder flexibility while increasing reliance on heat pumps and solar PV.

[www.showersave.com](http://www.showersave.com) [www.recoup.co.uk](http://www.recoup.co.uk)

## Bell wins Retrofit Academy Contractor award



Property services specialist **Bell** has won Retrofit Principal Contractor of the Year at the Retrofit Academy Awards for the second year in a row, with the judges praising the company's ability to successfully deliver the large, complex retrofit programmes essential to the UK's drive for net zero.

Bell's award submission highlighted its strategic approach to delivering whole-house retrofit projects; innovative use of data, technology and management systems; dedicated resident liaison, tailored support and community engagement; a commitment to sustainable best practice; and consistently high levels of quality. It also detailed the company's dedication to training and the investment it has made in this area.

01236 766878 [www.bellgroup.co.uk](http://www.bellgroup.co.uk)

## More award success for Meadfleet!



**Meadfleet** is proud to announce that it has been shortlisted as a finalist in the 2026 Unlock Net Zero Awards. Its entry, Biodiversity-Led Open Space Management, has been recognised in the Biodiversity and Nature category, reflecting the company's commitment to creating and managing open

spaces that deliver lasting benefits for both wildlife and local communities. Through initiatives including habitat creation, pollinator-friendly planting, community engagement and biodiversity enhancement, Meadfleet continues to champion sustainable open space management across residential developments throughout England and Wales.

[enquiries@meadfleet.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@meadfleet.co.uk) [www.meadfleet.co.uk](http://www.meadfleet.co.uk)

## Keylite Roof Windows strengthens commitment



**Keylite Roof Windows (Keylite)** has reinforced its position as a trusted partner to housebuilders by supporting the Keystone Innovation Day in partnership with the Future Homes Hub. Bringing together experts from across the industry, the event explored how product innovation must evolve to

meet the requirements of the newly updated Future Homes Standard (FHS) and support housebuilders with compliance. Guests enjoyed factory tours of Keystone's purpose-built roofing facilities and a live demonstration from Keylite's Head of Technical, Colin Wells, and Sales Director, James Malkin. The session showcased the award-winning ModuLite system and its role in simplifying roof construction while improving thermal performance.

01283 200 158 [www.keyliterateofwindows.com](http://www.keyliterateofwindows.com)



## Are you building in timber yet?

One in three UK homes is predicted to be timber frame by 2028. Structural timber offers a cost-competitive build method that reduces construction timescales, cuts skills dependency, and uses a natural, low carbon, renewable material. Homes can be built in as little as 15 weeks, compared to 26-30 weeks for traditional masonry.

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- Improved build quality through factory assembly, with fewer defects and less rework
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- Improved site safety, with less manual handling and fewer hazards

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Round table chair, HBD editor James Parker

# Keeping Fabric First in Future Homes Standard Compliance

A round table of housebuilders, consultants, academics and supply chain representatives convened earlier this year to discuss how housebuilders can maintain a focus on building fabric in complying with the new Future Homes Standard (FHS), in a context of demanding new home delivery targets in England. The meeting had some particularly important insights around how to ‘keep fabric first,’ and therefore obey the original maxim behind the standard, in the face of an industry narrative dominated by heating and renewable technologies, and operational carbon rather than upfront embodied carbon.

The event was held at London’s Building Centre, and was sponsored by Kingspan Insulation, engineered timber provider Medite Smartply, membranes supplier Don & Low, Tarmac Group, Keystone Lintels, and windows manufacturer Eurocell.

Shortcomings in the final published FHS consultation response were highlighted by delegates, although the final implications for housebuilders would not be clear until the publication of the Home Energy Model, expected to come into force in March 2027 alongside the FHS. The fabric requirements in the new standard themselves didn’t move far beyond the Part L 2021 improvements, apart from a small uplift in air-tightness, and a more rigorous way of calculating window performance, but the response confirmed many key compliance aspects affecting fabric spec, such as the PV requirement. Delegates particularly criticised the fixed ‘functional requirement’ for 40% of the ground floor area to be roof-mounted solar PV, constraining design flexibility around other options for compliance.

Other challenges raised included the persistent performance gap between design and built homes, and how value engineering hampered robust materials specification. In particular, skills shortages across the delivery chain were a barrier to prioritising fabric, and delegates said that even the emergence of the Standard itself, with its associated costs, was thought to have prompted more people to leave the industry. However, with the Government not backing up challenging building targets with good engagement with industry, the sector was likely to have to deliver the initiatives required, from skills to offsite building innovation. Solutions from triple glazing to Building Passports, as well as the likely impacts of the new National Planning Policy Framework, were all discussed in a pragmatic and highly engaged way, at the round table.

To give a broad-based picture of the issues around keeping fabric first, the conversation included leading housebuilders, a range of



## MULTI-DISCIPLINARY VIEWS ON THE MATERIAL REALITIES

The round table once again brought together leading voices from the construction sector with suppliers, to explore the practical realities of compliance

consultants, and sponsors’ representatives. While the Standard has confirmed many compliance aspects, and the transitional arrangements extending until 24 March 2028, delegates said HEM will be essential for clarifying the trade-offs and balances that housebuilders and designers will need to make in schemes.

Industry bodies and associations engaged in advocating a fabric focus in future homes included the Insulated Render and Cladding Association (INCA), the Insulation Manufacturers Association, the Association of Environment Conscious Building (AECB), and The Green Register. The debate took a deep dive into the onsite challenges, the systemic skills gap facing the sector, and possible solutions. Key recommendations for both industry and Government are collected at the end of this report.

Jonathan Ducker of Kingspan opened the discussion saying the target of cutting carbon emissions by ‘75% to 80%’ on 2013 Building Regulations under the Standard “isn’t actually that big a step.” He said it amounted to approximately a “30% to 35% improvement over 2021 regulations, depending on house type” – either reassuring or somewhat underwhelming, depending on your perspective.

On fabric specifically, he said that retaining the Fabric Energy Efficiency Standard (FEES) to nominally prioritise fabric in the FHS is welcome, as it is “what keeps the building honest. The fabric as a

whole is the foundation that then allows for the building services and heating systems to perform in a coherent and appropriate way. And if you don't get the fabric right to start with, then those systems may well underperform."

Ducker was confident that fabric was embedded into compliance, thanks to FEES: "The requirements do seem to be structured so that you can't leave the fabric behind and still get the building to pass anyway; you will struggle significantly on FEES, you may even struggle on the dwelling emission rate and primary energy metrics; there is simply no longer the flexibility that you might have had in the past."

Consultant and SAP assessor Naomi Sadler said that she and many others were "disappointed that the baseline U-values weren't lowered further [from the original SAP levels]." While there had been a "jump" to make to the interim SAP 10.3, she said, it's "very much pointing towards what HEM will be aimed at, looking closely at the small gains, such as secondary pipe insulation and products' thermal conductivity."

### The burden of evidence

Sadler added that the new rigour of providing continuous BREL photo evidence on projects, "showing exactly what is put into that building and also precisely how it is built," was the sector's "biggest compliance challenge," and a "massive cultural jump." She said it was mandatory for "absolutely everything, especially thermal conductivity," but celebrated that "cheap and poorly installed insulation will no longer be accepted." She said digital apps that "support multiple authenticated users and preserve ongoing access," were needed, avoiding issues such as the frequent problem of site managers "disabling location settings due to surveillance anxieties."

Simon Storer, representing insulation manufacturers, said a culture change had to happen: "We must stop building homes below current environmental standards. Excusing compliance failures because trades turn off geo-location settings is unacceptable."

Ducker added that the new regime should bring more rigour, for example with redesigns being required if air-tightness scores "did not turn out as expected, or changes of specification such as windows are done without full knowledge of energy assessors." Rob East of Newland Homes described how all of the evidence gathering was "adding a layer of bureaucratic work," but benefitted from a SAP assessor with a dedicated software platform.

He advised: "Holding pre-start site meetings across the entire structural supply chain – from groundworkers up – is essential. We warn site managers that failing to log photos at the moment of construction will jeopardise CML mortgage sign-off." Jon Ducker said that the days of design teams "rarely communicating the importance of key thermal details to site installers, and design-stage compliance certificates simply filed away" were now over. "Proactive communication is now vital," he said, as "a single failure in a hidden detail will cause the building to fail its final test."

### Industry's fabric first initiatives; from Building Passports to EPDs

Simon Storer said the Government should back a "definitive digital building passport" to collate architectural and material data from BREL photo evidence, to geo-located compliance data, and EPDs in a central hub, providing a "single source of truth" that would thereby

### ROUND TABLE CHAIR

**James Parker**, Managing Editor, Architects' Datafile and Housebuilder & Developer

### ATTENDEES

**Naomi Sadler**, Director, SEES (Sadler Energy & Environmental Services)

**Tim Martel**, Standards & Certification Programme Manager, Association for Environmentally Conscious Building (AECB)

**Dr Marina Topouzi**, Researcher, Energy programme, University of Oxford (Environmental Change Institute)

**Simon Storer**, Chief Executive, Insulation Manufacturers Association (IMA)

**James Towt**, Principal Energy and Carbon Consultant, Useful Simple Trust

**Tom Westwood**, Programme Director, The Green Register

**Rob East**, Associate Technical Director, Newland Homes

**Ness Scott**, Head of Sustainability, Greencore Homes

**Paul Christmas**, Insulated Render & Cladding Association and Head of Technical at EWIPRO

### SPONSORS' ATTENDEES

**Jon Ducker**, Head of Regulatory Affairs, Kingspan Insulation

**Roly Ward**, Head of Business Development, Medite Smartply

**Alan Collier**, Business Development Manager, Don & Low

**Chris Pears-Ryding**, Commercial Director, Blocks, Tarmac Group

drive quality. This would "record subsequent life-cycle modifications, manufacturing traceability, and structural quality," including detailed product tracking provided to support circularity.

Delegates agreed this would ensure data continuity across changes in ownership, and prevent loss of evidence due to subcontractor churn. Naomi Sadler emphasised the need to safeguard homeowners long-term against changes in the supply chain, such as people leaving job roles.

Simon Storer said the industry should be held to the same standards as automotive manufacturing, but while manufacturers in construction faced "intense quality control" such as Declarations of Performance, contractors "often bypass hidden details because they are difficult to execute." He said the rigour expected in Passivhaus should be more commonplace; "I don't think it's excusable to say it's a bit difficult."

With a lack of buyer know-how, "progress must be industry-led," said Storer, adding that "if left to old habits, our environmental standards will fail." Roly Ward from sponsor Medite Smartply pushed back, saying that consumer demand was a driver; "they demand low operational costs, longevity, and durability, even if they do not understand structural material physics."

### Onsite spec changes & feedback loops

Delegates said that post-design changes onsite such as substituting some building elements, often due to availability issues, could hamper performance aims. Naomi Sadler said that in terms of building envelope and block specification, "the reality onsite is that different conductivities and U-values are routinely mixed across different floors." She added: "Unauthorised material changes are rampant, and while generic, freely available psi value details are helpful, they are legally invalidated if a site switches from aircrete blocks



### SOLUTIONS FOR GETTING FUTURE HOMES' FABRIC RIGHT

As well as exploring the challenges of keeping fabric to the forefront, delegates looked at solutions including data transparency, onsite checks, and embodied carbon

to alternatives.” Chris Pears-Ryding from event sponsor and block supplier Tarmac said it was important to “motivate busy site teams” to ensure that demand was managed appropriately, to avoid mixing: “Compliance data needs to offer direct operational advantages, for example, verifying material volumes via digital photo logs to power automated demand forecasting.”

Rob East assured delegates that for Newland Homes, “mixing block types within a single storey is an absolute no-no. If a shortage occurs, we halt construction at a defined plot boundary and revise the compliance calculations.” He said that aircrete blocks “vary significantly by manufacturer, so our buying team identifies available options, and we run SAP calculations based on the worst-case scenario data to ensure a fail-safe compliance route.” His firm has extended its spec to a 125 mm blown-insulation filled cavity, “which fills structural gaps more reliably than partial-fill rigid boards.”

He added that quality control has been tightened up – Newland Homes has reduced air tightness from seven “down to a consistent five.” While he said going to 4.5 would be “comfortable,” dropping down to 3.0 becomes “significantly more demanding on trades and depends heavily on house geometry.”

Delegates pointed to the importance of setting up ‘feedback loops’ from developers on the true thermal performance of compliant homes to help grow best practice. Dr. Marina Toupouzi of the University of Oxford said a true fabric-first approach “must prioritise holistic thermal comfort and structural resilience against future cooling demands, not just heating costs.” And “active evidence” needed to form those feedback loops to “instruct installers onsite about structural failures. Currently, we compile data without learning from construction mistakes.”

Another reason that performance may not match expectations was around default values being applied to fabric designs, however, plus a lack of expertise in the sector, however this was exacerbated by certain product substitutions, said delegates. Jon Ducker explained the example of substituting a specified 0.15 W/mK aircrete block

with a dense aggregate block, which “significantly increases the psi value.” He added: “If this goes unrecorded, the completed home will seriously underperform. If it is caught late, the house will fail its compliance test.”

And Ducker asserted that FEES would not protect against this, being a “holistic score determined by walls, roofs, floors, windows, air tightness, thermal mass, and ventilation. You cannot compensate for a poor fabric design by adding solar PV; individual window variances cause minor swings, but party wall junctions and lintels can cause massive heat loss if developers drop down to poor regulatory default values.”

Naomi Sadler added: “This is where progressive companies utilising intelligent vapour membranes will succeed. BREL requires visual evidence of explicit membrane overlaps, which manages interstitial condensation risks while securing airtightness.” She said that standard site practices, “like incomplete mortar dabs behind plasterboard or unsealed floor joist penetrations,” are primary sources of major air leakage.

### Solving the skills and competence gap

Paul Christmas of external wall association INCA described the training initiatives underway to increase rigour and professionalism of installations, in the wake of well-publicised failures of external wall insulation following ECO projects. While he was focused particularly on the huge domestic retrofit challenge, tackling the inconsistency within training that he pinpointed was a vital part of the new, more belt-and-braces culture permeating across the industry, which will slowly rebuild consumer trust.

Paul accepted that the standard curriculum still “completely omits proper installation detailing,” and even structural engineers, according to Naomi Sadler, “routinely alter site details without understanding the impact on psi values or fire safety compliance.” She said that further education colleges “refuse to update their curricula,” so it’s left to enlightened consultancy to spot failures and

force contractors to remedy them, even rebuilding structures. As Paul Christmas said, it will take some time before the mainstream standards begin to improve as a result of current training efforts.

Simon Storer thought that it was more essential to “build true competence” than to “hand out training certificates.” He added: “I have seen certified coordinators take photos blindly – simply because they were told to gather evidence, without understanding the underlying building physics.”

## Session Two: Suppliers' Question Time

In the second session of the debate, the sponsors got to ask a series of pertinent questions from their perspectives, bringing a further real-world practicality to the discussion. First, Roly Ward of Medite Smartply raised the issue of the ‘double-whammy’ of achieving lower embodied carbon plus the rigorous performance requirements of the Future Homes Standard for designers of residential buildings. He questioned why less than 15% of homes in England were now built using timber frame, and asked delegates what Government-led initiatives needed to be enforced to enable resi developers to increase uptake. He affirmed how timber was already ahead of the game on EPDs, as they were increasingly “on systems not just on products,” but that selling offsite processes required a whole-life carbon calculation attached.” However, much more Government engagement in driving those approaches.

Jon Ducker from Kingspan Insulation then asked: “Given that Wales and Scotland are maintaining stronger fabric standards, what would encourage developers to go beyond the English notional specification to deliver low-energy homes?” Tim Martel of the Association for Environment Conscious Building said full Passivhaus design only adds around 4% to 8% cost premium but “drastically slashes lifetime running costs.” He said the AECB’s standard was a “pragmatic” new-build space heating target of 40 kWh/m<sup>2</sup> per year, compared to the Passivhaus target of 15 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>. Roly Ward held that a target of 40 was “well within the grasp of standard builders, and that we “must be entirely pragmatic about volume supply to reduce national carbon emissions rapidly.”

Ducker was followed by Alan Collier, from Don & Low, who focused on membranes for creating airtight constructions, asking “how confident are housebuilders that onsite installation quality of membranes and airtightness detailing matches the performance assumed at design stage, and what needs to change in order to close that gap?”

Ness Scott of Greencore Homes commented that they have a “strong level of confidence” based on their robust onsite QA practices, including a QA manager picking up any issues “very early on.” However, she said she hoped FHS compliance wouldn’t be a case of “suddenly introducing a new quality assurance process.”

Then, Chris Pears-Ryding, Tarmac Group changed the focus onto embodied carbon, asking: “With the Future Homes Standard currently driving the majority of focus to reducing operational carbon, how can we ensure that the potential benefits of reducing embodied carbon get the right level of attention from regulators and housebuilders alike?”

Delegates agreed that reporting or limiting embodied carbon was a glaring omission in the Future Homes Standard, and Simon Storer for one believed that evaluating whole-life carbon must become the priority, “not just upfront embodied.” However Ness Scott gave a



### SHARING THEIR SKILLS

Our delegates brought their skills to the fore, including around the skills crisis and how offsite methods could point to a solution

possible explanation for the short-term focus, that whole-life carbon models such as over a 60-year cycle “rely on highly speculative assumptions, while upfront embodied carbon can be accurately and verifiably assessed today.”

Questions were also submitted by Eurocell and Keystone Lintels on the ramifications of the Standard when it came to windows and openings, and these were tackled during the debate despite the absence of company representatives. Eurocell asked if, without further government support, the “escalating costs and regulatory complexity associated with achieving net zero would limit the growth of UK housebuilding,” and Keystone Lintels posed the issue of whether an overt focus on walls and insulation values could ignore how thermal bridging at openings can “quietly undermine performance,” and whether its impact was underestimated. Several delegates commented on the importance of detailing solutions, including junctions and openings, such as Naomi Sadler, but she said that this threw some SAP Assessors’ shortcomings into sharp relief.

Sadler said this challenge also affected the overall envelope design: “Most SAP assessors lack practical site experience and do not understand physical construction. So when structural engineers alter block specifications for loading or foundation depth without consulting the energy assessor, the thermal implications on sills and lintels junctions are ignored.” Naomi came back to the issue of default U-values, saying that assessors typically apply generic values; in reality, large structural window openings require custom lintels, and this causes late-stage compliance failures.”

She also commented on issues around window specification from the new Standard: with architectural trends specifying large areas of glazing with slim frames, consequential structural steel posts “disrupt thermal junctions.” She added: “Most site teams cannot define a Y-value, and uncalculated changes in block conductivity can completely destroy the validity of the SAP calculation. Delegates also looked at the realities of triple-glazing’s performance and structural ramifications, as well as impacts on G-values, and therefore solar gain.

### Conclusion

One of the most interesting takeaways was when several delegates backed the idea of bringing back the rarely-seen Clerk of Works role, to coordinate delivery of designs onsite, spot cost-cutting, and



#### AT THE CENTRE OF THE INDUSTRY DEBATE

Building Insights LIVE continue to host the leading round tables for construction sector academics and associations to come together with supply chains

enforce quality. Rather than a national regulator policing energy efficient buildings, delegates supported the Clerk of Works option, pointing out that Berkeley Homes for one still employed them.

Simon Storer summed up why the simple maxim of fabric being ‘first’ for FHS-compliant homes had to be followed: “If fabric fails, the heat pump cannot operate efficiently.” Jon Ducker said the proof of poor outcomes would be seen in consumer complaints; “any structural fabric failure will be immediately evident to the consumer through poor heating performance.”

Storer pointed to the future, saying that part of recruiting the next generation of construction professionals was that “we must create specialised, well-paid compliance roles,” as opposed to box-tickers. Ducker was optimistic that “systematically tracing real-world building performance will force the industry to address underperformance.”

Simon Storer offered a strongly-worded conclusion in making his recommendations for industry and government (see box, right), which homed in on the fundamental problem of Government setting targets, and sometimes imposing measures, without any depth of industry knowledge. This spoke to the need for industry initiatives on maintaining focus on good fabric such as those highlighted at the round table to receive greater consideration by the Government, especially rigour and transparency.

He said that the Government “needs to stop beating the industry up and imposing so much on it. How many consultations have there been in the past five years, and what do they do with them? Release another consultation because they don’t like the answers?”

Pinpointing the knowledge gap between the Government and industry on building performance, he said “a much better, collegiate relationship” was needed, given the challenges the whole value chain was undergoing. “Work with us, trust us to prove it, and stop doing things ‘to’ construction.”

Storer asserted that although the industry was often “seen as the enemy” by Government, there was huge scope to improve on the interface between it and the sector, for the good of all.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INDUSTRY & GOVERNMENT






- **Tim Martel, AECB:** You have to have someone onsite to check that what has been designed is being built. Toolbox talks and dummy examples can bring the site team together.
- **Jon Ducker, Kingspan Insulation (event sponsor):** Signposting from Government would be hugely welcome, plus onsite performance evaluation and certification.
- **Marina Topouzi, University of Oxford:** It’s not fabric or renewables first, we need both, and we need understanding at all levels, from design until operation.
- **Naomi Sadler:** I’d like more transparency from industry and for the Government – to be able to upload photo evidence to a Government portal to be accessed by all.
- **Rob East, Newland Homes:** When you produce something that’s substantially better than an EPC ‘A’ rating, it ought to be recognised, in a way that’s easy for a home buyer to see at a glance.
- **James Towt, Useful Simple Trust:** We need transparency around the direction of travel from the Government.
- **Alan Collier, Don & Low (event sponsor):** Communication and education; training onsite such as around VCLs, and onsite supervision, and I’m all in favour of bringing back the Clerk of Works.
- **Ness Scott, Greencore Homes:** Regulation for embodied carbon is absolutely essential, that would drive the change we are all looking for. The industry needs to do more post-occupancy evaluation.
- **Roly Ward, Head of Business Development, Medite Smartply (event sponsor):** The proposed Part Z is key, mandating measurement of embodied carbon, to shift focus from operational energy. We need encouragement and engagement from the Government, their high targets weren’t really backed up with any substance or assurance.
- **Paul Christmas, EWIPRO:** The Government should focus on reducing energy consumption via fabric first, rather than putting all their focus on cheaper energy.
- **Chris Pears-Ryding, Tarmac Group (event sponsor):** We need that embodied carbon information from the Government.
- **Tom Westwood, The Green Register:** The Government could partly ease the transition to increased regulatory requirements by funding training.
- **Simon Storer:** We need to move to the Building Passport idea as soon as possible; it may be difficult to get going, but once it’s in place you build on it, you don’t have to have the final model from day one. And unless you have a proper inspection regime, the standards don’t mean anything.



# Delivering healthier social housing through better design partnerships

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# Materials matter when it comes to heat: How Cedral is supporting housebuilders

**CEDRAL**  
by etex



**W**ith more intense sunshine, higher temperatures and increased radiation, the UK renovation and homebuilding sector is having to re-evaluate material choices to ensure that homes are more resilient.

While most building materials are designed to withstand some degree of expansion and contraction, excessive heat can push these materials beyond their limit. Heat or over exposure to sunlight can result in warping and bulging, and can even affect the structure. Expansion and contraction on the building's fabric can also affect the quality of the indoor environment.

We are also seeing more rainfall and higher wind speeds which could potentially compromise a roof's durability and result in higher future maintenance costs.

## WHY CHOOSE CEDRAL

Housebuilders are increasingly judging materials for their thermal performance, compatibility with low energy homes, maintenance and lifecycle cost and value. Fibre cement is a strong choice for new builds as well as for retrofits and renovations. It offers a robust, regulation-ready solution fit for today's built environment.

Fibre cement cladding acts like a second skin on a building's exterior. It is frost, mould and water resistant to protect against the elements. A ventilated facade such as the Cedral ventilated rainscreen system can help support a building's energy efficiency enabling the rapid drying of external walls, reducing condensation and humidity. A ventilated wall also reduces structural movement of the building and extends the lifetime of the facade. Cedral's advantages include:

- Fire-resistant: Cedral products are Class 0 and EN 13501-1 fire performance classified to A2-s1, d0 which is one of the best classification ratings that can be achieved.
- Low maintenance and resistant to rot and warping: Fibre cement doesn't rot

or rust and lasts longer than traditional cladding materials. Thanks to its thermal stability it will not warp or crack under high temperatures.

- Stands up to the harshest weather conditions: Fibre cement can withstand severe frosts, torrential rain, high heat and direct sunlight and has a minimum life expectancy of 50 years.
- Light-weight building material: With the layered production and fibre matrix supporting the cement, fibre cement roof slates are thinner than concrete, but have the same performance benefits.
- Style and creativity for a home's exterior: Cedral cladding and roofing is available in a wide range of finishes and colour choices. Boards can be mounted vertically or horizontally to create a range of looks, from country cottage to bold contemporary styling. Cedral roofing slates are available in square or dressed edges, smooth or textured finishes.
- CCPI accreditation: Cedral Sidings have been CCPI assessed and certified.



## SUSTAINABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT WINNER WITH CEDRAL

Cedral is committed to supporting housebuilders with cladding and roofing solutions for beautiful homes. An example is

with an award-winning Park Lanneves housing development in Bodmin, Cornwall which uses horizontal Cedral cladding in platinum grey. The brief for the development, a mix of two, three and four bedroomed houses and one bed apartments, was for a contemporary look that would be smart and stylish. When contractors, Triple D Construction, took on the scheme, a different type of cladding had already been specified for the upper part of the exteriors. However, Daniel Williams, Director at Triple D Construction recommended using Cedral cladding instead.

"We had just used Cedral on a previous development, Hays Commons Development in Launceston, and the cost comparison was negligible. We knew how to use it, we knew the Cedral representatives and installers, and we knew it was a good system that we'd never had issues with."

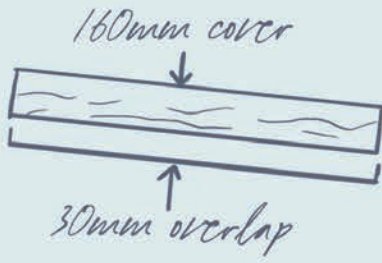
Designed to withstand the elements without regular repainting or treatment, Cedral is a practical and long-lasting alternative to traditional wood cladding.

"Cornwall can have severe weather and there aren't many low maintenance products for residential properties," says Daniel. "We used the cladding from just above the ground-floor windows to the top of the building, so there shouldn't be any need for scaffolding during maintenance periods. You can clean it from below and it should only need minimal attention. That's why we chose it."

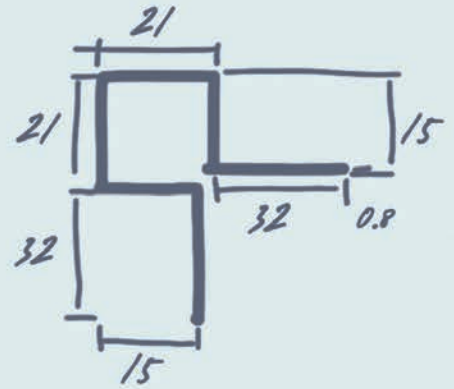
Using certified Cedral Select installers, Westclad, to fit the cladding gave the client the warranties they required. As long as Cedral cladding is fitted to the manufacturer's recommendations, a Cedral facade has a 10 year product guarantee.

The development is already a big hit, winning the sustainable development of the year award at Insider South West Residential Property Awards 2025.

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by etex

## Senior's PURe® and simple solution for the new Future Homes Standard



Senior Architectural Systems is helping designers and housebuilders prepare for the forthcoming Future Homes Standard (FHS), with its aluminium window systems already engineered to meet the more stringent thermal performance requirements that will apply from 2028.

Published in March 2026, the updated Standard confirms a major shift in the way window performance must be assessed. Under the new Home Energy Model (HEM), wholewindow Uvalues must be calculated for the exact configuration installed, replacing the previous approach that allowed the use of a standardised window. The maximum allowable Uvalue for windows in new homes will also tighten from 1.6 W/m<sup>2</sup>K under current Part L to 1.2 W/m<sup>2</sup>K.

Senior's patented PURe® aluminium window system is already designed to meet both current regulations and the new Future Homes Standard using double glazing, providing a straightforward route to compliance without the need for deeper profiles or tripleglazed units. This performance advantage is delivered through PURe®'s unique PUR thermal break technology, which enables significantly lower wholewindow Uvalues across a wide range of styles and configurations.

For projects requiring alternative aesthetics or specific design features, Senior also offers additional window systems including the slimline, heritageinspired Ali VU and the newly launched SPW+. Both can be specified in double or triple glazing to help meet projectspecific Uvalue requirements, offering further flexibility for residential schemes.

Senior Architectural Systems' specification support manager Karl Kovak said: "The Future Homes Standard provides muchneeded clarity for the industry, and window performance will play a central role in achieving the required outcomes. PURe® has been engineered from the outset to deliver longterm, futureproof thermal performance, and we are confident that our full range of aluminium window systems is well placed to support designers and housebuilders as they prepare for the transition."

Senior is encouraging early engagement on new residential schemes, with full product information, technical resources and regional support available via its NBS Source profile and company website.

01709 772600 [seniorarchitecturalsystems.co.uk](http://seniorarchitecturalsystems.co.uk)

## Proctor Group provides an 'Air' of luxury on new home development

The first site development by a new luxury housebuilder is benefiting from Proctor Group's Proctor Air® underlay on the pitched roof.

Braddus Homes is a small housing developer set up by childhood friends who wanted to offer something different to the volume housebuilding companies they had previously worked for. Their first development is Priory Fields, a site of four homes, each with five bedrooms.

The company has set out to deliver excellence as standard and needed to ensure the materials they sourced would match their premium approach to housebuilding, right from their very first project. Their homes are marketed as luxury, exclusive and high specification – and they needed every detail to meet this high standard to ensure complete customer satisfaction.

For developers of small housing sites looking to differentiate themselves in the marketplace, offering a high-end product means spending money in the right places. That includes using the best products that provide the performance they promise.

For the pitched roof specification, Braddus Homes therefore chose to use Proctor Group's air permeable, low resistance underlay Proctor Air.

As an air permeable, low resistance (APLR) underlay Proctor Air allows the passage of both



air and moisture vapour. This combination of qualities reduces condensation risk in roofs and avoids the need for separate roof ventilation products, as the underlay provides a more consistent flow of air than standard roof vent products.

Proctor Air has a BBA certificate, and has been assessed against the Code for Construction Product Information (CCPI). The underlay is also one of six Proctor Group products covered by an

environmental performance declaration (EPD).

Furthermore, as developers and housebuilders grapple with best practice around using solar PV on new homes, Proctor Group has published industry leading guidance around the use of Proctor Air with integrated solar panels.

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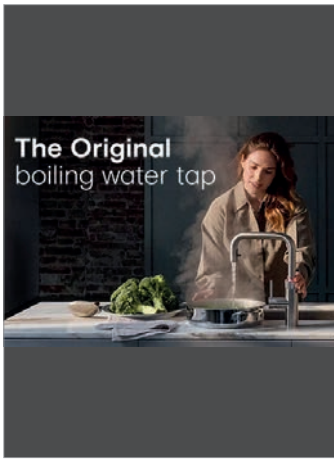
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The all-new Guardian Veranda is a contemporary aluminium system designed to transform any outdoor area into a sheltered and stylish space. Created by **Guardian Building Systems**, it is available as a standalone system, maximising your home's functionality from the inside out.

Whether you are looking to create sheltered outdoor seating, extend useable living space, or protect your car or walkways, the modular design of the Guardian Veranda allows it to be designed with bespoke layouts, sizes, and finishes that suit any home. Featuring slim aluminium profiles and refined detailing, it can accommodate 6.4mm laminated glass or 6mm polycarbonate, offering flexibility in design, light transmission, and budget.

The Guardian Veranda is available in a range of pitches, from 4° to 40°, with discreet integrated guttering for effective water management. The robust all-aluminium framework also delivers exceptional strength and durability with minimal maintenance, ensuring your investment will stand the test of time, season after season.

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# TESTED SYSTEMS, QUIETER FLOORS

Roly Ward from MEDITE SMARTPLY says tested OSB flooring systems with consistent performance are the key to acoustic compliance – and explains why detailing, sealing and substitution are what determine real-world performance.

**A SYSTEM DESIGNED AND TESTED TO MEET A 40 DB THRESHOLD MAY NO LONGER DO SO ONCE MODIFIED**



**E**xcess noise within homes remains a persistent issue across UK housing, particularly in multi-occupancy settings where internal floor construction plays a critical role. Beyond occupant comfort, acoustic performance is a compliance requirement under the Building Regulations, placing clear obligations on developers to meet minimum airborne sound insulation standards.

Tested timber floor systems, including those incorporating oriented strand board (OSB) are increasingly used to meet these requirements. However, achieving compliant acoustic performance in practice depends less on the headline specification and more on how consistently that specification is delivered on site.

UKAS-accredited laboratory testing has shown that some OSB flooring panels, when used as part of a complete system, can achieve the 40 dB airborne sound insulation benchmark required for internal residential floors in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. These panels are typically assessed within full-floor assemblies – including joists, insulation layers, ceiling linings, and floor decks – rather than as individual components in isolation.

This distinction matters. Acoustic performance is not an inherent property of a single board product, but of the entire floor build-up and the interaction between its elements. Subtle changes to any part of that system can have a disproportionate impact on outcomes.

In practice, three recurring issues tend

to undermine performance: junction detailing, late-stage substitutions, and inadequate sealing.

Junctions – particularly at wall-to-floor interfaces – are a common weak point. Even where a tested system is specified, poorly executed junctions can inadvertently create flanking paths for sound transmission. These paths allow airborne noise to bypass the primary floor structure, reducing the effectiveness of otherwise compliant systems.

For housebuilders, this presents a coordination challenge. Acoustic performance is often treated as a discrete requirement, yet it relies heavily on the continuity of multiple trades, from structural framing through to plasterboard installation. Without an intentional effort to maintain system integrity at junctions,



performance gaps can emerge.

Late-stage substitutions represent a second risk. In response to procurement pressures or availability constraints, materials are sometimes swapped without full consideration of their role within a tested system. Even where alternative products appear similar in specification, their behaviour within the assembly – particularly in relation to stiffness, mass or fixing – may differ.

The result is that a system designed and tested to meet a 40 dB threshold may no longer do so, once modified. This is particularly relevant in timber frame construction, where floor cassettes and offsite elements are designed for repeatability. Introducing variation at site level undermines that consistency.

Sealing and airtightness form the third, and often overlooked, factor. Gaps around board joints or perimeter edges can significantly reduce acoustic performance. Sound transmission is closely linked to air movement, meaning that uncontrolled air paths can also act as sound paths.

This creates a critical overlap between acoustic compliance and wider building fabric performance. As the industry moves towards tighter airtightness targets under evolving standards, the detailing required to control air leakage can also support improved acoustic outcomes, provided it is applied consistently.

In a survey we conducted, in partnership with the Structural Timber Association, data from timber frame manufacturers highlighted the broader

context in which these challenges sit. Acoustics was identified as a key area of concern under the Future Homes Standard, alongside thermal performance, moisture management and thermal bridging. While not always the primary focus, it remains part of a wider set of performance criteria that must be addressed simultaneously.

At the same time, the industry is operating under significant labour constraints, with 73% of manufacturers reporting shortages of skilled personnel. This has direct implications for onsite quality control, particularly for tasks such as sealing and detailing, which rely on consistent workmanship.

Against this backdrop, there is growing interest in systems that reduce onsite complexity and improve repeatability. Tested OSB-based flooring solutions can contribute to this by providing a defined, pre-validated approach to acoustic performance, rather than relying on ad hoc combinations of materials.

One example is the use of coated or engineered OSB panels within flooring systems designed to meet both acoustic and airtightness requirements. Where these panels form part of a tested system, they can help simplify the number of components that need to be managed by installers onsite.

However, the presence of a tested product or component does not remove the need for system discipline. The performance demonstrated in laboratory conditions assumes that installation follows the tested

configuration, including fixings, joint treatment and interface detailing.

For developers, this raises a practical question: how to ensure that what is designed and specified is what is ultimately built. Increasingly, this comes down to procurement clarity and site supervision. Specifications that reference tested systems, rather than individual products, provide a clearer framework for delivery.

Equally, there is a need to resist the tendency to value-engineer acoustic elements late in the process. While cost pressures are a reality, changes made without reference to test data can introduce risk, particularly where compliance margins are narrow.

The role of OSB timber within these systems is therefore best understood as part of a wider assembly strategy. Its structural consistency and compatibility with prefabricated flooring systems make it well suited to repeatable construction methods. When incorporated into a tested build, it can contribute to predictable acoustic outcomes.

Ultimately, quieter timber floors are not achieved through specification alone. They depend on a combination of tested system design, disciplined procurement, and careful onsite execution. Where these elements align, compliance becomes more straightforward – and the gap between designed and delivered performance begins to close.

Roly Ward is head of business development at MEDITE SMARTPLY



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# GEOSYNTHETICS PROVIDE GENUINE SAVINGS

Mark Gillies, director of technical solutions at Burdens, looks at the key role that geosynthetic materials can play in new housing developments, in particular how they can underpin cost-saving strategies.



**F**or many housebuilders and developers, groundworks remain one of the most unpredictable – and expensive – elements of a project. Challenging ground conditions and rising material costs, paired with the increasing pressure to deliver sustainable projects, are forcing the industry to rethink traditional construction methods. This is where geosynthetics are becoming increasingly important.

## HOW DEVELOPERS CAN USE GEOSYNTHETIC MATERIALS

Geosynthetics are polymer materials which are designed to improve ground performance. Typically supplied in sheet or grid form, geosynthetics can be used in a wide range of applications, such as working platforms, drainage systems, access roads and ground stabilisation. Having been widely adopted in major infrastructure projects for decades,

they can often be underused in housing development projects.

One of the most significant benefits geosynthetics offer is the ability to reduce, or even eliminate, the need for imported stone. Traditionally, when building on weak or variable ground, developers rely on thick layers of aggregate to create stable working platforms or access routes. In some cases, this can mean hundreds or even thousands of tonnes of stone being

brought onto site.

By acting as a separation and stabilisation layer, geotextiles prevent aggregate from being lost into soft ground, while geogrids interlock with the stone to distribute loads more effectively, resulting in a far more efficient use of materials. In practical terms, this can reduce the thickness of stone required by 30-50% – depending on ground conditions – delivering immediate cost savings.

For housebuilders, the financial implications are considerable. Less stone means fewer deliveries, reduced haulage costs and lower fuel usage. It also means less excavation, as thinner construction layers require less digging and disposal of spoil. When multiplied across an entire housing development, particularly on sites with poor ground conditions, these savings can quickly run into hundreds of thousands of pounds.

#### IMPROVING EFFICIENCY ONSITE

Beyond direct cost savings, there are also programme benefits. Importing large volumes of stone takes time and creates logistical challenges, particularly on constrained or urban sites. By reducing the number of vehicle movements, geosynthetics can help accelerate construction programmes and minimise



## IN MANY CASES THEY ARE INTRODUCED AS A VALUE ENGINEERING EXERCISE

disruption to surrounding communities.

They also play a critical role in enabling development on more challenging land. As the availability of straightforward brownfield and greenfield sites declines, developers are increasingly looking at marginal land – areas with weaker ground that would traditionally require extensive ground improvement. Geosynthetics provide a cost-effective way to make these sites viable without resorting to excessive

usage of materials on developments.

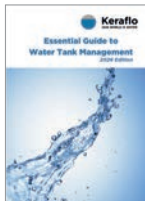
Despite these advantages, geosynthetics are not always specified at the outset of a project. In many cases, they are introduced later as a value engineering exercise, once costs begin to escalate. However, the greatest benefits are realised when they are considered early in the design process. Early engagement allows engineers and contractors to optimise the design, rather than simply substituting materials at a later stage.

Another key consideration is specification. Not all geosynthetics perform the same function, and selecting the wrong product can lead to underperformance or unnecessary cost. This is where technical expertise becomes critical – understanding ground conditions, load requirements and application specifics ensures the right solution is used from the start.

Ultimately, geosynthetics are not just a substitute for traditional materials; they are a smarter way of building. For housebuilders and developers looking to control costs, improve efficiency and unlock more challenging sites, a better understanding of these materials could offer a significant competitive advantage.

Mark Gillies is director of technical solutions at Burdens

## Keraflo launch 2026 edition of essential guide



Keraflo has announced the release of the 2026 Edition of its *Essential Guide to Water Tank Management*. This updated edition provides an essential resource for facilities managers, building maintenance engineers and health and safety specialists navigating the complexities of cold water storage. The original guide, which set the industry standard for professional good practice, was widely praised for its accessible and comprehensive

advice on everything from temperature control to visual inspections. The 2026 Edition expands on this foundation, addressing critical new challenges such as changing water regulations, heightened scrutiny on water conservation, and the latest advancements in tank management technology.

0118 921 9920 [www.keraflo.co.uk/downloads](http://www.keraflo.co.uk/downloads)

## Vent-Axia supports high-quality student living



Vent-Axia has delivered high-performance ventilation across Centre Court, Olympian's landmark purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) development on Alfreton Road, Nottingham. Ashley Beresford, commercial director, C&D Electrical, said: "Today's

developments demand flexibility, there is no longer a one-size-fits-all approach to ventilation. Regulation is driving this shift, meaning we need a range of adaptable solutions to meet project-specific requirements. We specified the Lo-Carbon Sentinel Econiq Cool-Flow since it combines all the benefits of MVHR with an integrated DX cooling module helping prevent overheating and meet the requirements of Part O."

0344 856 0590 [www.vent-axia.com](http://www.vent-axia.com)

## PDAS Group – Pumping station specialists

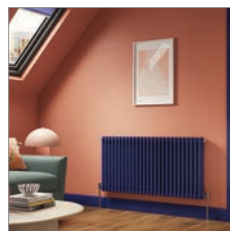


Whether you are involved in designing new pumping systems which form part of new development infrastructure, or you're maintaining existing pumping station assets, PDAS can assist you every step of the way by providing expert knowledge and experience throughout the design and construction

phase. PDAS provides a service and maintenance solution once the pumping station is commissioned that includes real-time monitoring via a cloud-based telemetry platform. This gives visibility of how the pumping station is performing. So, if you are responsible for new or existing pumping station assets and require expert assistance, PDAS can help.

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## New look column radiators from Stelrad



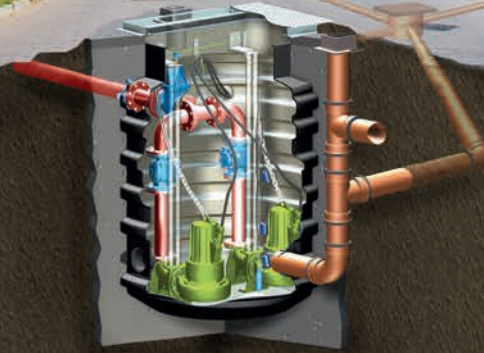
Leading radiator manufacturer, Stelrad Radiators has introduced an Italian-designed new look, improved range of its popular Column radiators – in both its vertical and horizontal column radiator ranges. The most obvious changes are to the design of the radiators that will now feature a new rounded column design. The streamlined model range will feature 54 horizontal radiators and four

vertical options with heights between 300 mm and 2,000 mm and lengths from 348 mm to 1,866 mm. They will feature an increased warranty – significantly extended from the current five years to fifteen years.

0800 876 6813 [www.stelradprofessional.com](http://www.stelradprofessional.com)



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## Design meets function with Ancona



The Radiator Company has introduced the new Ancona Console Table to its growing collection of design led heating solutions. Seamlessly blending contemporary aesthetics with practical functionality, the radiator meets the demands of modern interiors by offering a sophisticated solution for space conscious homes, without compromising on comfort and efficiency. The Ancona® Console Table combines practical shelving with efficient heat output to

provide a convenient solution for entrance areas and hallways. With its classic clean lines and balanced symmetry, the radiator suits any desired interior style and can be used as a slim console or side table.

01342 302250 [theradiatorcompany.co.uk/ancona-console-table](http://theradiatorcompany.co.uk/ancona-console-table)

## Genuit Group named among Climate Leaders 2026



Genuit Group plc, a leading provider of sustainable water, climate and ventilation solutions for the built environment, has been named in the Financial Times Europe's Climate Leaders 2026 list for the second consecutive year, recognising its continued progress

in reducing emissions while supporting the transition to a low-carbon built environment. Genuit's inclusion reflects the collective impact of its portfolio of leading brands, including Polypipe, Nuaire, Monodraught, Adey, Nu-Heat, Manthorpe and Salamander, which deliver sustainable solutions across water management, ventilation and low-carbon heating. Between 2019 and 2024, Genuit delivered a verified reduction of more than 54,000 CO<sub>2</sub>e across its operations and value chain, the equivalent to heating 25,000 homes a year.

0113 831 5315 [www.genuitgroup.com](http://www.genuitgroup.com)

## Vectaire offers a range of whole-house heat recovery products



Vectaire offers a range of whole-house heat recovery products designed to address ventilation challenges effectively. These systems extract pollutants and humidity while maintaining a constant intake of fresh, filtered air. They are energy-efficient, environmentally friendly, and economical, meeting the latest standards for modern homes. The newest products in Vectaire's range are the Cool Breeze and Cool Breeze Plus. These models are specifically designed to mitigate overheating in residential properties during the summer months. They ensure a comfortable indoor environment for people both during the day and night. They meet the standards used in CIBSE TM59 assessments and Approved Document O of the Building Regulations. They use R290, an eco friendly refrigerant over 225 times more environmentally friendly than R32. Manufactured in the UK, they are for floor or wall mounting and integrate seamlessly with a Vectaire Maxi (or Maxi Plus) MVHR, offering a compact and energy-efficient approach to indoor temperature regulation without the need for an external condenser. A Cool Breeze system is suited for use in new-build and retrofit applications where regulatory compliance and system efficiency are critical.

[sales@vectaire.co.uk](mailto:sales@vectaire.co.uk) [www.vectaire.co.uk](http://www.vectaire.co.uk)

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SATK32107



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- ✓ Eliminates heat loss into the loft
- ✓ Maintains airtightness of the ceiling
- ✓ Saves energy and money

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## New taps and showers brochure available

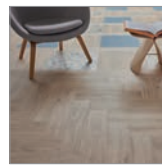


Leading heating and plumbing sector distributor **Navigator MSL** has launched its latest dedicated taps and showers brochure offering a comprehensive range of taps for bathrooms and kitchens, along with a selection of showers and shower hoses. The Navigator tap range is fully WRAS approved ensuring compliance with UK Water Regulations and giving installers confidence when specifying,

fitting and signing off installations. Head for the website, email or call Navigator on 01234 781234.

[sales@navigatormsl.com](mailto:sales@navigatormsl.com) [www.navigatormsl.com](http://www.navigatormsl.com)

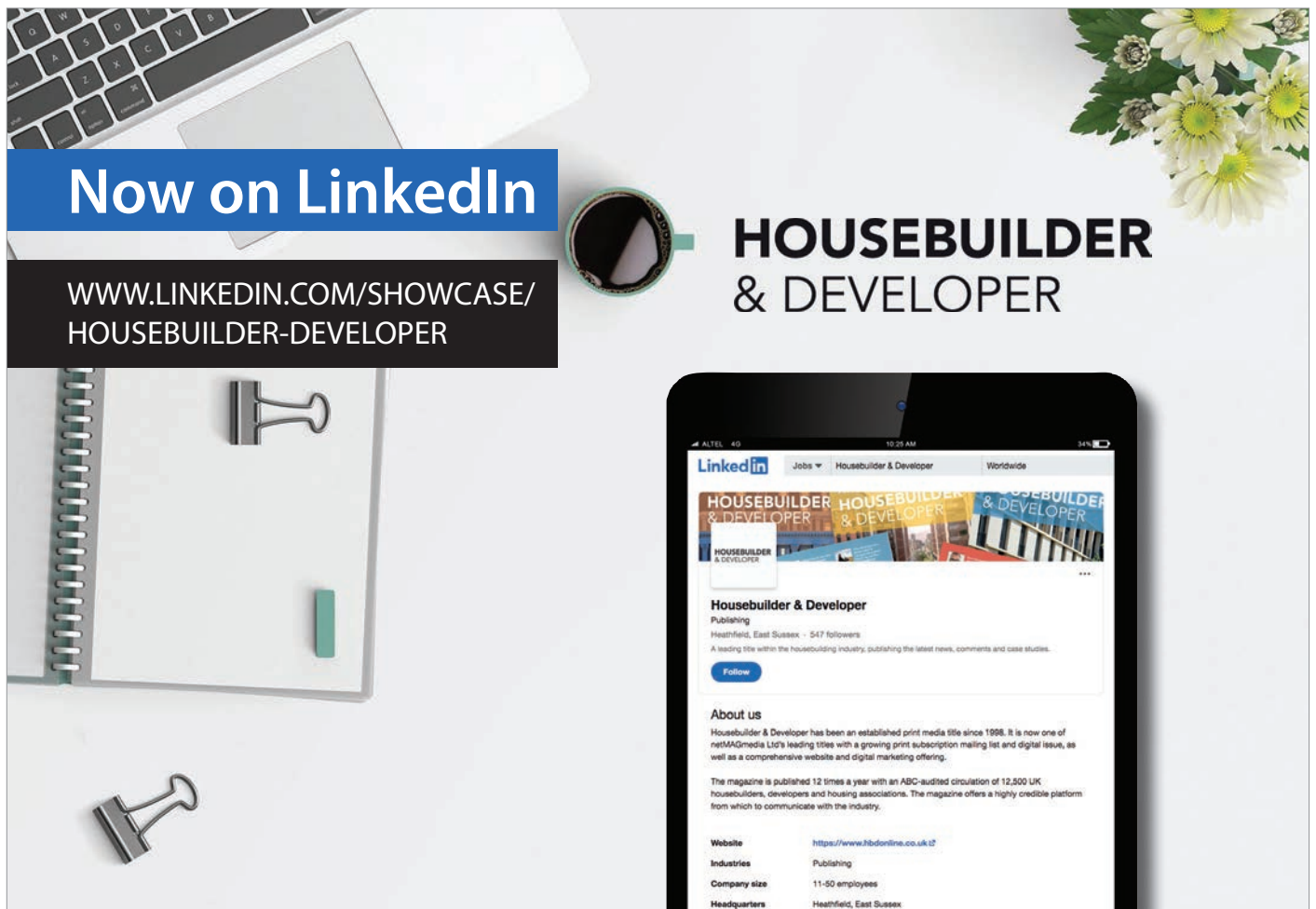
## Performance meets contemporary design



**Forbo Flooring Systems** has updated its Allura Decibel luxury vinyl tile (LVT) collection, combining 19dB impact sound reduction with 0.11mm indentation resistance and high dimensional stability. By integrating acoustic performance within the flooring, it removes the need for separate underlay, reducing installation time, costs and complexity. The refreshed

collection includes contemporary wood, concrete, textile, stone and terrazzo-inspired designs, with 100 items across 12 designs. Sustainability has also improved, with 25% more recycled content in the standard range. The new Allura Decibel b+ range contains 31% recycled content and incorporates bio-based PVC to further reduce environmental impact.

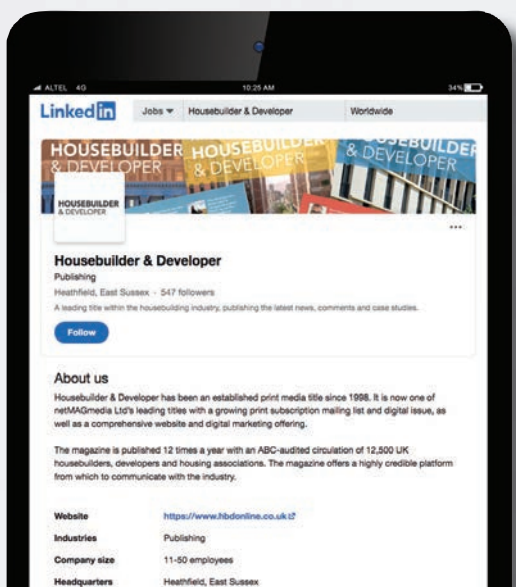
01773 744 121 [www.forbo-flooring.co.uk/alluradecibel](http://www.forbo-flooring.co.uk/alluradecibel)



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The magazine is published 12 times a year with an ABC-audited circulation of 12,500 UK housebuilders, developers and housing associations. The magazine offers a highly credible platform from which to communicate with the industry.

**Website:** <https://www.hbdonline.co.uk/>  
**Industries:** Publishing  
**Company size:** 11-50 employees  
**Headquarters:** Heathfield, East Sussex

# THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF SOCIAL NETWORKING

With their inherent efficiencies of scale, heat networks are becoming increasingly popular, but there are key considerations for developers for ensuring long-term performance, and they are not for every scenario, says Altecnic's Josh Collins



## HEAT NETWORKS ARE NOT A UNIVERSAL SOLUTION AND TEND TO WORK BEST IN SPECIFIC SCENARIOS

As the UK housing sector responds to tightening energy efficiency standards and net zero targets, heat networks are becoming an increasingly attractive solution for new developments. By generating heat centrally and distributing it to multiple homes, heat networks can support lower carbon emissions, improved energy efficiency and flexible integration with low-carbon technologies.

For developers, however, the decision to install a heat network should be driven by careful assessment rather

than policy pressure. Understanding how these systems work, where they are most appropriate, and what is required to deliver them successfully is essential to achieving long-term value for both residents and asset owners.

### HOW HEAT NETWORKS WORK

A heat network consists of a central heat source, insulated distribution pipework and individual dwelling connections via heat interface units (HIUs). Instead of each home having its own boiler or heat pump, hot water is generated centrally

and delivered on demand for space heating and domestic hot water.

Heat networks can be designed to serve a single building or an entire development, and they can operate at different temperature regimes depending on the chosen heat source. This centralised approach offers efficiencies of scale, particularly where heat demand density is high.

For residents, the system is largely invisible. Heat is delivered via standard radiators and hot water outlets, with billing typically based on metered



consumption rather than fuel supply.

#### WHEN ARE HEAT NETWORKS APPROPRIATE?

Heat networks are not a universal solution and tend to work best in specific scenarios. High-density developments such as apartment blocks, mixed-use schemes and urban regeneration projects are often well suited, as the concentration of heat demand improves efficiency and economic viability.

They are also particularly effective where there is access to low-carbon or waste heat sources, such as ground or water source heat pumps, energy centres, or connection to an existing district heating network.

Conversely, low-density housing with widely spaced dwellings may struggle to justify the additional infrastructure costs. Early feasibility studies are therefore essential to assess technical, financial and regulatory suitability before committing to a heat network strategy.

#### INTEGRATING LOW-CARBON HEAT SOURCES

One of the key advantages of heat networks is their ability to integrate with a wide range of low-carbon heat sources. Unlike individual dwellings, where plant size and space are constrained, central plant rooms can accommodate larger, more efficient equipment.

Common low-carbon options include air, ground or water source heat pumps, combined heat and power (where still appropriate), and increasingly, hybrid systems that can evolve over time. Importantly, heat networks can be designed to allow future decarbonisation by swapping or supplementing heat sources without significant disruption to residents.

This flexibility makes heat networks a potentially future proof solution, provided they are designed with long-term performance in mind.

#### SYSTEM DESIGN & SPECIFICATION

Correct system design is critical to the success of any heat network. Poor design can lead to inefficiencies, resident dissatisfaction and costly remedial work.

Key considerations include accurate heat demand modelling, appropriate pipe sizing, hydraulic balancing and temperature control. Distribution losses must be minimised through proper insulation and layout, particularly in larger developments.

At dwelling level, the specification of heat interface units plays a major role in overall performance. HIUs must be matched to the system design, capable of delivering adequate hot water performance while supporting efficient operation of the network.

Engaging experienced designers and

suppliers early in the process helps ensure that the system is engineered correctly from the outset.

#### METERING, BILLING & CONSUMER PROTECTION

Unlike traditional heating systems, heat networks require robust metering and billing arrangements. Individual heat meters measure each dwelling's consumption, enabling fair and transparent charging.

Developers must consider not only initial installation but also long-term billing arrangements, whether managed in-house or outsourced to a specialist heat network operator. Clear communication with residents is essential to ensure they understand how the system works and how charges are calculated.

With increasing regulatory focus on consumer protection in heat networks, correct metering, accurate billing and responsive customer service are becoming non-negotiable aspects of system delivery.

#### OPERATION, MAINTENANCE & LONG-TERM PERFORMANCE

A heat network is a long-term asset, and its performance over decades depends on how well it is operated and maintained. Unlike individual boilers, failures can affect multiple homes, making reliability paramount.

Planned maintenance regimes, remote monitoring and performance assurance processes should be established from the outset. Developers should consider who will own and operate the network post-handover and ensure responsibilities are clearly defined.

Performance assurance, including commissioning, verification and ongoing monitoring, helps ensure the network operates as designed and continues to deliver efficient, cost-effective heat to residents.

#### DELIVERING SUCCESSFUL HEAT NETWORK INSTALLATIONS

Heat networks can offer significant benefits when applied in the right context and delivered correctly. For developers, success depends on early feasibility assessment, robust design, correct specification and a clear long-term operational strategy.

By taking a considered approach and working with experienced partners, heat networks can provide a reliable, future ready heating solution that supports sustainability goals while delivering comfort and value for residents throughout the lifetime of a development.

Josh Collins is heat networks manager at Altecnic

# On the front line of design innovation – Vicaima doors open to new lifestyle at former Military HQ



The conversion of a Grade II listed building, with a history spanning over 130 years, requires thoughtful and imaginative planning at the best of times. However, this is all the more important when the building holds a special affection and relevance for a town steeped in an illustrious military past. In this instance it was more than just bricks and mortar. The building has a lineage dating all the way back to 1894, when the Duke of Connaught, Queen Victoria’s son and General Officer Commanding for the Aldershot District, inaugurated this important headquarters for the armed forces.

This challenge however, was more than successfully met by Weston Homes, when they re-imagined the 4th Division Military Headquarters in Aldershot. They transformed the historic site into an exclusive collection of contemporary apartments and cottages, while seamlessly

retaining its original character and charming architectural features.

To complement the interior layouts and design, Vicaima supplied interior timber doors from their Visual Sensations collection. For this, Weston Homes selected Dekordor® SD Forest in a cross-directional woodgrain styling. Forest, with its rich and luxurious walnut like hue, perfectly complements the tone of the surrounding joinery and flooring and its combination of both vertical and horizontal grain directions adds an interesting design statement, as you traverse between living areas.

Multi-award winning Weston Homes and WhatHouse? Housebuilder Of The Year 2025, has long been an advocate of Vicaima innovative door products, incorporating them throughout many of its residential developments across London and the South East. Weston Homes choice of Vicaima provides a seamless interior finish to every home, combining exceptional

design with lasting quality. Working in conjunction with ABL, a Colchester based installation company, Weston Homes specified a variety of dimensional requirements to perfectly meet the project requirements.

The Visual Sensations collection provides a wide finish and design spectrum with no less than 12 base woodgrain shades, that are each available in a selection of vertical, horizontal or cross-directional grain patterns. As with all Vicaima products, this collection is fully adaptable to meet specific project requirements. Whether that be performance fire doors, security entrance or acoustic solutions or custom configurations, such as single leaf, pairs, glazed options or decorative grooved embellishments, ensuring the interior doors perfectly enhance the desired design vision.

01793 532333  
info@vicaima.com



# Why brushed wood flooring should be on your specification list

For housebuilders and developers, flooring is one of the most visible specification decisions you make. It sets the tone for every room, influences how a property photographs for marketing, and plays a significant role in how buyers perceive quality and value. Brushed wood flooring is emerging as a specification choice that delivers across all these areas, combining the authentic character of natural timber with the durability and practicality that modern residential development demands.

## A FINISH THAT ADDS VALUE WITHOUT ADDING COMPLEXITY

Brushed wood flooring is created by gently removing the softer wood fibres from the surface of the timber, enhancing the natural grain and adding a subtle texture. The result is a floor that looks and feels genuinely premium.

“With its subtle texture and depth, highlighting the natural structure of the wood, this flooring brings warmth and quiet sophistication to living spaces. The textured surface provides a balanced combination of elegance and performance, making it ideal for family homes.”

That combination of elegance and performance is particularly relevant for residential development. Woodura Planks with a brushed finish are engineered for long-term stability and everyday resilience, making them well suited to new-build environments where properties need to perform from day one and continue to look their best through years of occupation.

## VERSATILITY ACROSS PLOT TYPES AND PRICE POINTS

One of the most practical advantages of brushed wood flooring for developers is its flexibility. Light brushed oak tones work well in smaller rooms and north-facing spaces, maximising the sense of light and openness. Deeper, richer tones create atmosphere in larger living areas and open-plan kitchen-diners, which remain one of the most in-demand features in new-build homes.

This tonal range means a single flooring specification can be deployed intelligently across different plots and house types within the



same development, maintaining a consistent quality feel while allowing for variation between homes. It also photographs exceptionally well, which matters enormously in an era where the majority of property searches begin online.

## ALIGNED WITH HOW BUYERS WANT TO LIVE

There is a growing expectation among homebuyers for interiors that feel considered, natural and connected to the materials around them. Brushed wood flooring sits squarely within the trend towards biophilic design, bringing an authentic, organic quality to a space that buyers increasingly associate with wellbeing and quality of life.

“Homeowners increasingly seek natural materials that add authenticity and character. The finish feels tactile and genuine, supporting the growing trend towards biophilic design and nature-inspired interiors.”

For developers looking to differentiate their product in a competitive market, that connection to natural materials is a meaningful selling point, one that resonates with a wide range of buyers from first-time purchasers to those trading up.

## A SMART SPECIFICATION FOR SHOW HOMES AND SALES

Brushed wood flooring also performs particularly well in show home environments. The way the textured surface interacts with both natural and artificial light creates a sense of warmth and movement that staged photography and CGIs often struggle to replicate. Getting it into a show home means buyers can experience it directly, which tends to be far more persuasive than any specification sheet.

Its timeless quality means it will not date as interior trends evolve, reducing the risk of a development looking tired before all units have sold. For volume housebuilders and developers alike, brushed wood flooring represents a specification decision that supports both the quality of the finished product and the strength of the sales story.

For more information on Bjelin and Woodura Flooring contact UK National Sales Manager – Richard Banham:

07500 758 364  
Richard.banham@bjelin.com



# MODERN DOOR SYSTEMS PROVIDE THE KEY TO MODERN LIVING

ECLISSE explores how pocket doors and flush hinged systems are helping developers maximise space, streamline interiors and enhance homeowner appeal.



## FLUSH HINGED DOOR SYSTEMS ARE BECOMING AN INCREASINGLY ATTRACTIVE SPECIFICATION CHOICE FOR HOUSEBUILDERS

**T**oday's housebuilders face increasing pressure to deliver more with less. Space constraints, rising buyer expectations and evolving interior design trends are reshaping the way homes are planned and specified across the UK residential market.

As developers look for ways to maximise floorplans while creating high-quality living environments, interior door systems are becoming far more than

a functional necessity. Increasingly, they are playing a central role in how homes feel, function and perform.

This shift is driving growing demand for integrated systems that improve space utilisation, simplify specification and support contemporary interior aesthetics.

### MAXIMISING USABLE SPACE

Efficient use of space has become one of the defining challenges in

modern residential design. Whether in apartments, townhouses or family homes, every square metre matters.

Traditional hinged doors can limit layout flexibility by requiring clearance zones and interrupting usable wall space. In tighter footprints, this can affect room configuration, furniture placement, and overall flow throughout the property.

Pocket door systems provide an increasingly popular solution.



By sliding into a concealed cavity within the wall, pocket doors eliminate the need for 'swing space' entirely. This creates greater freedom when designing layouts and can help rooms feel larger, cleaner and more open.

In practical terms, pocket doors can transform the usability of kitchens, ensuite, utility rooms and open-plan living areas. They also help create more adaptable spaces that can be opened or divided depending on how homeowners choose to use them.

As hybrid working and multifunctional living continue to influence residential design, this flexibility is becoming increasingly important.

Importantly for developers, installation efficiency also plays a major role. Prefabricated frame kits and straightforward assembly help reduce on-site complexity while supporting programme timelines and build consistency across multiple units.

#### RISE OF MINIMALIST INTERIORS

Interior trends within the residential sector continue to move towards cleaner, more architectural aesthetics. Buyers increasingly favour minimalist detailing, uninterrupted wall lines and streamlined finishes that create a greater sense of openness and simplicity.

As a result, flush hinged door systems are becoming an increasingly attractive specification choice.

Unlike traditional door frames and architraves, flush systems allow the door to sit perfectly aligned with the wall

surface, creating a seamless appearance that complements contemporary interior design schemes.

Flush hinged systems are designed to deliver this refined aesthetic while maintaining the practicality required for everyday residential use. The result is a discreet, modern finish that works particularly well within premium apartments, open-plan homes and design-led developments.

Flush systems also provide flexibility from a design perspective. Doors can be finished to blend seamlessly into surrounding walls for a concealed effect or used as subtle architectural features, depending on the overall interior scheme.

For developers operating in competitive housing markets, these details can be crucial for contributing to perceived value and buyer appeal.

#### BALANCING AESTHETICS WITH PERFORMANCE

While visual appearance is important, performance and durability remain critical considerations when specifying products for residential developments.

Door systems are among the most frequently used elements within the home, meaning reliability has a direct impact on homeowner satisfaction and long-term maintenance requirements.

Attention to frame rigidity, alignment and running quality helps minimise common issues associated with lower-quality systems, such as sticking doors, movement within the frame, or premature wear.

For developers, this can help reduce aftercare concerns while protecting the overall quality perception of a completed scheme.

Equally important is the ability to integrate seamlessly within modern construction methods. As offsite manufacturing, tighter build programmes and higher finish expectations become more common across the sector, products that simplify coordination and installation are increasingly valuable.

Integrated systems that combine technical performance with design quality therefore offer clear advantages for both contractors and end users.

#### FUTURE PROOFING RESIDENTIAL DESIGN

The way people use their homes continues to evolve. Flexible living arrangements, remote working and changing family dynamics are all influencing buyer expectations and design priorities.

Door systems that allow spaces to adapt more easily support this shift effectively.

Pocket doors, for example, allow homeowners to separate rooms when privacy or acoustic separation is needed, while still maintaining openness throughout the rest of the day. This adaptability can help homes remain functional as lifestyles change over time.

At the same time, flush detailing and minimalist finishes reflect broader architectural trends that continue to influence both developers and purchasers.

As the market becomes increasingly design-conscious, these systems are moving from niche specification choices to mainstream residential solutions.

#### A SYSTEM-LED APPROACH

Ultimately, developers require products that do more than simply look good. Systems must integrate efficiently into the build process, support reliable long-term performance and contribute positively to the overall homeowner experience.

Our approach focuses on delivering complete engineered systems that address both functional and aesthetic requirements. From pocket doors and flush hinged systems through to technical support and installation guidance, the emphasis is on helping developers achieve higher-quality interior outcomes with greater efficiency.

As the residential sector continues to prioritise smarter use of space, cleaner architectural detailing and enhanced flexibility within the home, integrated door systems are becoming an increasingly important part of modern housebuilding.

Article supplied by ECLISSE

# Click Scolmore expands its market leading Flow range with the launch of the new 6Pole lighting connection system

Click Scolmore has announced the launch of its new Flow 6Pole range, an advanced addition to the company's established Flow lighting connection and management system. Designed to meet the growing demand for flexible, intelligent, and futureproof lighting installations, the new 6Pole solution brings enhanced capability for modern commercial environments - including full support for DALI, switch-dim, and (0) 1-10V dimming solutions.

Building on the success of the existing 3 and 4pole Flow products, the new 6Pole range provides contractors with a simple, plug and play method for creating more complex lighting installations quickly, safely, and with minimal disruption. The system has been engineered to reduce installation time, simplify configuration, and support easy reconfiguration as building layouts and client requirements evolve.

The Click Flow system has always been about speed, safety, and flexibility. The new 6Pole range takes this to the next level, giving installers a powerful solution for advanced lighting control without adding complexity.

## ADVANCED LIGHTING CONTROL MADE SIMPLE

The 6Pole Flow connectors provide six dedicated terminals, enabling seamless integration with many lighting control systems including both DALI (Digital Addressable Lighting Interface) and (0) 1-10 dimming. This allows luminaires, sensors, and control devices to communicate intelligently, delivering precise lighting management and improved energy efficiency.



With two-way communication and built-in monitoring capabilities, DALI-enabled installations can be easily adapted as spaces change, without the need for rewiring, it also offers emergency lighting and energy monitoring which can be critical for commercial and industrial installations. The system also supports switch-dim and (0) 1-10V dimming, offering smooth, reliable brightness control for everyday use and full dimmable control during emergency operation. This allows the required light levels to be set or adjusted depending on the application of the area.

## FAST, SAFE INSTALLATION WITH PUSHFIT TECHNOLOGY

Like the rest of the Flow range, the new 6Pole products feature Click Scolmore's proven screwless pushfit technology, designed to cut installation time in half. Integrated cable clamps, push in terminals, and a simple locking



mechanism ensure a secure, low maintenance connection every time.

The connectors are engineered for rapid testing, maintenance, and component replacement – allowing contractors to work more efficiently and with minimal disruption on site.

## BUILT FOR MODERN COMMERCIAL ENVIRONMENTS

The Flow 6Pole range is ideal for offices, retail spaces, sports halls, exhibitions, and any environment requiring adaptable lighting control. For applications where fire safety and environmental protection are essential, the 6-Pole Flow cables are manufactured using Low Smoke Zero Halogen (LSZH) materials; so that it can offer enhanced fire and environmental protection.

## EXPERT LIGHTING DESIGN SUPPORT

Every Flow 6-Pole installation is backed by Ovia's in-house lighting design team, providing comprehensive support from initial enquiry through to ordering goods. Services include:

- Site specific lighting calculations
- Luminaire selection guidance
- Compliance focused design support

This collaborative approach ensures that installers, contractors and specifiers can achieve reliable, compliant and high performance lighting solutions tailored to the needs of any installation.

## IMPROVED SAFETY WITH CLICK'S FLOW SCHEME

The Click Flow Scheme is designed to simplify and improve the safety of complex lighting installations. Using a flexible system of distribution hubs, management boxes, and compatible connectors, Flow enables adaptable wiring solutions that respond to changing legislation and project requirements.

A wide range of Ovia luminaires are available preterminated with Flow connections, alongside prewired 3 and 4pole cables, however the Flow 6Pole range is a standalone solution and is not compatible with existing 3Pole or 4Pole Flow products. Each scheme is tailored to the project brief or wiring schematic and can also accommodate cross specification designs produced by Ovia's lighting design team.

Detailed equipment reports are provided by room or location, including full technical data, making Flow a valuable tool for electrical designers when selecting products and planning installations.

## A NATURAL EVOLUTION OF THE FLOW SYSTEM

The introduction of the 6Pole range reflects Click Scolmore's ongoing commitment to innovation and to supporting contractors with solutions that respond to changing legislation, energy efficiency targets, and the increasing complexity of modern lighting design.

For more information, visit the Click Scolmore website at [scolmore.com](http://scolmore.com), where a dedicated brochure covering the full Click Flow 6Pole range is available, or download the Scolmore Group app.

[sales@scolmore.com](mailto:sales@scolmore.com)  
[scolmore.com](http://scolmore.com)



## Usable loft space becoming a key differentiator



A usable loft can add nearly £18,000 to the value of a family home and make it easier to sell in what is now the strongest buyers' market in a generation, according to estate agents. Research of 500 property brokers found a boarded and easily accessible roof space adds

£17,677 to a four-bedroom property, £13,821 to a three-bed, and £9,867 to a two-bed. With the property market firmly in buyers' hands, sellers are under pressure to make their homes stand out and avoid stagnation. Experts said the answer could be right above their heads, providing a significant return on an investment as little as £260 with **LoftZone** StoreFloor achieved through raised loft boarding and insulation work.

[sales@loftzone.com](mailto:sales@loftzone.com) [www.loftzone.co.uk](http://www.loftzone.co.uk)

## Keller Kitchens launches 'SUITE LIFE' design



This new "Hotel Chic" look from Keller brings the exclusive atmosphere of a luxury hotel into the kitchen. The scheme centres on premium materials, clean lines and a refined finish that evokes the feel of a sophisticated suite in a top-tier hotel. Named the Suite Life, the designer can create a space that

exudes luxury, without being excessive, with rich tones like oyster grey and deep black, chrome accents, and statement lighting. As always with Keller, the colour, finish and handle options are limitless when considering exciting schemes. The new Hotel Chic creations feature luxurious materials such as velvet, marble and dark wood, creating a rich, refined look.

[www.kellerkitchens.com](http://www.kellerkitchens.com)



© Steven Barber

## Why Homeowners are Embracing the 'Fifth Wall' with Havwoods

The 'fifth wall' or ceiling is often overlooked when designing a space, but it can have a huge impact on the overall look and feel of a room. From rustic finishes to on-trend panelling, leading wood surface specialist, **Havwoods**, has a wide variety of ceiling options that are capable of completely transforming a space.

Wood ceilings are increasingly being specified as architectural focal points, creating visual interest beyond eye level, helping to make a space feel taller. Timber instantly adds character, warmth and texture, whilst being incredibly versatile. Whether used to decorate a whole ceiling or a smaller area, wood helps a room feel more considered and inviting.

Beyond its beautiful aesthetic, studies suggest that wood interiors can help reduce stress and promote relaxation. Inspired by the principles of biophilic design, incorporating exposed wood can strengthen a homeowner's connection to nature, helping rooms feel calmer and more welcoming.

Whether through rhythmic linear patterns or seamless timber applications, these installations encourage homeowners to engage with a space in a more immersive way.

01524 737000 [www.havwoods.com/uk](http://www.havwoods.com/uk)

## Your trusted partner for biodiversity net gain

Wates Wildscape is dedicated to delivering high quality biodiversity habitat sites across the UK with BNG habitat units now available to purchase.

We're part of Wates Group, a **fourth generation family business founded in 1897**, and one of the UK's leading family owned development, building and property maintenance companies.

Wates Wildscape provides a vital solution for developments that are unable to meet Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) planning obligations on site. Our growing portfolio of habitat creation sites provides a dependable route for securing approved BNG units. Drawing on our deep understanding of the land development process, we offer a **trusted and reliable way for developers to fulfil their BNG obligations**, while also contributing to long term conservation, ecosystem restoration and nature stewardship.

If you're seeking secure, high quality BNG units backed by an experienced national provider, we're here to support your next project.

Talk to an expert and secure BNG units for your next development today



Wates  
Wildscape

[wates.co.uk/wates-wildscape](http://wates.co.uk/wates-wildscape)

Illustrative CGI. Final site appearance may differ

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