

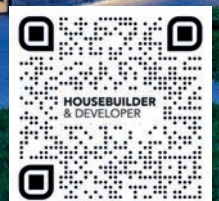
HOUSEBUILDER & DEVELOPER

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2026

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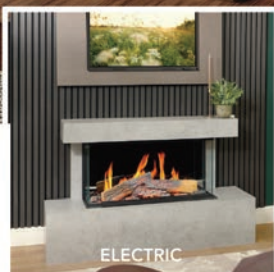
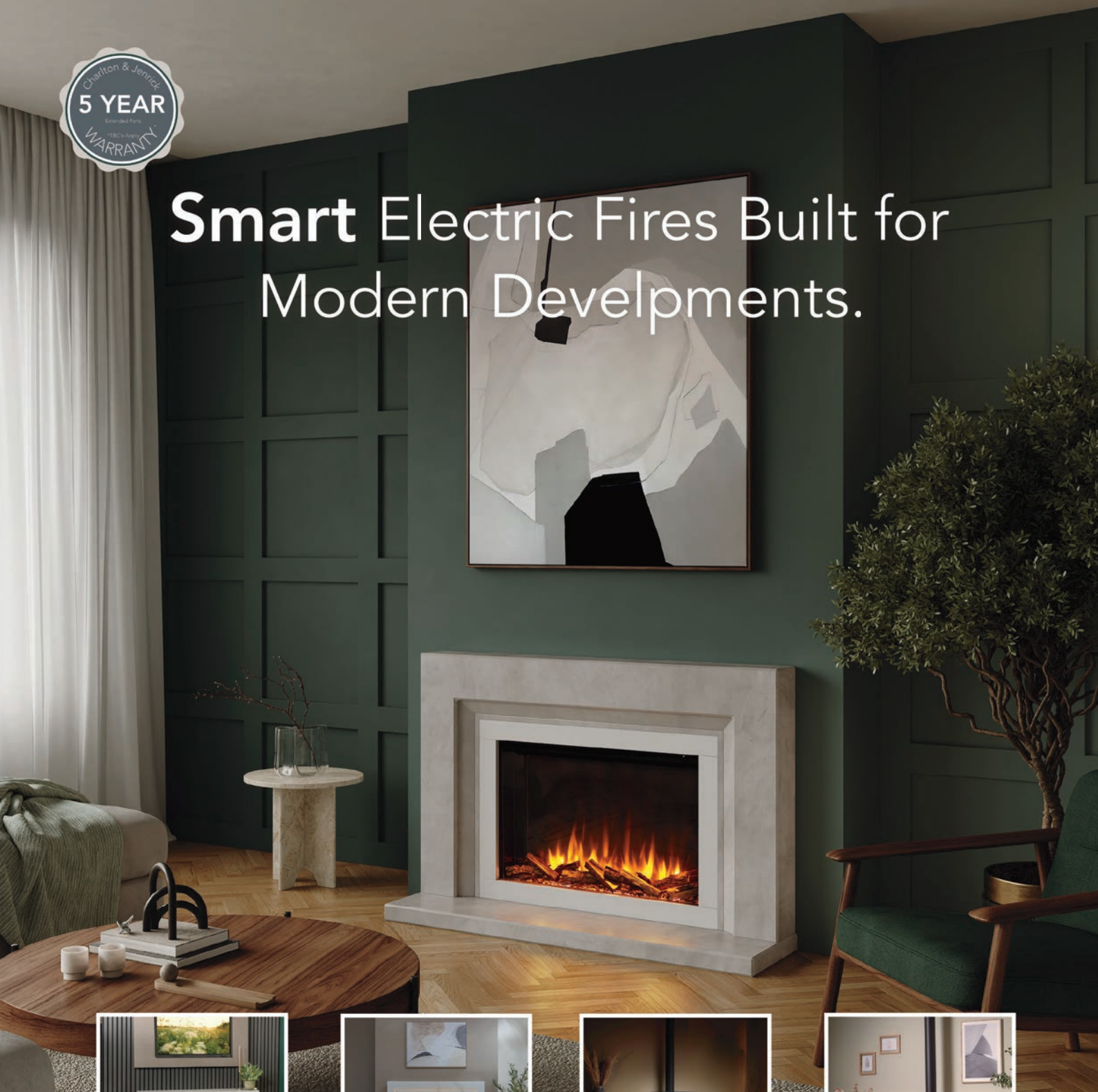
A development on the Kent/Sussex border by Q New Homes retained and transformed a group of former dairy buildings into nine luxury homes, while making room for occupants

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James Parker

ON THE COVER

HOUSEBUILDER & DEVELOPER

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FROM THE EDITOR

Prime Minister Andy Burnham is returning from his summer holiday to a wake up call, in terms of the bulging to-do list he has already assembled. One of his first utterances, even before officially confirmed as PM was to reinforce his commitment to a council homebuilding programme that would be the 'biggest since the post war period.' This is the cornerstone of his aim to cut welfare and fund all his other plans.

Burnham championed social housebuilding as the way to redistribute wealth from private landlords to local authority coffers, as "the fair and sustainable way to bring the welfare bill down and meet our fiscal rules." It does sound like an awful lot is hanging on this.

However there's no detail yet on this massive council building programme, such as likely funding streams. Instead, some well-meant promises on how better homes will mean savings for the whole country: "We will help people to live well, building a more preventative state, investing in people's success, rather than paying for failure."

The issue, as well as – ironically – part of a solution, might emerge with Burnham's parallel mission to devolve decision making to the regions, following his moderate success building homes, among other achievements, in Manchester. The new, clunky buzzword, 'Manchesterism' is thought to have resulted in over 18,000 new affordable homes across the region between 2017 and 2025, however they only managed 2,368 homes specifically for social rent.

The PM might want a "place first, not party first" strategy across the UK, but the bottom line is that achieving major numbers of council homes for social rent is probably unlikely without huge levels of Government subsidy. The Section 106 route of requiring developers to deliver a proportion of social housing is declining in popularity, and something else is needed. Namely, a national council housebuilding strategy with compelling incentives for developers.

Burnham said his Government would "use vacant public land to reduce costs," and promote higher density residential development in towns. But achieving the (just under) 200,000 council houses we built in 1953 is going to take a lot more intervention than that. Planning reform has to include some form of legal, possibly draconian requirement for social housing allied to funding, if we are going to really make this much more than a set of aspirations. And as others have said, that is going to pull away from the local decision-making which planners have long practiced, to more regional oversight. It will be messy.

With the relentless heat this summer pointing to a worrying future, we also have to ensure that swathes of new council homes do not create uncomfortable, and potentially unsafe, overheating. The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) produced an "interim heat mortality monitoring report" recently, which showed there were 2,877 "heat-associated deaths" in England during May and June 2026. Shockingly, this is almost double the figure they reported for the whole of 2025.

This has to be a 'wake up call,' as the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) says. Representing Environmental Health professionals working with councils, does such a body have the clout to go beyond Part O, and ensure that new homes are designed with future resilience. Could we finally see inward opening windows plus external shutters rolled out across the UK, as they are in southern Europe, as our climate changes forever?

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Redford submits plans for 175 homes in former Nationwide headquarters



Redford Developments (Swindon) has submitted an outline planning application to Swindon Borough Council, proposing the transformation of the former Nationwide headquarters building into 175 new homes.

Located on Pipers Way in central south Swindon, only a mile from Swindon's upmarket Old Town district, the 3.8 ha site benefits from a draft allocation for residential development in the emerging Swindon Local Plan 2023-2043. In addition to the new homes, the outline plans incorporate a tree retention and planting strategy, a new pocket park, and children's play area.

Redford Developments appointed Corstorphine & Wright Architects to draw up the outline plans, along with an illustrative masterplan of what a future scheme could look like, including the delivery of a mix of two and three-storey houses.

As part of Redford Developments' proposed plans, the majority of the established trees and hedgerows along the site boundary are to be retained, with new tree planting planned to add to the street scenes. Ecological enhancements to increase the biodiversity of the site are also outlined.

Nationwide Building Society vacated Wakefield House in 2021. The organisation is currently the world's largest building society and a major provider of savings and mortgages in the UK. Nationwide is Swindon's biggest employer and has around 13,000 office based staff, many of whom are based at its headquarters,

located in a modern office complex on Pipers Way, a few minutes' walk from Wakefield House.

The Ridgeway Hospital, School and Sixth Form Centre are also located very close to the development site. Pedestrian movement is therefore prioritised within the development plans through an "enhanced north-south connection," said Redford Developments, complemented by a dedicated cycle and pedestrian link towards Gilbert Place. Two access points from Lowry Way provide "convenient permeability" across the site.

Wakefield House is approximately 1.9 miles from Swindon Railway Station and 2.2 miles from Junction 15 of the M4. Situated on the southern boundary of the town centre, Pipers Way benefits from being surrounded by lush greenery and Broome Manor Golf Club, with Coate Water Country Park only two miles away. Swindon is approximately 40 miles east of Bristol, 80 miles west of London, 47 miles west of Reading and 30 miles south west of Oxford.

The acquisition of the Wakefield House site earlier this year was the Warwickshire-based developer's largest land purchase to date. It is the first of a handful of brownfield sites the firm is looking to acquire for redevelopment within Wiltshire. Redford Developments is backed by significant private investment, enabling sites to be purchased unconditionally or subject to planning. The company is also "in the market to acquire commercial assets that are non-income producing, requiring refurbishment, or redevelopment."

Bellway buys land for 82 low-carbon homes in North Horsham



Bellway has completed the purchase of land to build 82 low-carbon homes within the new Mowbray Village development in North Horsham.

The acquisition follows the submission of a reserved matters planning application earlier this year, for a range of one, two, three and four-bedroom properties, all featuring air source heat pumps and electric vehicle charging points.

Outline planning permission for up to 2,750 homes along with a business park, retail units, community centre, and leisure and education facilities on land north of the A264 was granted in 2018.

Bellway's proposals are to develop a 6.4-acre parcel of land at the northwestern edge of the first phase of the wider scheme, where construction is already underway. The Bellway site borders Old Holbrook to the west and will be accessed from Moat Road, the main spine road serving this phase of the development.

If the plans are approved, Bellway could start construction work on site in the autumn.

Bellway's plans comprise 72 properties for private sale, featuring two, three and four-bedroom houses, and 10 affordable homes ranging from one and two-bedroom maisonettes to four-bedroom houses.

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Newett Homes strengthens leadership team with addition of Mathew Drake as head of land



Newett Homes has appointed Mathew Drake as its new head of land, reinforcing the company's ambitious growth plans.

Mathew joins the Yorkshire housebuilder with more than 20 years' experience in land acquisition and residential development, having built an impressive track record of identifying and securing strategic development opportunities throughout the region.

Prior to joining Newett Homes, Mathew held senior land roles at Bellway Homes Yorkshire and spent more than 12 years with Barratt and David Wilson Homes Yorkshire West Division.

Throughout his career, Mathew has led complex land acquisitions from initial appraisal through to contract completion and planning delivery, securing opportunities through both competitive tender processes and off market transactions. He has also established strong relationships with landowners, agents, promoters and key stakeholders across the region.

In his new role, Mathew will lead Newett Homes' land function, overseeing land acquisition strategy, planning and promotion, commercial appraisal, due diligence and pipeline growth to support the company's continued expansion.

"Mathew's appointment reflects Newett Homes' ongoing investment in its leadership team as the business continues its growth journey, expanding its portfolio of high-quality residential developments while maintaining its

reputation for delivering exceptional homes and communities," said the firm.

In April this year Newett Homes secured its first site outside of Yorkshire with the acquisition of a seven-acre greenfield site in the Lincolnshire village of Kirton in Lindsey, representing a key milestone in its long-term strategy to expand its geographical footprint beyond the region.

Established in 2017, Newett Homes is an award-winning housebuilder dedicated to delivering quality-led homes in hand-picked locations. Employing over 70 people, the business currently has 10 active developments, supported by a growing land pipeline.

In March 2026, it was awarded its first five-star rating from the Home Builders Federation (HBF) recognising the businesses continued commitment to excellence in build quality and outstanding customer experience.

Vistry secures resolution to grant planning for 306-home brownfield scheme next to major London hospital site

Vistry has secured a unanimous resolution to grant planning permission from Enfield Council for the partnership-led regeneration of land adjacent to North Middlesex University Hospital in Edmonton for 306 new homes. The partnership with GLA Land and Property, Hyde and the Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust will "unlock a complex brownfield site," commented Vistry.

The milestone "demonstrates how Vistry's partnerships model can bring together public landowners, affordable housing providers and public-sector organisations to unlock complex brownfield sites and accelerate the delivery of much-needed homes," the mixed-tenure housebuilder said.

Vistry was selected by GLA Land and Property as development partner following a competitive procurement process, and the scheme is being brought



forward with Hyde as the registered provider and long-term affordable housing partner.

Designed by architects HTA, the development will deliver a combination of 152 social rent homes and 154 "intermediate homes," which include key worker homes for eligible hospital staff. The proposals also include a nursery and cafe for residents and the surrounding community.

Around 1,700 m² of open and play space will "sit at the heart of the



development," said Vistry, supported by new planting, sustainable drainage and improved walking and cycling routes. All of the homes will have private outdoor space, and 10% will be designed for wheelchair users.

The partnership aims to create "wider social value through local jobs, apprenticeships, skills and training opportunities, helping the investment in the site deliver a lasting benefit for Edmonton."

The resolution is subject to completion of the Section 106 legal agreement, following which and construction is anticipated to begin later in 2026.



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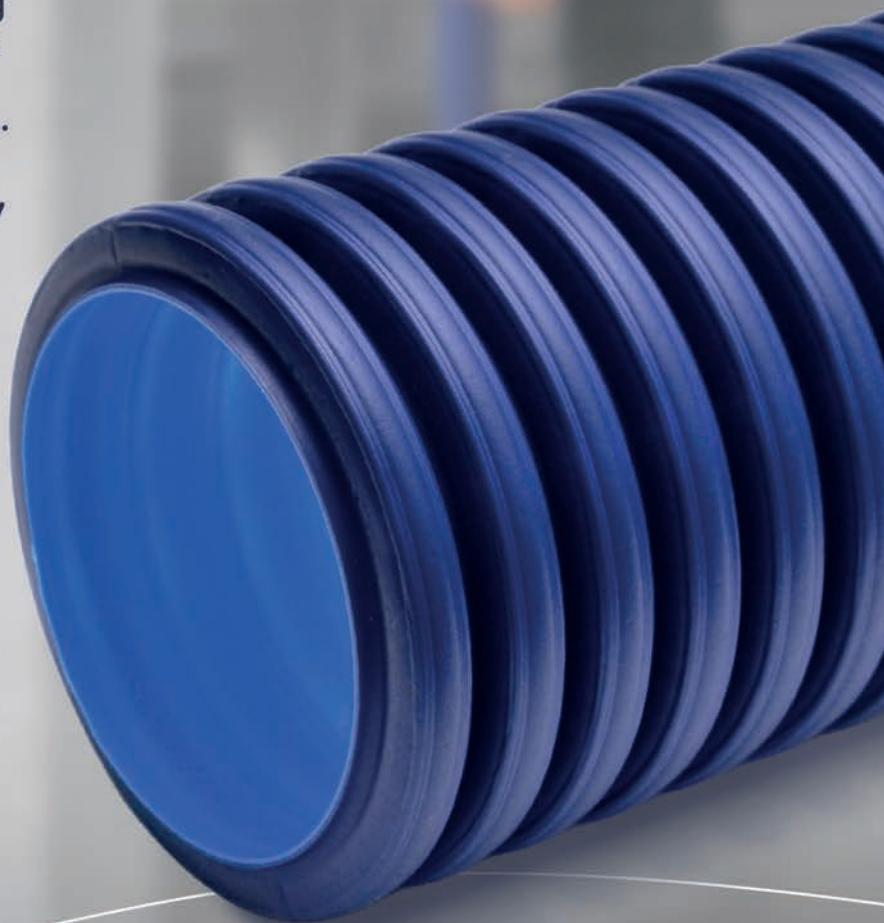
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Construction begins at Bargate's 90-home scheme in New Forest



Award-winning regional housebuilder Bargate has officially commenced construction at Horizon Wood in Pennington, Hampshire, following clearance and groundworks. The 90-home residential scheme will deliver a mix of open-market and affordable homes, alongside extensive green open space on the edge of the New Forest National Park.

Located off Milford Road, the 15.8-acre scheme will provide a range of one- to four-bedroom homes, with a variety of affordable housing being delivered in partnership with VIVID, Hampshire's largest not-for-profit provider of affordable homes. Nearly two-thirds of the site will be dedicated to preserved habitats, wildflower planting and public open space.

Its location places future residents close to the Solent and just a mile from Lymington, combining village and coastal living with easy access to the New Forest, Southampton, and the wider Hampshire and Dorset area.

The layout has been designed to reflect the character of Pennington, with lower-density housing, generous landscaping and extensive public open

space throughout the development. The architectural approach draws from local materials and detailing, including red brick, render, timber cladding and traditional chimneys.

Residents will benefit from landscaped green spaces, footpaths, informal play areas and an Alternative Natural Recreational Greenspace, supporting both recreation and biodiversity. The development will also include ecological enhancements such as new habitats, tree planting and wildlife features to encourage biodiversity.

Pennington offers village amenities, pubs, cafes and access to Pennington Common, while nearby Lymington provides independent shops, a historic quay and rail links to London Waterloo via Brockenhurst.

The start of construction at Horizon Wood follows the recent launch of Shepherds Green in Hordle, Bargate's 100th development. Earlier this year, Bargate retained its five-star rating in the national Home Builders Federation Customer Satisfaction Survey and received a 2026 Gold Award from In-House Research.

Allison Homes appoints commercial director to support East Midlands growth plans



Regional housebuilder Allison Homes East Midlands has welcomed Gary Whysall as commercial director to support the region's "exciting growth plans and continue its expansion across Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire," commented the firm.

Allison Homes East Midlands added: "Gary joins Allison Homes with decades of industry experience, having begun his career by studying quantity surveying at Nottingham Trent University. Post-graduation, Gary started on the commercial side, building schools, office blocks and pubs, before switching to housebuilding and spending time at both SME and PLCs."

For 14 years, he worked for a national developer, moving up the ranks from quantity surveyor to commercial director.

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Cameron Homes submits planning for 40 homes in North Cotswolds village



Cameron Homes has submitted detailed plans to Wychavon District Council for 40 family homes to be delivered on a 2 Ha (5-acre) site in the Worcestershire village of Honeybourne, on the north-western fringes of The Cotswolds.

The Reserved Matters application – designed by White Ridge Architecture – follows on from the site being granted outline planning consent in mid-2025. A range of one- to five-bedroom two-storey houses and bungalows are proposed, to cater for Honeybourne's identified housing needs. 16 of the 40 homes are to be allocated as affordable, across a range of tenures.

Accessed from Stratford Road, the site is within a short walk of village amenities and a 15-minute walk from Honeybourne train station, which has frequent services to Evesham, Worcester and London. The direct service to Paddington station takes under 100 minutes. The Staffordshire-headquartered five-star HBF housebuilder has previously constructed developments in the nearby villages of Long Marston, Lower Quinton, Luddington, Blockley, and Tredington.

Cameron Homes' proposed plans illustrate exterior elevations that are traditionally styled with brick and render

to complement the local vernacular. The elevation treatments mirror a recently completed development to the west of the site. Many of the new dwellings will have frontages to both Stratford Road and Mickleton Road, while others will have views over the open space and fields to the south of the site.

The latest green energy features will be incorporated into this scheme, with a very high EPC rating targeted. Specification highlights will include smart Hive thermostats, electric vehicle car chargers, and solar PV panels.

The majority of the existing hedgerow around the site will be maintained and managed. As part of the development programme, Cameron Homes will also deliver new public realm, ecological enhancements, additional features for wildlife habitats, and increase the biodiversity of the site through the creation of two attenuation ponds.

Honeybourne benefits from a post office and local shops, two pubs, a primary academy, recreational spaces, a refurbished village hall, takeaways, and the regional family attraction All Things Wild. Broadway – referred to as 'the jewel of The Cotswolds,' is under five miles from the development site.

Tom Sheppard begins MD transition as David Foreman moves to exec chair role at Newland



Gloucester-based housebuilder Newland Homes has announced the promotion of Tom Sheppard as managing director designate, a newly created role to support the continued growth of the business as a leading developer of zero carbon homes in the South West.

The appointment reflects Newland Homes' commitment to ensuring continuity of leadership while maintaining the values, culture and quality that have underpinned the company's success for more than three and a half decades. David Foreman, who co-founded the business in 1991, will begin to step back from day to day running of the company over the coming year while continuing to support the business strategically as executive chairman.

Sheppard has held senior positions at Newland Homes since 2011, progressing to design director, a role he has held for the past three years, and formerly planning director. The transition period will see him working alongside David and the wider leadership team to "ensure the continued growth of the company, whilst maintaining its longstanding commitment to quality, sustainability and customer satisfaction," said Newland.

As managing director designate, Tom will retain a key role within Newland Homes' design and planning team, an area in which he has made a significant contribution. Over the next year, he will become increasingly involved in all areas of finance, commercial and operational aspects of the business.

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MJ Gleeson strengthens senior leadership team with several hires and promotions



Gleeson Homes, part of MJ Gleeson plc, is pleased to announce several senior appointments across the Group and its regions.

Joanne Morrison, previously of Vistry Group, joins Gleeson as regional managing director for the North West. Joanne will lead growth initiatives across the region, drive operational excellence and oversee the safe delivery of much-needed new homes.

Alongside Joanne's appointment, the Group has also welcomed:

- Craig Knowles as group operations director, bringing together the Group's Commercial, Technical, Sustainability, Land and Planning functions under a single leadership structure to enhance collaboration, efficiency and the sharing of best practice across the business.
- Andy Clarke (pictured) joins the business as divisional adoptions manager, a newly created role. Andy will serve all regions to manage and de-risk the adoption of roads, sewers and drainage, ensuring developments

are completed, approved and transferred to adopting authorities in a timely and compliant manner.

- David Appleby as group SHE director, who has previously served at both Taylor Wimpey and, most recently, Miller Homes. In this new role, Dave will oversee Safety, Health and Environment across the Group. His appointment reflects a continued commitment to strengthening safety culture and driving further improvements, ensuring the highest standards are maintained as the business works towards its long-term ambitions.

As part of its commitment to developing internal talent, Gleeson has also made several key senior promotions at Regional and Divisional level:

- Evonne Hitchen, previously divisional finance director, has been appointed regional managing director for North East. Evonne will take overall responsibility for the region's performance, growth strategy and operational delivery.
- Supporting Evonne, Steven Burn, previously technical director for the North East region, has been promoted to operations director, overseeing the region's land, construction and technical operations.

Placefirst and Strata complete first phase of £28.5m Nottingham Build to Rent neighbourhood

Developer-operator and single-family housing specialist Placefirst, alongside contemporary homebuilder Strata, has completed the first phase of homes at Chingford Meadows, its new 104-home 'Build to Rent neighbourhood' in Bilborough, Nottingham. Once complete, the £28.5m development will mark Placefirst's first scheme in Nottingham and the second project delivered through the company's joint venture with Strata, which aims to deliver 500 single-family

rental homes across the UK by 2028.

Located in Bilborough, approximately 15 minutes from Nottingham city centre, Chingford Meadows has been designed as a "managed residential neighbourhood" specifically for long-term rental living. The completed development will comprise 104 family homes, including 70 three-bedroom houses and 34 four-bedroom houses.

The scheme reflects Placefirst's focus on delivering high-quality single-family rental housing in locations where demand is growing. All homes have been developed to a bespoke rental specification created jointly by Placefirst and Strata, incorporating spacious layouts, private gardens and modern design features. Chingford Meadows will be managed directly by Placefirst's in-house operations teams, providing residents with dedicated resident support and responsive maintenance services.

Sustainability has been a central component of the development. All homes incorporate PV solar panels, battery storage systems and electric vehicle charging infrastructure, helping to improve energy efficiency and reduce costs for residents. The homes have also been designed to support lower-carbon living while providing high-quality, future proofed family accommodation.

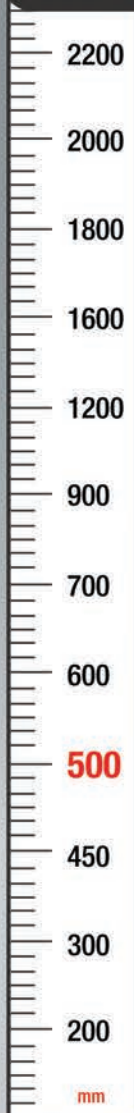
Placefirst said the completion "further establishes the company's presence in the Midlands and brings the total number of homes being delivered through the joint venture with Strata to 232, which is an important step towards our ambition of delivering 500 homes by 2028."





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Lib Dem Gideon Amos calls for SME exemption from planning permission



Lib Dem housing spokesperson Gideon Amos has suggested small builders should be exempted from requirements to gain planning permission for very small developments. He said SMEs should be able to put up a “couple of houses” without planning permission, and backed the Federation of Master Builders’ call for licensing for housebuilders, to “drive out cowboy builders.”

Amos, who is the Lib Dem spokesperson for housing and communities and MP for Tiverton and Wellington, made the comments in an interview featured on the Federation of Master Builders’ (FMB’s) podcast, *Build Up From the Basement*. He said that small builders should be “freed up altogether from requiring planning permission for a handful of homes,” said the FMB.

Mr Amos, who is a chartered architect and former town planner, said he was exploring plans to expand permitted development rights so small builders could construct a small number of

houses without going through the planning system at all, “in the same way homeowners can build an extension without permission.”

On licensing, the FMB said that its new research shows “rogue builders” have cost consumers “£14.3bn over the past five years, with the economy losing out on £11.2bn a year as one in five are put off doing domestic building work.” Amos also took aim at the Government’s skills system, revealing that more than £3bn of the apprenticeship levy was handed back to the Treasury unused between 2020 and 2023, and warning that 200,000 EU workers have left UK construction since 2019.

Commenting on why so few young people are choosing construction careers, with FMB research showing fewer than half of parents would recommend the industry to their child, Mr Amos said the sector needed to do more to show off the scale of the opportunity, pointing to major projects such as Hinkley Point and the

Agratas ‘gigafactory,’ a £4bn EV battery manufacturing facility under construction by Tata Group in Bridgwater, which is near to his constituency.

Amos also called for councils to be given more support to build social housing and unlock stalled sites, warning that simply issuing more planning permissions won’t fix the housing crisis while 13,000 approved homes in Somerset alone remain unbuilt.

30 affordable homes to be built by Owl Group in Worcestershire site



Site layout showing the 30 new affordable homes Owl Partnerships will deliver at Drakes Broughton, Worcestershire (Umaa Architecture)

Award-winning housebuilder, Owl Group has completed the purchase of a 3.74 acre parcel of land in Worcestershire for an undisclosed sum.

At Stonebow Road in Drakes Broughton, Owl Partnerships, Owl Group’s affordable housing business, will deliver 30 brand new affordable homes. Detailed planning consent has already been secured for the site on the village’s northern edge and includes a mix of one- to four-bedroom homes, private parking, and new landscaping.

Homes at Drakes Broughton comprise six different designs, including some with striking dual aspect views. The development will include the retention of green corridors along the northern and western boundaries, along with extensive new trees and planting.

Reliable heating controls built for the long-term demands of social housing



For housing associations and local authorities, maintaining existing heating systems can be a tricky balancing act. Budgets remain ever-tightening, housing stock is continuing to age, and expectations around energy efficiency and tenant comfort are only increasing. As a result, selecting heating controls that are robust, easy to maintain and designed to deliver reliable performance over many years has never been more important.

Manufactured in the UK, Drayton has spent decades developing heating control solutions that meet the practical needs of installers, maintenance teams and housing providers alike. Its range of motorised valves and thermostatic radiator valves (TRVs) is designed to simplify servicing, minimise disruption and help ensure heating systems continue performing efficiently throughout their lifespan.

MAKING MAINTENANCE SIMPLER

Within social housing, planned maintenance and component replacement are far more common than complete heating system upgrades. That's why ease of installation and servicing plays such a vital role in reducing both costs and downtime.

Drayton's motorised valves are available in both 2-port and 3-port versions, with 22mm and 28mm options to suit the heating systems that are most commonly installed across UK housing stock. Designed around industry-standard dimensions and wiring configurations, they enable straightforward replacement of existing valves, allowing engineers to complete work efficiently while limiting disruption for residents.

Every valve is also individually tested before leaving the production line, ensuring consistent quality and dependable performance in the field. This commitment to manufacturing excellence has helped Drayton establish a strong reputation among installers, reflected in its excellent customer satisfaction ratings.

Future maintenance is equally

straightforward thanks to snap-on actuator technology, which allows actuators to be replaced without draining the entire heating system. This not only reduces labour time but also helps keep properties heated while maintenance is carried out, benefiting both landlords and tenants.

IMPROVING COMFORT WHILE SUPPORTING ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Giving residents greater control over their heating is one of the simplest ways to improve comfort while reducing unnecessary energy consumption. Thermostatic radiator valves enable individual room temperature control, allowing occupants to heat spaces according to how they are used.

Drayton's RT212 and RT414 valves have been developed with the needs of social housing front of mind. Fully compliant with BS EN 215, both models use liquid sensing technology to deliver accurate temperature regulation, helping maintain consistent comfort levels throughout the home.

Range-limiting functionality also allows landlords to set minimum and maximum operating temperatures where required, preventing excessive heating while ensuring properties remain comfortable and safe for occupants.

Where additional durability is needed, the RT414 offers further benefits through non-stick internal components that help reduce limescale build-up. By lowering the risk of valves sticking after prolonged periods of inactivity, housing providers can reduce maintenance call-outs and extend product life.

A TRUSTED SOLUTION WITH PROVEN EFFICIENCY

For more than three decades, Drayton's TRV4 has been a familiar product for heating engineers across the UK. Available in Classic and White – both of which have a Class 1 rating from

the European Valve Manufacturers Association – alongside Chrome and Anthracite finishes, it combines reliable performance with one of the highest efficiency ratings available, achieving a Class 1 rating from the European Valve Manufacturers Association.

Designed for long-term reliability, the TRV4 incorporates non-stick internals, double gland seals to minimise the potential for leaks and a top-seal arrangement that enables servicing without draining the heating system, making ongoing maintenance faster and more cost-effective.

PERMANENT BALANCING FOR BETTER SYSTEM PERFORMANCE

Available on selected TRV4 and RT414 models, Drayton's permanent auto-balancing technology helps heating systems operate more efficiently by automatically regulating water flow to individual radiators.

Unlike manual balancing, which can drift over time, the technology continually maintains optimum flow rates throughout the life of the system. The result is more even heat distribution, fewer hot and cold spots, improved boiler performance and reduced commissioning time.

Independent testing has shown average energy savings of 8.8%, helping housing providers reduce running costs while improving comfort for residents and minimising future maintenance requirements.

Supported by UK manufacturing and technical expertise from its Plymouth headquarters, Drayton continues to provide housing associations and local authorities with dependable heating control solutions designed to simplify maintenance, improve efficiency and deliver reliable performance for years to come.

To find out more about Drayton's range of heating controls, please visit the website.

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David Churchill
partner, Carter Jonas

COMMENT

Taking lessons from the old to inspire the new

David Churchill discusses what the right strategic framework should look like for the Government's 'new' new towns.

© Jay Mullings



In March the Government named the locations for consideration as new towns, as part of the most ambitious housebuilding programme in more than half a century.

The concept of the 'new town' has always been an ambitious expression of the state's power to shape growth. Post-war, it was a necessity: a means of tackling population displacement, overcrowding and poor housing by creating self-sufficient places from scratch. Today, the drivers are different – and arguably more complex – but the need for bold interventions is no less pressing.

In the local authorities in which the new towns are to be located, the announcement will inevitably generate headlines – and familiar resistance. But to move the debate forward, we need to focus not on whether we should build new towns, but how.

History tells us that the new towns that flourished were those built with the right strategic frameworks. This means land assembly and delivery structures that give confidence to investors and clarity to

communities. It means a robust planning system that balances local involvement with regional oversight. And above all, it means long-term political commitment. Without these fundamentals, new towns will remain little more than slogans.

WHY NEW TOWNS MATTER AGAIN

England's first wave of new towns began in the 1940s and spanned three decades. In total, 21 settlements were delivered – from Harlow and Hemel Hempstead to Milton Keynes – housing more than 2.5 million people today. They remain one of the most successful planning experiments of the 20th century.

But attempts to replicate that success in recent decades have largely failed. The Urban Development Corporations of the 1980s were effective in regenerating parts of our inner cities, but they were never intended to build new places at scale. More recent initiatives, specifically Eco Towns and Garden Villages, have lacked the powers, scale or political support to succeed.

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The Government's renewed appetite for new towns is welcome. But this cannot be a rebranding of past programmes. It requires serious commitment to strategic delivery and a long-term vision rooted in the reality of land, infrastructure and politics.

THE CRITICAL ROLE OF DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS

At the heart of the post-war success story were the Development Corporations. Backed by the 1946 New Towns Act, they had far-reaching powers to assemble land, grant planning consent, deliver infrastructure and manage delivery. Importantly, they operated outside traditional local government boundaries – freeing them from some of the short term political pressures that hamper major development today.

The 2023 Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act revives and updates these powers. Local and combined authorities can now create locally-led Development Corporations, supported by land assembly tools such as Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs), Development Consent Orders (DCOs) and Special Development Orders (SDOs). These are not panaceas – but they provide the institutional backbone needed to move from vision to delivery.

Where there is a clear delivery vehicle, private sector confidence follows. Development Corporations offer that clarity. Without them, new towns are more likely to falter at the planning stage or drift into piecemeal development.

LAND ASSEMBLY & THE IMPORTANCE OF SCALE

No single challenge looms larger than land. Sites must be large enough to support significant growth – the New Towns Task Force proposes a minimum of 10,000 homes – yet few such sites are available without intervention. Land assembly is difficult, slow and

often contested. But to create proper communities with schools, employment, healthcare and transport, a minimum threshold of scale is essential.

England's post-war new towns average populations of over 120,000 – 10 times the minimum size of the current Government's ambitions. That scale underpinned the delivery of major infrastructure and real placemaking. Smaller settlements often struggle to achieve that, and risk becoming dormitory extensions rather than new towns in any meaningful sense.

Scale also supports long-term economic growth. Properly planned, new towns can diversify regional employment patterns, attract investment and improve productivity – but only if planned alongside infrastructure, not after it.

THE CASE FOR STRATEGIC AUTHORITIES

To underpin this approach, a stronger strategic planning framework is required. The abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies in 2010 created a vacuum in strategic coordination. Since then, local plans have been the primary means of planning for growth – but localism alone cannot resolve the cross-boundary issues that new towns entail.

The 2024 English Devolution White Paper, now embodied in the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act, proposes 33 new single-tier strategic authorities, each with a population of at least 500,000 and responsibility for housing, transport and infrastructure. These new authorities have the potential to rebalance the planning system – offering a more democratic alternative to regional planning, but one capable of thinking at the scale required for new towns.

MANAGING POLITICAL RISK

Delivering a new town takes decades. The original Development Corporations had average lifespans of 25-40 years.

Against that backdrop, the suggestion that homes could be delivered on new town sites by 2029 looks overly optimistic.

Instead, we need to think in terms of phases. Some smaller settlements could come forward more quickly, helping to address short-term need. But the bigger new towns will require sustained political commitment over multiple parliaments. That means putting in place structures that endure and resisting the temptation to tinker with the framework at every spending review or reshuffle.

Private sector partners will only invest in long-term projects if they believe the strategic direction is fixed. Certainty is just as important as speed.

CONCLUSION

New towns are not a quick fix to the housing crisis. But done right, they are a powerful part of the solution. That means building at scale, in the right locations, with the right planning and delivery structures in place.

Development Corporations should play a central role, supported by the new strategic authorities and empowered by modern planning tools. Land assembly must be treated as a priority, with access to DCOs, SDOs and CPOs where necessary. And political leaders must show the long-term commitment required to turn these plans into places.

Crucially, new towns must be just one part of a wider strategy. Alongside them, we need sustained investment in urban regeneration, densification and strategic urban extensions.

The announcement of the potential locations of the first seven new towns marks a welcome shift in ambition. But it is the strategic framework behind them that will determine whether they succeed. History has shown us how to do it and how not to do it: we have much to learn from.

David Churchill is a partner at Carter Jonas



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Michael Holloway
is a director at Urbana

THERE IS A
WIDENING
GAP BETWEEN
POLICY AND
WHAT CAN BE
REALISTICALLY
DELIVERED

COMMENT

The industry needs deliverability, not just ambition

Michael Holloway of planning and development consultancy Urbana makes the case for a more pragmatic approach from everyone involved in housing development – from the Government down.



The UK's housing shortage is well documented. Demand continues to outstrip supply, local authorities face increasing pressure to meet housing targets, and few would dispute the need for significantly more homes across the country.

Yet despite widespread recognition of this need, more residential developments than ever are struggling to progress from concept to construction.

It's increasingly evident that deliverability, rather than a shortage of sites or developer appetite, is the challenge we face.

A widening gap is emerging between what planning policy demands and what can realistically be delivered. That gap is now one of the most significant barriers to increasing housing supply and is affecting developments of every scale, from urban extensions to

town centre regeneration sites and smaller residential schemes.

A SUCCESSION OF CHALLENGES

For many housebuilders and developers, bringing forward new homes has become an increasingly difficult balancing act. The industry has absorbed successive challenges, including Brexit, the Covid-19 pandemic, supply chain disruption, inflationary pressures and global geopolitical instability over the past few years. The total impact has been a substantial increase in build costs and a more uncertain market environment.

The planning process has also become more complex and expensive. Planning application costs have been growing, with developers committing significant resources before there is any certainty around a positive outcome.

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Strategic sites can spend years going through the planning system, with delays increasing both risk and cost. By the time consent is secured, the market conditions on which the original viability assessment was based may have changed considerably.

Beyond this, Section 106 agreements and Community Infrastructure Levy contributions are placing growing demands on development. Investment in infrastructure and local services is essential, but there comes a point where cumulative obligations can undermine the very developments that are intended to deliver these wider benefits.

High rise residential development has been fundamentally reshaped by the introduction of the Building Safety Act. The industry's commitment to safer, higher-quality homes is unquestionable, but stricter compliance requirements, additional design considerations and gateway approvals have inevitably increased both programme lengths and development costs. These are challenges that developers must navigate long before construction begins.

LOWER PREDICTABILITY AFFECTS CONFIDENCE

Taken together, these factors are creating a development environment characterised by uncertainty, which is increasingly influencing funding decisions.

Lenders and investors continue to recognise residential property as an attractive investment, but their confidence is built on certainty. When planning outcomes, regulatory requirements,

delivery timescales and construction costs become harder to predict, risk appetites become dampened down by caution.

The impact is perhaps most visible in the affordable housing sector, where many schemes, particularly in London and the south east, are facing intense viability pressure. This is particularly frustrating because these locations remain the strongest housing markets in the country, with sustained demand and significant housing need. Many developments are being delayed, redesigned or, in some cases, not progressing at all.

We need to recognise that viability is the mechanism that determines whether homes get built. If housing targets are to translate into delivery, a more pragmatic approach is required from everyone involved in the development process.

THE VIABILITY CONVERSATION

Local authorities should be willing to engage openly on viability where market conditions have materially changed. Policy aspirations remain important, but they must be balanced against commercial reality. A development delivering fewer affordable homes than originally envisaged may still represent a positive outcome if the alternative is no development at all.

The principle is straightforward – 20% of something is better than 40% of nothing.

Similarly, a scheme that delivers 80% of its original ambition still provides much needed homes, creates employment, supports local economies and contributes to housing supply. Allowing sites to



remain stalled while stakeholders pursue perfection helps nobody.

Ambitious proposals are important, but viability assessments must reflect market realities rather than best-case scenarios. Robust business planning is becoming increasingly critical as market conditions remain uncertain.

PLANNING PROCESS RECOMMENDATIONS

Confidence within the planning process could also be improved. Dedicated officer resources for major housing sites and earlier engagement between planning authorities, consultees and applicants could help reduce delays and improve certainty. Even modest improvements in predictability can have a significant impact on viability and investment confidence.

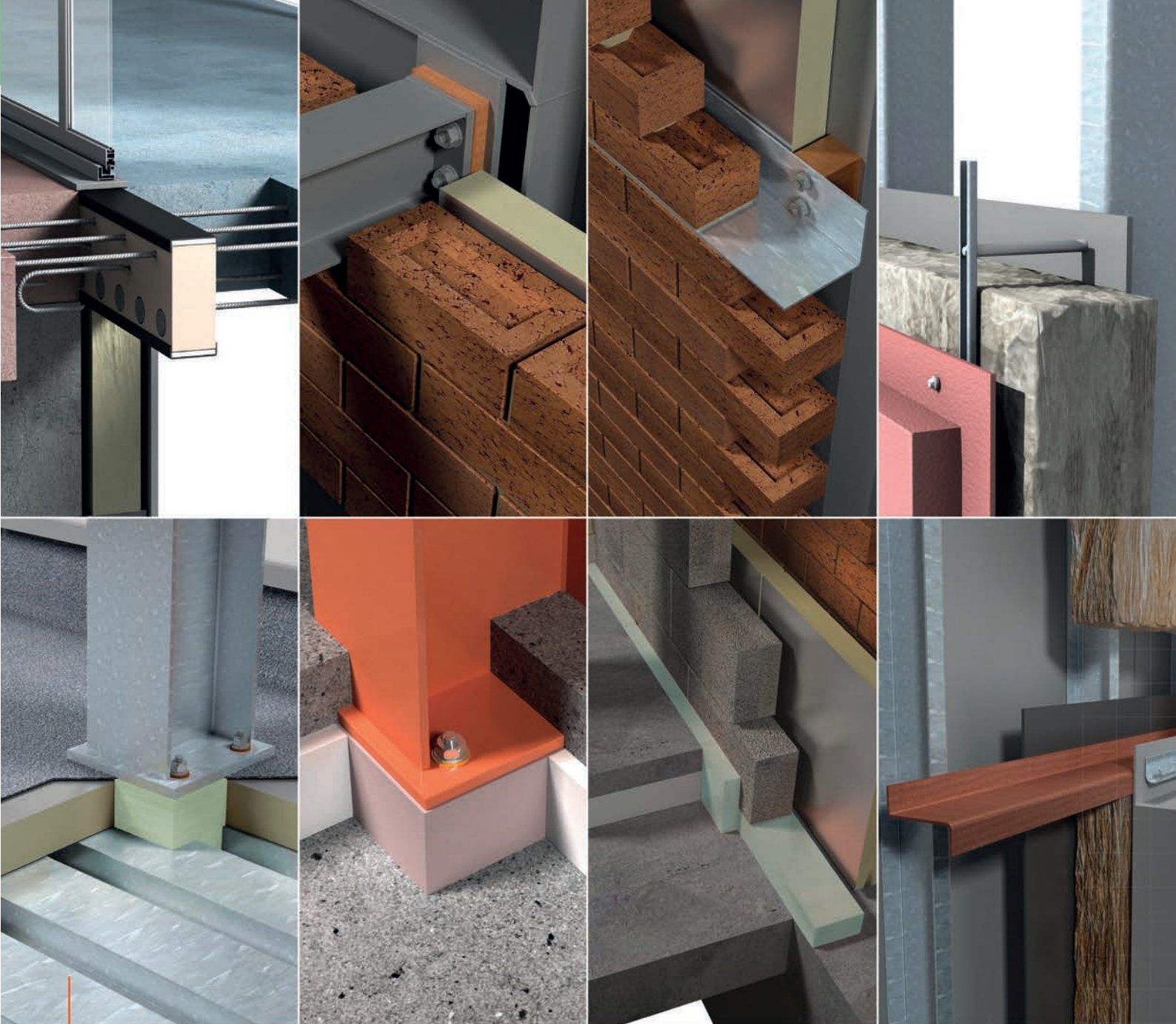
Ultimately, if the UK is serious about increasing housing delivery, the conversation must move beyond housing numbers alone and focus more on what is genuinely deliverable.

The country has housing demand and development opportunity. It just needs conditions that allow viable schemes to come forward and proceed to construction.

A more collaborative, realistic and delivery-focused approach would benefit the sector. Without it, we risk continuing to approve housing developments that never materialise, while the gap between housing need and housing delivery grows ever wider.

Michael Holloway is a director at Urbana

THE PRINCIPLE IS STRAIGHTFORWARD – 20% OF SOMETHING IS BETTER THAN 40% OF NOTHING



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LUXURY DEVELOPMENTS PROJECT REPORT

Pastures new

Working closely with architects, Q New Homes transformed a redundant dairy farm on the Kent/East Sussex border into a high spec, highly sustainable development, within strict constraints. Roseanne Field reports.

A development on a disused dairy farm littered with dilapidated buildings, within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, under a local authority with strict agricultural building reuse policies, was never going to be straightforward.

And yet developer (and main contractor) Q New Homes working with architects Nissen Richards Studio not only achieved it, but have built a development of nine homes that considerably surpass typical sustainability and specification standards.

The 40 acre site in the village of Cowden had been owned and used by several generations of the same family of dairy farmers, until the death of the last farmer in 2017 also saw its agricultural use cease. By this point many of the site's buildings – which included ageing dairy buildings, Dutch barns, sheds and lean-tos, accumulated incrementally over many decades – had already fallen into disrepair.

The site subsequently gradually fell into further disrepair, before Q New Homes – a London-based private developer founded in 2012 by brothers Damien and Michael Wynne – bought it with an existing planning consent in place for a residential scheme, granted in January 2021.

The developer appointed Nissen Richards Studio in May 2021 to replace the consented scheme with a “more ambitious architectural proposal,” explains Nissen Richards Studio director, Jim Richards. However, the development was also subject to Sevenoaks Council's strict planning policies regarding the reuse of agricultural buildings.

A COMPLICATED SITE

Any new homes on the site had to retain the existing structure of 10 of the buildings – nine former agricultural buildings and the farmhouse – while some of the smaller additional buildings could be demolished.



It was therefore essential that, while Nissen Richards Studio updated the planning consent to a more ambitious scheme, they also “retained the approved building footprints and agricultural forms,” Richards explains. Their revised scheme was submitted and approved in November 2021, ahead of an extended period of pre-commencement work that included archaeology, ecology and environmental investigations.

Planning consent included 25 conditions, of which 12 had to be discharged before works could commence, “covering archaeology, ecology, environmental matters and extensive ground investigations,” Richards says. “There was a considerable amount of work before construction could begin.”

The existing consent had already identified which buildings should be retained and that the smaller, newer buildings should be demolished, which Nissen Richards Studio decided to leave unchanged. “We agreed with the approach because the larger barns were the buildings that gave the farmstead its identity,” Richards says.

“By selectively removing secondary lean-tos and ancillary buildings we were able to open up a generous central courtyard, improve circulation across the site and reveal long views into the

surrounding Wealden landscape,” he adds. “Sometimes the most significant architectural intervention is deciding what not to keep.”

Serving as both developer and main contractor meant Q New Homes had a “high level of control throughout the construction process.” As well as leading the architectural design, Nissen Richards Studio coordinated the consultant team including structural, landscape, environmental, ecology and whole-life carbon specialists.

The number of homes remained unchanged from the original consent, which had been established based on what could “comfortably” be accommodated within the AONB and Green Belt setting. Creating quality homes was always the ambition, rather than squeezing as many units on to the site as possible. “The generous spacing between buildings, the relationship between architecture and landscape and the character of the original farmstead were all fundamental to the success of the project,” says Richards.

The homes range from three bedrooms up to six, with the largest approximately 6,500 ft². To avoid visual repetition, each property is unique in the way it responds to its “inherited form, orientation and surrounding landscape,” explains Richards.

NISSEN RICHARDS DEVELOPED THE EXISTING CONSENTED SCHEME INTO A “MORE AMBITIOUS ARCHITECTURAL PROPOSAL”



CHARACTER & HISTORY

From the outset of the project both Nissen Richards Studio and Q New Homes shared a vision to “retain the memory and character of the former farm while creating contemporary homes for modern living,” Richards says. “We wanted the new homes to evolve from the existing site. The project became an exercise in interpreting and extending the site’s agricultural history, creating contemporary architecture that remains firmly rooted in its landscape and past.”

While working with the confines of existing buildings was in some ways a challenge, the ad hoc jumble of buildings that had amassed on the site was also an exciting prospect for the practice. “What attracted us wasn’t simply the opportunity to redevelop redundant buildings, but the richness of the existing farmstead,” Richards says.

The existing planning consent “inevitably introduced constraints,” says Richards, “but they proved surprisingly productive.” With the approved footprints already agreed upon, and the requirement to preserve the agricultural building forms, the team were able to focus on rethinking how the internal layouts of the homes would work. They also looked at the exterior architecture, which is where most of the “visible” changes came about.

Original designs featured pale timber cladding, which Nissen Richards Studio opted to swap out for charred timber, dark brickwork and black standing seam zinc roofing, “creating a more contemporary yet contextual response,” Richards explains. “Internally, we reorganised the layouts to create generous vaulted living spaces, maximise natural daylight

and frame views across the surrounding Wealden landscape.” He also emphasises that these openings were only used where appropriate, and that “more restrained openings” were used where the building overlooks a shared space.

Richards describes the project as a “delicate high wire act,” in regards to the balancing the aims of retaining the agricultural forms, creating generous and inspiring living spaces, meeting high sustainability targets, and ultimately ensuring the buildings “remained rooted firmly in their landscape and history. In many ways those constraints made the architecture stronger.”

A MATERIAL IDEA OF LUXURY

The site was viewed by the team to be of such high quality that it “demanded an equally ambitious architectural response.” Both Q New Homes and Nissen Richards Studio wanted to demonstrate that modern rural housing could achieve not only high design standards but also high sustainability standards, but with each holding equal importance.

This shared ambition was a key driver in the project, with Damien Wynne of Q New Homes describing it as an aim to create homes with “their own special architectural moments,” demonstrating attention to detail and a “willingness to embrace design excellence,” adds Richards. “Having a client who genuinely valued architecture allowed us to push much further than would normally be possible on a speculative residential development.”

Rather than deciding to ‘add-on’ sustainability features to a luxury development, the two were deliberately

“WE AGREED, BECAUSE THE LARGER BARNs WERE THE BUILDINGS THAT GAVE THE FARMSTEAD ITS IDENTITY,” JIM RICHARDS, NISSEN RICHARDS STUDIO



integrated from the outset of the project. Richards indeed believes that the two aims naturally go hand in hand: “Better insulated buildings create more comfortable interiors, generous glazing brings exceptional natural light into the homes, and carefully selected materials provide longevity as well as beauty,” he explains.

The approach is well received by clients, he says, particularly in the south east. “There continues to be strong demand for homes that combine exceptional design with genuine sustainability – Hartdene Barns demonstrates that buyers increasingly value architectural quality, low running costs and a strong connection to place alongside more traditional measures of luxury.”

For Nissen Richards Studio, luxury is about more than just “expensive materials or finishes.” Richards explains that generosity of space, natural light and a meaningful connection with each home and its surroundings are “fundamental” to achieving the result. For this project, the character of the original buildings meant vaulted ceilings, “carefully framed” views across the surrounding landscape and open plan living spaces were almost natural. These coupled with other features such as full height Crittal-style glazed doors, bespoke staircases, crafted timber joinery, quartz worktops and detailed fireplaces create spaces that feel “refined without becoming overly formal,” says Richards.

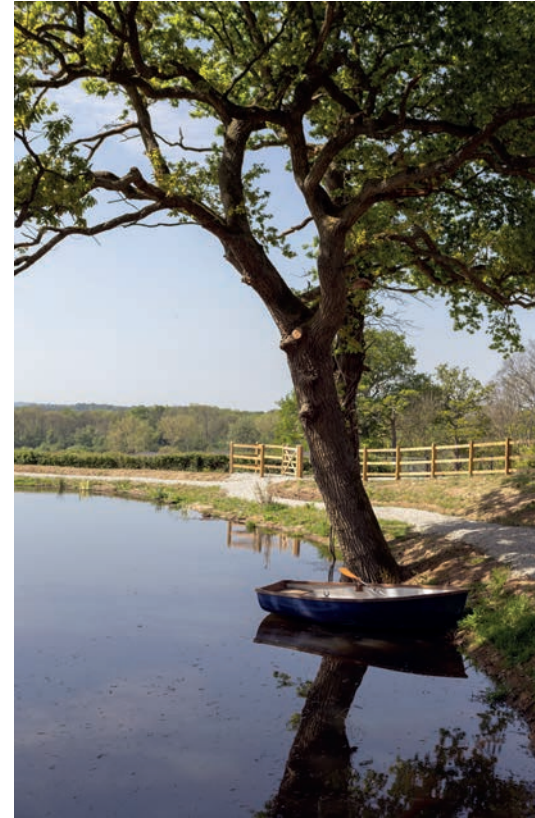
Playing an “important architectural role,” fireplaces help keep the desired open play layout while also creating more intimate living environments, as well as adding a luxury feel.

Inside the homes, materials are “deliberately restrained,” says Richards, to allow the light, views and proportions of the spaces to become the “defining features.” Elsewhere however, materials played an essential role in meeting the brief. “Every material was selected because it could satisfy several objectives simultaneously, such as reducing embodied carbon, improving operational performance and delivering high quality architecture,” he explains.

Structural insulated panels (SIPs) were chosen to form the basis of the construction thanks to their ability to create an extremely well-insulated and airtight building envelope, while also reducing embodied carbon by around 40% compared to masonry construction. The build quality, amount of waste and construction time onsite are also all improved by their prefabricated nature.

Wherever possible, the architects used glulam timber over steel, not only to again reduce embodied carbon, but also to “allow the structure to become part of the architectural expression of the interiors,” explains Richards. “Lightweight timber framing and offsite manufactured metal web joists further reduced material use while simplifying the installation of building services.”

Elsewhere, existing concrete from across the site was crushed and reused as hardcore, and any additional concrete required was low carbon. “This circular approach reduced waste and transportation impacts,” says Richards. “The greatest challenge wasn’t any individual material but ensuring that structural systems, sustainability targets, construction sequencing and commercial



**THE CONSTRAINTS OF
THE EXISTING SCHEME
“PROVED SURPRISINGLY
PRODUCTIVE,”
SAYS RICHARDS**



realities all worked together.”

Externally, materials were chosen to “reflect the robust character of agricultural buildings while expressing them through a contemporary architectural language,” explains Richards. “One of the themes we embraced throughout the project was that agricultural buildings are often more industrial than romantic; we wanted to celebrate that honesty rather than produce a nostalgic interpretation of rural architecture.”

A palette of black is used throughout the development, found in the anthracite zinc roofing, charred spruce cladding, dark brickwork and black powder-coated aluminium windows. It helps create a visual coherence while allowing each building to achieve its own identity through subtle differences in form and cladding pattern.

In particular, the charred timber “became a defining material for the development,” says Richards, reiterating the physical benefits of reducing movement, weathering and maintenance over the building’s lifetime. This means that while a larger investment upfront, it’s longevity makes it the more sustainable choice in the long term. Balancing longevity and the robustness required to sit within the agricultural setting with the “quality and refinement expected of a contemporary luxury development” was “the greatest challenge,” says Richards.

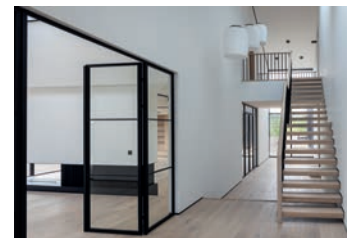
TACKLING THE RIBA CLIMATE CHALLENGE

Hartdene Barns is Nissen Richards Studio’s first project to adopt the RIBA Climate Challenge – a set of targets set by RIBA in relation to operational energy, embodied carbon, potable water use and health and wellbeing. Their shared ambition with Q New Homes to prove low carbon housing can be delivered without compromising on architectural quality and commercial viability meant this was the perfect opportunity to “test how far we could push environmental performance within a live residential development,” Richards explains.

This began with the fabric first approach taken, focusing on reducing the homes’ energy demand through the use of SIPs, “exceptional” airtightness, and eliminating thermal bridging. Embodied carbon was reduced through the construction material choices and recycling of materials onsite. Building services and renewable technologies were then used to meet the remaining requirements.

Every home includes air source heat pumps, solar PV panels, battery storage, MVHR, EV charging points and “high performance” glazing, which has resulted in operational net zero performance and EPC A ratings.

“Working to the RIBA Climate Challenge was both rewarding and demanding because it required us to consider operational and embodied carbon



together, rather than treating them as separate issues,” explains Richards. “It fundamentally changed the way we approached design, procurement and collaboration across the consultant team.”

While Richards believes there has historically been a perception that sustainability involves compromise for occupants, he says the architects are finding that to be increasingly challenged by projects. He cites the facts that better insulated homes are quieter, healthier and more comfortable, better daylight improves wellbeing, durable materials age more “gracefully,” and lower running costs providing lasting values for homeowners.

“The challenge isn’t balancing luxury against sustainability,” he says. “It’s integrating both ambitions from the very beginning of the design process. When sustainability becomes an inherent part of the architecture rather than something added later, the two reinforce one another remarkably well.” While he acknowledges that the initial cost can be higher, he believes the lower operational costs, durability and overall improved performance repays that cost.

The team felt it important that independent validation was sought for their sustainability efforts. Whole life carbon assessor Darren Evans concluded the development performs 10-15 years ahead of most new build housing in the UK in terms of its whole life carbon

performance, describing them as “among the most environmentally friendly houses in the UK.” For Richards and the project team, it was confirmation that they’d made the right choices: “It provided real evidence that the design decisions we had made were delivering measurable environmental benefits,” he says.

That’s not to say they don’t believe there’s room for improvement on future projects. Hartdene Barns successfully met the RIBA 2025 potable water targets “through careful specification of fittings and appliances” but to meet the more ambitious 2030 targets certain elements – such as rainwater harvesting and site-wide water recycling – will, says Richards, need to be factored much earlier in the design process. “Those lessons are already informing how we approach subsequent projects,” he says.

Richards believes that the housebuilding industry as a whole can be “more ambitious” when it comes to high end, sustainable homes. While he acknowledges that a single approach will never work, due to each site’s unique planning, commercial and environmental constraints, he says that Hartdene Barns proves that architectural quality and environmental performance don’t have to “compete.” He adds that with the right team, it’s “entirely possible” to create desirable, environmentally responsible and commercially successful homes.



“The biggest lesson from the project is that sustainability shouldn’t be viewed as an additional requirement or marketing feature,” Richards adds. “It should be embedded within the design process from the very beginning. When that’s the case, it improves every aspect of a development.”

LANDSCAPING AS ARCHITECTURE

Richards explains that the landscaping of the development was another element “considered an integral part of the architecture” as opposed to an add-on. Given the site’s location within an AONB near the Ashdown Forest, the landscaping needed to “respect and enhance” the existing local ecology.

Native planting was used to not only support but strengthen biodiversity across the site. Each home has a private garden and its own allotment, and elsewhere a large balancing pond – formed from a World War II bomb crater – enhances the site’s “unique character and ecological value.”

Removing some of the later agricultural buildings allowed for the original courtyard arrangement to be re-established. “Overall the landscape strategy reinforces the relationship between the homes and their setting, creating a development that feels embedded within the landscape rather than imposed upon it,” Richards says.

Construction on the project progressed well, beginning in September 2022 and completing in April 2026. The challenges with this project were not with the construction itself, says Richards, but rather balancing the ambitious objectives with the “practical realities of construction and constraints of the existing planning consent.”

“Much of the learning centred around material selection, construction sequencing and ensuring that sustainability objectives

were considered throughout the procurement as well as design,” he adds. “Meeting the RIBA Climate Challenge also required us to think beyond operational energy and consider the whole-life impact of every design decision.”

Collaboration was key to ensure the complex targets were met. But rather than viewing the challenges as ‘obstacles’, the team saw them as “opportunities to develop new knowledge that has informed subsequent products,” says Richards.

The response to the project, says Richards, has been “extremely encouraging,” generating “significant interest” not just from the public but also within the industry, particularly in regards to how it combines design quality with measurable environmental performance. “It demonstrates an alternative approach to rural housing, one that respects agricultural heritage without resorting to pastiche,” he explains.

“The forms and silhouettes of the original dairy buildings give the development a strong sense of place and a tangible connection to its past, while their contemporary reinterpretation provides buyers with homes that are future-ready, low carbon and uncompromising in terms of design quality,” he adds. It’s this absence of compromise that he believes has garnered the positive response – and that makes the whole project team immensely proud of what they’ve achieved.

The whole project team are immensely proud of what they’ve achieved with Hartdene Barns – and what it shows is doable. “The most rewarding outcome is that Hartdene Barns challenges the idea that sustainability and luxury are opposing ambitions,” Richards concludes. “I hope more developers will see projects like Hartdene Barns as evidence that sustainability and luxury are not opposing ambitions, but complementary ones.” ■



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Freefoam Building Products EPD's enable transparent product specification

Three new Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) are announced for PVC rainwater systems and PVC & U-PVC roofline products.

Freefoam Building Products are delighted to announce the release of three Environmental Product Declaration's. Summary documents of the full EPD's are now available covering PVC Downpipes, PVC Gutter and PVC Fascia, Soffit and Window Trim ranges, giving the trade clear, concise access to verified environmental performance information for key roofline and rainwater products.

Aidan Harte, CEO, commented "We're delighted to announce the availability of these 3 EPD's. Our teams have worked hard over the last 12 months alongside external assessors to measure, calculate and produce this information. It's been a long process but vital as our industry works towards the transition

towards a net-zero future."

Three new summary documents are now available online containing key information and high-level data designed to give clear concise information to help building product distributors, installers, housebuilders, specifiers and contractors respond to the growing need for transparent sustainability data across the construction supply chain.

Each document presents key assessment results for 1kg of product. These summarise product cradle-to-gate carbon footprint data, along with embodied carbon footprint data for the entire lifecycle of the product. Additional information on programme operator details, standards followed and the manufacturing scope are covered in each of the summary documents.

The products are manufactured in the United Kingdom and assessed using 2024 production data, with the declarations following ISO 14025:2006 and EN 15804:2012+A2:2019/AC:2021.

For Freefoam customers, the release provides an accessible route to product-level environmental information that can support specification decisions, tender responses and conversations around lower-carbon construction. The documents summarise Global Warming Potential and embodied carbon values for declared units of 1kg, helping the trade



compare product categories using consistent assessment boundaries.

The summaries also set out the lifecycle modules covered, including raw materials, raw material transport to factory, manufacture, transport to site, construction, building use and maintenance, and end-of-life stages such as demolition, waste transport, recycling and disposal.

Kevin Cronin, Chief Operating Officer summarised: "The publication of these EPD summary documents is an important step in giving our customers practical, transparent information about the environmental performance of our products. Stockists, installers, housebuilders and specifiers are increasingly being asked for clear product data, and these summaries make that information easy to access."

The full Environmental Product Declarations are available through The International EPD System, with additional product information available from Freefoam Building Products.

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Altecnic release new 2026/2027 General Product Guide

Altecnic Ltd, a leading supplier of hydronic solutions, has launched its new 2026/27 General Product Guide, introducing over 130 new products alongside an expanded heat pump section showcasing solutions designed to support the energy transition.

The latest edition features several new and updated product ranges across water quality, pressure management, heat pumps, and system protection, helping installers and specifiers meet the demands of modern building services.

One of the key additions is Altecnic's range of Unvented Cylinder Spare Components, including inlet control groups and safety relief valves. Designed to support the servicing and maintenance of unvented hot water systems, the inlet control groups combine pressure reducing valves, check valves, and safety relief valve functions into a single assembly.

Also making its debut in the guide is the Caleffi Series 551 Degasser. Using vacuum degassing technology, the Series 551 continuously removes dissolved gases from heating and cooling systems before they can form air pockets. By helping maintain virtually gas-free water, the unit can improve circulation, reduce corrosion, minimise noise, and support long-term system efficiency.

The guide also features the updated iStop® High Temperature Anti-Freeze Valve range. Designed to provide passive freeze protection for heat pump installations, the latest generation of iStop® valves now offers



an operating temperature range of 0°C to 90°C, providing greater flexibility across a wider range of applications whilst continuing to protect systems from freeze-related damage.

Further additions include seven new models within the Series BV Buffer Vessel range. Designed specifically for heat pump applications, the newly added compact vessels help increase system water content, improve hydraulic stability, and support efficient system operation. They are available in 2500 – 8000 litre capacities – making them ideal for use where space is limited.

Another notable launch is the Series 5771 FILTERSTOP, an innovative 3-in-1 solution combining filtration, isolation, and maintenance functionality within a single compact unit.

Featuring a high-performance 160 µm filter and front-access service, FILTERSTOP has been designed to help installers save time, space, and installation costs whilst protecting modern heating systems.

Available in both digital and print formats, the new Product Guide has been proudly produced in the United Kingdom by a certified Carbon Balanced print partner under the World Land Trust Organisation. This means the production process, transport, and all materials used are fully carbon balanced.

Gary Perry, Managing Director at Altecnic, commented: "At Altecnic, we are dedicated to innovation and customer satisfaction. Our 2026/27 General Product Guide reflects our ongoing commitment to providing cutting-edge solutions that address the dynamic needs of our industry and support the energy transition. With the addition of over 130 new products designed to meet the needs of our customers, coupled with our industry-leading product support and knowledge-sharing resources, Altecnic continues to be the partner of choice for hydronic solutions."

To order a hard-copy version of the 2026/27 General Product Guide, please email sales@altecnic.co.uk or contact your local Area Sales Manager.

The digital guide can be accessed online at: <https://online.fliphtml5.com/rwime/gxiq/>

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**BUILDING
INSIGHTS**
LIVE



Round table chair, HBD editor James Parker

Embodied Carbon Counts: The Transformational Power of the Net Zero Carbon Buildings Standard & Part Z

A Building Insights LIVE round table we held in London recently saw sustainable design advocates come together to explore the potential for embodied carbon to be raised up the industry's priorities list, despite a range of competing factors. The Future Homes Standard conspicuously ignored embodied carbon, and cost allied to delivery at scale being overwhelming challenges. But how can limiting or at least measuring it upfront in projects – arguably the missing link to achieving true sustainability – be brought into mainstream practice?

The event was sponsored by precast manufacturer Milbank Concrete Products, which has a long-established culture of transparent embodied carbon reporting, given the inherent carbon challenges of concrete, and in a context of a persistent lack of any regulatory requirements. However, we discovered that the comprehensive, data-rich and multi-agency-backed Net Zero Carbon Buildings Standard was beginning to get a foothold in the construction sector. It was helping to focus minds onto at least the importance of upfront embodied carbon, but also whole-life costs,

MILBANK
CONCRETE PRODUCTS



HARNESSING INVESTOR CLIMATE GOALS

Will Arnold said that his key motivator as author of the Net Zero Carbon Buildings Standard was to “bring consistency around a green building definition” for investors

ATTENDEES

Will Arnold, Head, Sustainable Materials, Useful Simple Trust
Kirsty Girvan, Senior Policy Advisor, UKGBC
Tim den Dekker, Associate, Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios
Stephanie Baker, Sustainability Consultant, SEES (Sadler Energy & Environmental Services)
Ewan Duffin, Associate Director, Harley Haddow
Simon Sturgis, Founder, Targeting Zero & Chair, RIBA Sustainability Futures Group
Ivan Jovanovic, Director, Sustainability & Environmental Design, Atelier Ten
Simon Wyatt, Partner, Sustainability, Cundall
Ellen Willis, Head of Sustainability, Chetwoods
Diego Padilla-Philipps, Director of Decarbonisation, WSP

SPONSORS' ATTENDEES

Lee Cowen, Managing Director, Milbank Concrete Products

as well as the already foregrounded operational carbon reductions. The hoped-for amendment to the Building Regulations that is Part Z – an industry-led regulation that would explicitly govern embodied carbon (albeit only for schemes above 1000 m² or over 10 homes), remains in the wilderness. But the NZCBS, on which Part Z is based, is out, and beginning to alter the landscape.

Our meeting was crucial, however, to not only raise awareness of the need to consider embodied carbon as part of sustainability drivers in projects, but also to identify how it is being sidelined currently in procurement. Among our multi-disciplinary group we were pleased to have embodied carbon trailblazer Will Arnold, now of non-profit group Useful Simple Trust, who was the lead author of Part Z working with Government, and architect Simon Sturgis, who advised the Government's Environmental Audit Committee on whole-life carbon assessment in 2022.

There was consensus that the industry could not drive such innovations into the mainstream without strong regulation, despite recent industry initiatives (such as NZCBS, and RICS' whole life carbon assessment tools). Whole-life carbon assessment encompasses both upfront and operational carbon, but perhaps more than in any other area of projects, early stage involvement of the supply chain is the only way to ensure the embodied portion is not an afterthought at best.

The bottom line is that there has been scant progress on reducing embodied carbon in construction since Covid. UKGBC, represented by Kirsty Girvan, estimates that it has only dropped a paltry 4% since 2018, so how can the industry be incentivised to do better, and do we wait for regulation at our peril?

The Industry's Embedded Embodied Challenge

Tim den Dekker of Stirling Prize-winning practice Feilden Clegg Bradley opened his comments by saying decisively that mandating embodied carbon was “not something that the markets can sort out; it needs government to set the lead, otherwise we're not going to get embodied carbon down.”

He addressed the issue of potential unintended consequences from a shift to focusing on embodied carbon, and that there's an “assumption that those consequences will be negative,” adding: “I think there will be a lot of positive unintended consequences.”

Ven Dekker wanted to “dispel this myth that it's really hard to do a good embodied carbon assessment,” but said that it was about not “wanting everything all at once,” but proceeding in incremental steps: “let's focus on the easy bits first.”

Will Arnold characterised a mixed picture in the wider context of both increasing resistance to net zero as a goal, but also increasing uptake of embodied carbon reduction. He said the politicisation of net zero by populist parties had made it “way harder than it was three or four years ago,” however also that he saw clients “who want to act being more able to do so because of things like the NZCBS standard. Arnold said he was concerned that mainstream projects were being held back by the “wider rhetoric,” although it's “easier than ever to do [embodied carbon reduction].”

He concluded that developers were having to justify pushing the agenda on the basis of being “lower cost, lower risk, all these other metrics, they can't justify it on being lower carbon.” Arnold cited one client that “was entirely justifying it around supply chain resilience – alternative cements that they don't have to import, because of the global situation.”

Our round table found that, as ever, capital cost is the most pervasive issue, with a downturn in the housing market having unfortunately hampered the case for investing in mainstream sustainability benefits, with speakers citing a lack of demand among consumers for higher sustainability homes. But Simon Wyatt of Cundall said that in certain sectors of the residential market,



ADVOCATING FOR GROWING CARBON LITERACY

With UKGBC reporting a poor level of embodied carbon reduction in the sector, Kirsty Girvan said that increasing 'carbon literacy' in construction was vital

clients at the higher end of urban residential tend to be powered by investors who are "driven by things like Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation in Europe," with the EU having its own requirements on carbon assessment of projects.

Will Arnold said that in writing the Net Zero Carbon Buildings Standard, the key motivator was to "bring consistency" around a definition of a "green building" for financial institutes to validate their investment. He said it "makes it far easier for a major bank to pay its green loans," whereas until now, the financial lever "[hasn't been] working."

Whole Life Assessment & EPDs

Will Arnold called for a Ministerial Statement "setting out a timeline for introducing embodied carbon reporting, as a minimum." He suggested this could be restricted to "products over a certain size," and it would give the signal the market needs, supporting all of the existing reporting initiatives, including AI-based. Simon Sturgis agreed, but added that Ministers should tackle "whole life carbon reporting, because to make a good design decision you need to understand the upfront, in-use embodied, and the energy use." Stephanie Baker of consultant SEES added that whole life carbon assessment from cradle to grave and back around again, needs to be more in the forefront.

Arnold said early engagement with the supply chain was needed in order to thrash out embodied carbon data, and den Dekker explained how Feilden Clegg Bradley's carbon tool was now regularly used on projects – by 9,000 users. Diego Padilla-Philipps said however that UK designers needed to be incentivised to reduce embodied carbon, as in other markets.

Environmental Product Declarations should be standardised, as well as mandated, to harness their potential to drive reporting and reduction of embodied carbon. Ivan Jovanovich of Atelier Ten said Government had missed a trick, and that it should have demanded EPDs were "supplied for any product going into public buildings."

Lee Cowen said standardised EPDs could tackle the varied challenges in reporting embodied carbon in products. "Industry bodies produce generic EPDs for certain components that cover 40 or 50 suppliers that are bringing material in from all over the globe." He stressed firms such as Milbank were "often brought in too late to influence what we can do to reduce cement or steel."

Carbon literacy & the knowledge gap

Sustainability specialist architect Ellen Willis said that a lack of early engagement fed into the industry's poor record on selling its benefits,

but also missed potential cost savings. She stressed it was important "not to underestimate the knowledge gap we have in the industry." She said that increasing "baseline climate literacy" needed to be the focus, alongside consistent reporting across the industry, supporting this aim.

The knowledge gap extended to architects, said Simon Sturgis, and we needed to "develop carbon intuition" as a long-term strategy. "The numbers don't really matter, you need people to do good things, and for carbon to just be like gravity or sunlight, just part of 'what you do' as an architect."

Kirsty Girvan acknowledged this knowledge gap around what carbon reporting means in practice, and said it is actually amplified by the fact there's "lots of data out there." She said that feedback from Government around Part Z was that "they're just not sure because they're nervous; not just in terms of how to engage with the supply chain, but how to understand that data."

Girvan said the "pushback" to Government should be that the sector propose to them "that if you implement parts, Tier 1 contractors for example will take it upon themselves to make sure that that is scaled up." She added that the explanations required on data to increase that literacy "did not need to be complicated; it's not lots of new training programmes, it's literally 'this is what this means,' similar to an EPC."

Stephanie Baker of consultant SEES said that designers were "asked to collect EPDs in BREEAM projects," but "that doesn't necessarily guarantee that anyone's actually looking at them, and that anyone's actually using that process to make decisions that impact the design and ultimately reduce carbon." However, she said "it doesn't necessarily matter where you start, I think it's important to just start."

Cundall's Simon Wyatt said that most contractors "sign up to embodied carbon targets for the entire building – it's how you break that down into the sub-packages."

Delegates highlighted the need to engage all disciplines in embodied carbon reporting, but also the challenges here. The chair James Parker cited product data directory NBS' reported comments around the issues caused by sets of embodied carbon data being supplied in a piecemeal and inconsistent way by manufacturers, and the firm's calls for a unified framework.

Lee Cowen said the concrete sector's trade body had "worked with members to pull together information," to provide a "generic EPD," but added that the credibility of this "comes back to what is the real truth of what is being delivered by the 40 or 50 members of the trade body, based on their supply chain." He said that the Government should "take on board some kind of mandate around how reporting and EPDs are produced, and then hold the manufacturers to account."

Solutions

The group shared ideas on how industry could collaborate in order to both increase 'carbon literacy' inside and outside the sector, stimulating consumer demand, but also adopt certain proven carbon measurement routes. One was the 'taxonomy' approach of certifying all building elements on carbon emissions, which the EU has mandated (and which is backed by Simon Wyatt for one).

Event sponsor Lee Cowen asked how early in projects choices on



GOVERNMENT NEEDS TO LEAD

Architect Tim den Dekker said that mandating embodied carbon “was not something the markets can sort out; it needs Government to set the lead”

materials should be made “to have meaningful impact.” He said currently, such decisions could be left until a very late stage, and embodied carbon might not feature at all. Diego Padilla-Phillips cautioned that the need for pre-stressed concrete meant higher strength precast concrete mixes in many projects, and Cowen once more highlighted “early engagement,” as the method to identify the ways to achieve performance while minimising emissions, but asserted “it doesn’t happen.” Ewan Duffin emphasised that early stage design thinking could for example reduce a column grid, and “reduce concrete usage by 30%” on projects.

Simon Sturgis advocated the ‘stick’ approach of a “mechanism [requiring developers] to report their square metre carbon rate, in the same way cars and flights do. If people are required to report, it will start the process where people then start comparing to things like the NZCBS, but also becomes a competitive issue.” He accepted Simon Wyatt’s assertion that EPCs “haven’t driven competition,” but said they were “absurdly inaccurate.”

WSP’s Padilla-Phillips mentioned a “simplified calculator” the firm developed with the Future Homes Hub, to “access our data for different wall build-ups,” rather than having to “calculate every single level from scratch.” Simon Wyatt that working with LETI and the GLA had shown Cundall the benefits of “breaking down carbon budgets into specific disciplines like structural engineers, facades, MEP; where everyone knows their targets.” He added: “It’s how you optimise every single area, because you could have two buildings on two completely different foundations.”

Simon Sturgis concluded: “What I come across time and again is people wanting quick answers, and that is quite often based on preconceptions. So, for example, the classic preconception is that concrete is bad, timber is good, but the concrete industry is making huge efforts to improve the performance of concrete.”

Incentives & scale

Attendees generally stressed the need for strong regulation first on embodied carbon to force a pivot in the sector, but also a range of other possible incentives for embodied carbon reporting and minimisation. These included taxing virgin materials, and dropping VAT on other materials with low embodied carbon. Government-backed loans were another incentive (mooted by Ewan Duffin) to drive low carbon residential construction.

Several speakers at the round table noted that reporting embodied carbon on individual existing dwellings of different sizes and nature within overall developments was challenging – however she warned against over-simplifying data reporting to counter this, if it risked

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INDUSTRY & GOVERNMENT

- **Ivan Jovanovich, Atelier Ten:** Treat it as an opportunity, and tax virgin materials.
- **Will Arnold, Useful Simple Trust:** A Ministerial statement setting out a timeline for embodied carbon reporting.
- **Kirsty Girvan, UKGBC:** If housebuilders are a barrier, let’s look at the commercial sector.
- **Diego Padilla-Phillips, WSP:** Disclose our designs’ Scope 4 emissions & a ‘Help to Buy Green’ Government scheme.
- **Simon Wyatt, Cundall:** Make the data availability publicly – it’s heavily used at stages one and two.
- **Lee Cowen, Milbank Concrete Products:** Better standardisation on EPDs and guidance from Government, and people held to account for the content; industry has to engage better with the supply chain.
- **Ewan Duffin, Harley Haddow:** Prioritise maintenance budgets to look after what we already have
- **Stephanie Baker, SEES (Sadler Energy & Environmental Services):** Government to get some regulation out for data consistency and validity, and we need data to build on.
- **Simon Sturgis, RIBA Sustainability Futures Group:** A Ministerial Statement on whole life carbon reporting & the Government to do WLCA on all their own projects.
- **Ellen Willis, Chetwoods:** Government; introduce an imperfect regulation just to get it started. The industry needs to lean into uncomfortable conversations.
- **Tim den Dekker, Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios:** Simplify and prioritise the ask – report whole life carbon but not limit.

“losing the quality of data.” Ellen Willis assured the group that from smaller projects, “a lot of the information is not hugely technical, and I have had the time to find that information.”

Conclusion

Our delegates confirmed that we are a long way from being able to say that embodied carbon limits and reporting are becoming part of mainstream building delivery. Helping educate the sector on the benefits, including by growing ‘carbon literacy’ at round tables, and addressing misconceptions, is the first step on the road to verifying embodied carbon and therefore create truly sustainable projects.

As we approached the concluding recommendations for industry and government from the delegates, Simon Wyatt pointed out that Simon Sturgis (as RIBA’s Sustainability Futures Chair) had already made recommendations to the Climate Change Committee, including to adopt Part Z, but its likely fate remains hard to predict. He said that if the regulation does happen, “we’re going to be collecting a lot of data, and I’d like it to be available to everybody and not hidden or behind a paywall or hidden. The more data we have, the better decisions we can make.”

The big takeaway from this session is that while the construction industry has organically developed a range of useful tools for embodied carbon reduction and reporting, the ball is firmly in the Government’s court for mandating the step change that is required. We hope the relevant Ministries will hear and listen to the insights from this expert group as they progress towards net zero.



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Passivhaus at scale is the panacea for achieving game-changing cuts in carbon emissions in our built environment, and making commercial and residential buildings resilient against future economic and climate-based shocks. While achieving such projects is challenging in terms of build quality and performance, misconceptions exist around excessive cost, design difficulty and aesthetic ramification, and the reality could be far more achievable than people think.

That was the number one takeaway of a recent round table held to share views, insights and experience around delivering large-scale Passivhaus projects. Held in London and sponsored by Ubbink, Aeroseal UK and Technal (representing the MVHR, air-tightness and facade sides of the debate respectively), 'Delivering Cost-Effective Passivhaus Projects at Scale in the Commercial and Residential Sectors' produced a multi-faceted, and fascinating discussion which busted a few myths.

Being staged in one of the hottest weeks on record the helped discussion around physical ramifications of better performing lower carbon buildings resonate even more strongly. The round table looked at key areas such as whether the Government should mandate Passivhaus, whether 'designing to Passivhaus principles' was enough, and most revealingly, how Passivhaus at scale could be delivered at competitive build costs.

The varied group we assembled included major housebuilders (Willmott Dixon and Barratt London), who were embracing certified Passivhaus approaches, and gave valuable learnings from their work to date delivering schemes. We also welcomed SME builders (London-based Kind & Co, Sheffield-based Milestone, and Hastings firm Serenity Projects), who shared their experience of pivoting to focus on Passivhaus. Several architects, the Passivhaus Trust, academics, and consultants including Certifiers, completed a really informed mix able to give a breadth of insight bolstered by questions from our sponsors.

The debate also took in findings from ADF's 2025 audience survey, which included positive findings such as that the current "resistance to a perceived Passivhaus look" of buildings will decrease over time as we approach net zero, and that architects roles can be strengthened by projects which bring the painstaking rigour which Passivhaus demands. However, while clients remained the key driver of uptake, respondents said they had misconceptions on what Passivhaus actually constitutes. The largest design challenges for architects were

confirmed as eliminating cold bridges, achieving airtightness, and including MVHR in schemes, although our round table confirmed all as being essential to Passivhaus.

The take-up problem

It is well-established that Passivhaus buildings save up to 90% of the typical energy consumed for heating and cooling, and some buildings don't even require additional space heating at all, however only 1% of homes currently built are certified. While the debate touched on reasons for the relatively low take-up in the UK, it also celebrated the great at-scale examples, from St Sidwells Leisure Centre in Exeter, to the Stirling Prize-winning social housing scheme Goldsmith Street in Norwich, and Agar Grove affordable housing in London. The first phase of the latter was on a par with average build cost per square

ROUND TABLE ATTENDEES

- **Mark Slater**, Managing Director, WWA Studios
- **Michael Brett**, Founder, By Milestone
- **Jean Dib**, Senior Building Physics Consultant, SRE
- **Ann-Marie Fallon**, Co-Director, Passivhaus Trust and Associate Director, Architype
- **Dr Joel Callow**, Founder Director, Beyond Carbon
- **Attaz Rashid**, Head of Design, Barratt London
- **Mike Roe**, Passivhaus Certifier and Director, WARM
- **Hannah Dixon**, Passivhaus Designer, Progress In Practice Architects
- **Daniel Levey**, Director, Serenity Projects
- **Lorna Taverner**, Head of Architecture and Technical Design, Willmott Dixon
- **Aaron McCarthy**, Director - Sustainability Lead, Hive Group
- **Evette Prout**, Business Development Manager, Kind & Co Builders
- **Dr Sara Mohamed**, Assistant Professor in Building Physics, University of Nottingham

SPONSORS' ATTENDEES

- **Craig Cundey**, Ventilation Product Lead, Ubbink
- **Hugh Franklin**, Head of Operations, Aeroseal UK
- **Craig Simms**, National Specification Manager, TECHNAL





BUILDING ON INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

Although only 1% of new homes are Passivhaus Certified, our group contained leading names including Barratt London and Willmott Dixon who were now building at scale

metre, and Goldsmith Street was even lower, coming in at a modest 1,875/m². This was a crucial learning to communicate, given that industry's costs had inflated by 91% since 2012.

The event chair James Parker framed the opening discussion by saying that Passivhaus at scale was an incredible opportunity to achieve a raft of energy and carbon savings “in one hit,” but it did mean that the industry would need to discard the prevalent “that’ll do” approach to construction. Passivhaus meant “embracing surgical precision and a painstaking focus on the details,” whether this was tackling thermal bridges or taping all junctions, he said.

The round table tackled several of the assumptions commonly made around Passivhaus, such as it being prohibitively expensive or difficult. But, as co-sponsor Hugh Franklin from Aeroseal UK put it, delivering certified buildings required a much higher level of ambition than the “do the minimum” approach that he asserted was common in project meetings: “Passivhaus is asking us to be brave and bold – that’s a wild change for people.”

But one of the key learnings from the round table was that high-density Passivhaus could provide the cost savings on other, lower density options that might help it become a more mainstream proposition. At the same time, the industry needed to share approaches and understanding more, particularly given the unlikelihood of specific Government levers coming into being.

Answering the chair’s question of whether Passivhaus should be mandated by Government in England (as it is soon to be, at least for an ‘equivalent’ standard, in Scotland), Franklin said that the industry should be looking to Ireland, where there had been a “market-led drive” to Passivhaus at scale in residential, citing one major builder “committed to improving the fabric of low rise housing” using Passivhaus. He added that in Ireland, “It’s Government encouraged. It’s not mandated. It’s all moving that way.”

We looked at how to drive industry culture, training, but also standardisation in the hope of helping grow Passivhaus (without killing innovation), but also critically how it was one of the few tools available to provide a clear, unambiguous benchmark on quality against the current major drivers to improve standards.

Anne-Marie Fallon gave a strong case that Passivhaus was the answer for serving the dual drivers of the incoming Single Construction Regulator (mooted for 2028 and covering building safety, product regulation, and contractor licensing), alongside the “consumer protection reform that is coming through DESNZ.” She said Passivhaus stood as a ready-made solution to the “fundamental issue of not understanding what quality is or what it looks like.” Fallon added that in this respect Passivhaus was a “framework to hang all of that building regulation on... it’s about building quality, accountability, transparency...we already have Homes England identifying that Passive House is one of the only methodologies that can give you a healthy home.”

Other participants agreed that Passivhaus was a proven but under-adopted framework for quality and comfort, and one, Dr Joel Callow of Beyond Carbon, held that energy use in properties “was the problem, not carbon, and Passivhaus hits that bullseye directly.”

Mandates versus incentives

The group had mixed views on whether the Government should be mandating Passivhaus for new builds in the commercial and residential sectors, in the way Scotland has done (albeit in a ‘Passivhaus equivalent’ model for Scottish homes). Ann-Marie Fallon said that current Government policy “prioritises clean heat over efficiency, which is backwards.” Attaz Rashid of Barratt London, who have committed to building all its new homes as Passivhaus Certified, warned about policy conflicts (for example “mandated heat networks” in London) making Passivhaus-type ambition unviable: “This kind of mandated de facto position in London just kills any ambition of anyone doing anything like Passivhaus...we’re definitely trying to break down those barriers.”

Joel Callow on the other hand had scepticism around adding to the “smorgasbord of contradictory regulation” already present, adding that Part L is “actively opposing Passivhaus by not showing the benefits that it actually brings.” Most delegates agreed that, rather than Government mandates for Passivhaus, what was needed was incentives for clients and developers to pursue the method, but also



ENGINEERING THE VALUE

Dr Joel Callow of Beyond Carbon gave the fresh insight that might be counterintuitive: “Passivhaus is in some ways the best value engineering tool”

as in the words of Serenity Projects’ MD, housebuilder Daniel Levey, “proper education on the benefits.”

In terms of the ‘carrot versus stick’ debate for increasing uptake, several in the group favoured incentives and outcome-based rules over simple prescriptive approaches. Mike Roe, Passivhaus Certifier at WARM, said that mandating Passivhaus was “dangerous; if we keep on mandating it, we’re always going to get pushback.” Instead he wondered whether there were “ways of incentivising Passivhaus, i.e. if you did Passivhaus, it smoothed the way.”

Lorna Taverner from Willmott Dixon however reckoned that the industry had to pursue “the carrot and the stick” to make developers take up the approach: “If they don’t want to, they will find a way not to do it.” One potential ‘planning incentive’ mooted was the idea of faster approvals granted if teams delivered Certified Passivhaus.

Cundey argued for mandating “sensible ventilation,” saying “if we are going to mandate things, let’s look at mandating a sensible ventilation solution rather than a four-inch bathroom fan. If we put MVHR in as the baseline, then people will start saying, ‘What’s the next solution after that?’”

Aaron McCarthy of Hive said that the Passivhaus community was growing, but Government incentives were needed to grow it further, and that each new project “becomes a new benchmark.”

The cost of Passivhaus design; and debunking myths

The delegates discussed the perception versus reality of the cost of Passivhaus, which has traditionally been seen as ‘higher end’ in UK residential projects, but where at-scale projects are demonstrating new levels of cost-effectiveness. However, Willmott Dixon’s Lorna Taverner noted that good aspirations can rapidly shift as clients discover the investment required: “many clients began with Passivhaus as an ambition but drop it as soon as cost advisors say it’s 30% more.”

Attaz Rashid described the journey that Barratt London had taken to Passivhaus adoption, a large part of which was proving viability, meaning “a year of building physics and work with a cost planner.” This was followed by a presentation to the board which was “framed around customer value, repeat business, and future resale, not just capex.” He added: “Once you put all the puzzle together and you present it right, it becomes very difficult to ignore.”

Dr Joel Callow said that PHPP, the well-regarded Passivhaus design software was, despite some limitations, also a worthy, but underappreciated value engineering tool. He said: “We regularly save the contractors money because we know they don’t need X, Y, or Z.”

Delegates discussed how at-scale schemes were able to further reduce costs, but the incentives for developers to do this were less in private residential than in commercial projects.

The pricing of risk, and the ‘de-risking’ of Passivhaus, was fundamental to increasing its uptake, said delegates including Hugh Franklin, as is the presence of QS’ in the early decision-making around projects’ feasibility. However, Ann-Marie Fallon of the Passivhaus Trust counselled against ‘double counting’ in cost plans – “they often double count or mis-assume, such as double counting wall insulation. She cited a school project where a cost plan reportedly priced an air test at £250K. She warned: “Those are risks that should be built into projects, and driven down over time.”

Aeroseal UK’s Hugh Franklin commented: “The person that should be in this conversation is the QS, otherwise there will be a red light in the middle. It will stop.” Lorna Taverner said while Passivhaus Designers should be engaged early, getting clarity on the project that will lead to realistic risk pricing and other certainties was “the difference between a Certified Designer and a good Passivhaus Certified Designer – they will give you really good starting points.” Evette Prout from Kind & Co builders, said that they “love early engagement,” and had been able to spot and fix overengineering with a particular social housing client as a result.

The conversation also looked at the need for dynamic modelling to cover the fluctuations in living behaviours and climate in large-scale, complex Passivhaus schemes, but also how PHPP could be the engine for the crucial collaboration that was needed in design teams. Aaron McCarthy of Hive Group said from his experience in large-scale schemes, “collaboration is really driven through the PHPP; no-one I have come across knows the ins and outs of every single aspect.”

Delegates agreed that PHPP was a useful predictive design tool, not just a set of tick boxes. On the other hand, SAP and Future Homes Standard modelling was heavily criticised for “baked-in errors” (e.g. not valuing permeability higher than 3 m³/h·m²).

The debate looked at the possibility that designers and contractors could be over-engineering Passivhaus, particularly in terms of the design of services, such as HVAC and MVHR in particular, and this could be one factor contributing unnecessary cost to projects. Instead, a more streamlined approach was possible, emphasised by our co-sponsor, Ubbink, at the debate.

Solutions: airtightness, MVHR & overheating

As ever, the second half of the debate began with our sponsors posing realistic, and often searching questions to the group. Ubbink’s Craig Cundey asked, based on experiences of several prospective Passivhaus domestic clients deciding against going the ‘whole hog,’ “What constraints are stopping them achieving Passivhaus? We know there’s a financial element, but is the void as big as we think? Is it planning issues? Is it product availability, a lack of skilled supply chain?”

Michael Brett of Milestone said that the biggest issue was “knowledge and education; people were either being told the wrong thing, so it’s putting them off, or the homeowner themselves isn’t educated on the benefits.” Cundey suggested that even the term “Passivhaus” could put people off, and wondered if something more like Barratt London’s ‘Low E’ branding would be more helpful with consumers.

The conversation around ventilation solutions was enmeshed with a continuing debate around Passivhaus’ ability to tackle





GETTING ENGAGED

Evette Prout of Passivhaus builders Kind & Co said early engagement with a social housing client had enabled the firm to identify and avoid 'overengineered' Passivhaus

rising temperatures and protect residents, particularly resonant in this heatwave summer, with heat a "silent killer" in the words of Joel Callow, versus the much more visible deaths at Grenfell Tower. He said there was "no natural ventilation solution to high-density housing."

In terms of MVHR delivery, Cundey said that 'design-only' software layouts for MVHR are often wrong, but site surveys and close supplier-installer collaboration can avoid oversizing and over-engineering.

Hugh Franklin of Aeroseal UK also homed in on perceptions of construction risk in Passivhaus, in his question. He asked: "Of the five core Passivhaus design principles: insulation, windows, ventilation, airtightness, and thermal bridge-free construction, do you consider airtightness to be the largest risk to delivering at scale?"

He gave a forthright set of comments around the fear factor for clients on the 'extreme' levels of airtightness, versus the reality of practice. He said "many site teams view achieving the high levels of airtightness required in Passivhaus as the biggest "risk," but this was because it's new, not because it's inherently more difficult to achieve. Hugh Franklin of Aeroseal UK (who specialise in air-tightness solutions), said that air testing day was "like a school sports day," in terms of the levels of excitement and expectation from this new discipline.

Lorna Taverner said that Willmott Dixon had managed to get air-tightness "down to 0.25," and that now the firm's "bigger risk" was building "thermal bridge-free." She admitted that in London, in a "non-combustible situation," the company "will not build a timber frame building that has no thermal bridges," and they "are spending a lot of money getting those modelled, because [for insurers] it just doesn't exist." Michael Brett said that the onsite culture shift towards a painstaking focus on details was huge compared to previously. "From where they were three years ago, the level of care and attention and detail that they put into a project now is out of this world."

Lastly, Craig Simms from Technal focused on commercial viability, suggesting that currently Passivhaus wasn't viable at scale in mainstream housebuilding. "What needs to change in the way projects are designed, specified and procured to make Passivhaus commercially viable at scale in mainstream residential development?" The delegates used this to springboard a conversation around the dangers of 'Passivhaus principles' being used for projects rather than actual certification; Simms saying this can result in "two different prices" for

INDUSTRY RECOMMENDATIONS

We asked our delegates to give their key recommendations

- **Mike Roe, WARM:** Incentivise rather than mandate, as it's more practical.
- **Daniel Levey, Serenity Projects:** People need proper education on the benefits.
- **Hannah Dixon, Progress In Practice Architects:** There needs to be a long-term plan people can have access to, so they can prepare.
- **Aaron McCarthy, Hive Group:** I would like to see the Government incentivise Passivhaus so the community can grow organically.
- **Craig Simms, TECHNAL:** Remove the association with Passivhaus automatically being about pound signs.
- **Evette Prout, Kind & Co:** Reach out to consumers.
- **Attaz Rashid, Barratt London:** Outcome-based performance targets on heating demand, overheating, air tightness, ventilation and in-use performance. Allow policy flexibility where evidence shows you have better outcomes than the default position.
- **Jean Dib, SRE:** Enhance the passive measures at the start of projects, to make things easier.
- **Ann-Marie Fallon, Architype:** Incentivise through outcome-based metrics, so a carrot not a stick, and mandate post-occupancy evaluation. Leverage the Building Safety Act to bring quality control, and see healthy buildings as a public right, not an asset.
- **Craig Cundey, Ubbink:** Increase training standards; what is offered currently isn't good enough.
- **Sarah Mohamed:** Focus on building performance, and academia and industry should collaborate to educate future generations.
- **Hugh Franklin, Aeroseal UK:** An outcome-based solution that isn't very confusing would be grasped with both hands by the industry.
- **Michael Brett:** Building Regs should be scrapped and rewritten, and it's all about what the guys onsite do.
- **Lorna Taverner, Willmott Dixon:** "We have a massive skills shortage; we need to bring the conversation to where new industry recruits are."
- **Mark Slater, WWA Studios:** Amalgamate Building Control with Clerk Of Works into a 'super inspector' role.

different specification levels in tenders.

Lorna Taverner gave the fascinating but worrying insight that Willmott Dixon has found they are "always undercut because other people will be saying we're Passivhaus principles, not Passivhaus certified." She said the risk factor here from ambiguity in tenders was "very challenging."

The group agreed that designing to 'Passivhaus principles' rather than going the whole hog, and therefore possibly ending up with 'Passivhaus-lite' schemes, was not advisable. It was seen that compromise of this sort would also potentially lead to "perverse outcomes," as Passivhaus is implicitly designed as a package solution with inter-related compliance components, not as a "pick and mix."

Many thanks to our sponsors, Aeroseal UK, TECHNAL and Ubbink.

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SHOW PREVIEW

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Max Britten, Screwfix managing director said: "Screwfix Live is an absolute highlight of the year, where we the trade community come together under one roof with hundreds of suppliers showcasing their fantastic products. Last year we welcomed a record-breaking 30,000 visitors, and we're delighted to open registrations for what promises to be another incredible event. Whether you're an experienced professional or serious DIYer, there's something for everyone at Screwfix Live and we look forward to welcoming visitors this September."

Article supplied by Screwfix

Siderise launches new inspection app to support industry with Gateway 3

Siderise has unveiled the next generation of this digital tool. Named "Siderise Inspection App," it has been developed to help installers verify the quality of passive fire protection and acoustic installations, maintain robust records of competency and meet their obligations under the Building Safety Act. Gateway 3 requires contractors to demonstrate that they have carried out installations competently and in accordance with the plans, specifications and documents approved at Gateway 2. In practice, this means embedding evidence-gathering into the construction process from the outset. The Siderise Inspection App enables users to document installations in real time using mobile devices. Captured photographs and key project data are then compiled into structured reports that are reviewed by Siderise's technical team, to confirm alignment with manufacturer installation guidelines. This not only reduces the time spent waiting for in-person inspectors but also ensures any remedial actions are identified early in the construction process, preventing issues either being missed or repeated across multiple areas of the project. The reports can also be incorporated as part of the Golden Thread of information and as evidence of installations being carried out in accordance with manufacturer guidance, as required in Gateway 3 compliance reports.

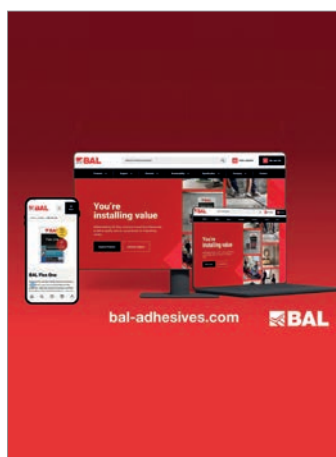
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BAL launches new website with enhanced digital tools

BAL is delighted to announce the launch of its new brand website, delivering a streamlined, user-friendly experience designed to make it easier than ever to find products, access technical information and plan tiling projects. The new website marks a significant evolution from the previous platform, moving away from a complex segmented user experience to provide a single, intuitive destination suitable for tilers, fixers, distributors and specifiers alike. Built with a responsive and fluid design, the new website has been developed with mobile users in mind, reflecting how the majority of people access BAL's digital resources. Enhanced navigation and improved functionality ensure visitors can quickly find the information and products they need, whether on site, in store or on the move. Among the new features available on the website are: Product comparison tool; Smart product search; Job List; and Personalised Technical Document Creator. Alex Underwood, head of marketing at BAL said: "The launch of our new website represents a major investment in improving the customer experience and providing easier access to the products, tools and technical support our customers need. "We've focused on creating a faster, more intuitive platform that helps contractors, retailers, distributors and specifiers find the right solutions quickly and efficiently."

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Designer Contract's summer starters and stars



Designer Contracts has announced a raft of new appointments, promotions and returners in its latest 'Who's Who' company listings. Said Designer Contracts md Peter Kelsey: "It's always a huge pleasure to announce new appointments and promotions and we're particularly delighted this summer to also welcome back onto the team, two familiar faces." Despite the current challenges around pricing volatility, Designer Contracts continues to go from strength to strength – and it's the dedication and enthusiasm of the people who work with us that lies at the heart of our growth and success." Designer Contracts operates nationally through its network of regional offices. As well as flooring, the company provides blinds and curtains plus furniture and lighting packs.

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FP McCann invests to secure roofing supply



FP McCann is strengthening UK roof tile supply amid industry-wide shortages through major investment and strategic acquisitions. A £40 million, fully automated, solar-powered manufacturing facility at Cadeby, Leicestershire, produces up to 90 million concrete roof tiles annually, helping deliver lead times of just 1-2 days. The recent acquisition of the Leighton Buzzard roofing business has expanded the company's portfolio with popular profiles including SL8, Gemini and Centurion, while increasing production capacity. FP McCann has also acquired Easy-Trim, adding leading roofing accessories to its offering. Together, these investments create a reliable, comprehensive roofing solution for contractors and developers across the UK.

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CONNECT, COLLABORATE & SHAPE THE FUTURE

Registrations are now live for UK Construction Week (UKCW) Birmingham, the national platform for the built environment to connect, collaborate and shape the future of construction.

Sponsored by Wyre, HotelPlanner, SolarEdge and Build Warranty, UKCW Birmingham returns to the NEC from 29 September to 1 October and will feature over 250 leading brands; 200 speakers and over 150 hours of CPD accredited seminars across five stages.

As the construction sector faces growing challenges around skills, sustainability, productivity and delivery, UKCW Birmingham has been reset to reflect the needs of today's industry. Moving beyond the traditional exhibition format, the show is designed to create meaningful opportunities for businesses and professionals to connect and collaborate.

UKCW Birmingham's editorial director, Martin Hurn, commented: "UKCW Birmingham has an important role to play as a national platform for the built environment to connect.

"Its location at the centre of the UK matters. With so much infrastructure, regeneration and development activity taking place across the Midlands and North, Birmingham is the right place to bring the industry together.

"This year, we want UKCW to be more than an exhibition. It needs to be a meeting place for leadership, ideas, collaboration and practical solutions, helping the sector address the challenges that are shaping construction today and in the years ahead."

Bringing together construction leaders, decision makers, and innovators from across the sector, UKCW Birmingham will serve as a central meeting point for the industry, showcasing the latest innovative products,



technologies and ideas driving the future of the built environment.

The Main Stage will explore key issues shaping the built environment, alongside a packed seminar programme across five additional stages providing practical insights into how businesses can respond. Face-to-face networking remains at the heart of the multi award-winning show, including insightful industry roundtables and meet the buyer sessions in the Build Connect Networking Lounge, with the exhibitor floor bringing it all together as visitors connect directly with suppliers and partners.

New for 2026, the Futurebuild Innovation Showcase will highlight the latest products, ideas and technologies transforming construction.

Opened by architect and Channel 4 presenter George Clarke, the show will once again feature an extensive programme of seminars, workshops, live demonstrations and networking opportunities across three packed days.

Article supplied by UKCW



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Proctor Air® fits the bill for roof rebuild

A substantial roof reconstruction project at a standalone property in Somerset valued at over £1 million, saw the entire existing pitched roof removed and rebuilt. Soteria Roofing Specialists put forward Proctor Air® as an alternative to the pitched roof underlay originally specified by the project architects.

Soteria Roofing Specialists was responsible for everything from the wall plate upwards, installing new timbers, supporting steelwork and roof covering to create a mansard-type arrangement providing room in the roof accommodation.

"We know Proctor Air works, we like working with it. We spend time looking into the materials we use because we don't want them failing on us," said Ricky Shellard, Director of Soteria Roofing Specialists. "Our immediate reaction on trialling Proctor Air was, 'this is good.' For example, it doesn't rip under your feet. It's



about using the best quality products – so Proctor Air fits the bill."

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team, Proctor Air achieves an excellent Mullen burst strength result. This is an assessment of the fabric's strength and helps it to resist normal roof installation loads.

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BRIDGING CONSTRUCTION AND EFFICIENCY WITH SMART BUILDINGS

Paul Beech from Armatherm discusses the role thermal bridging plays in limiting building performance, and why 'smart' building design is the means to address it and achieve genuine energy efficiency in residential buildings.

IMPROVING EFFICIENCY IS NO LONGER SOLELY ABOUT SPECIFYING MORE INSULATION

Smart buildings will play a vital role in the journey to net zero; however despite having energy-efficient solutions like solar panels and improved insulation specified into designs, buildings can still underperform, primarily because of an overlooked issue – thermal bridging. When any building is constructed, structural connections interrupt insulation layers, creating opportunities for heat to easily transfer from interior to exterior and vice versa. As a result, internal temperatures can fluctuate, increasing the energy required to maintain comfortable indoor conditions.

Looking closer at the general definition of a 'smart building,' these are structures that use technology to optimise resource usage, efficiency and comfort for occupants. They tend to be equipped with a variety of modern and innovative technologies, from artificial intelligence, augmented reality, and the Internet of Things. Smart buildings are designed

to monitor building performance on a variety of metrics, such as comfort, efficiency and productivity. To achieve this, they're equipped with digital sensors that can gather data and connect with software to provide opportunities for optimisation.

This is a great development in the world of construction to ensure energy is being used as efficiently as possible, with sensors monitoring temperatures, air quality and lighting to see where energy is required. Examples of smart buildings can be seen across the globe, including The Edge in Amsterdam, Capital Tower Singapore and, closer to home, Tottenham Hotspur Stadium in the UK, where solutions have been incorporated as part of the stadium's wider intelligent building infrastructure.

With the rise of these innovative buildings, energy efficiency targets appear closer than ever to being achieved. However, even the most intelligent

systems cannot compensate for thermal bridging within the building envelope.

Thermal bridging occurs when a more conductive material passes through or interrupts the insulation layer within a building envelope, allowing heat to transfer more easily between internal and external environments. This often occurs at structural junctions such as balconies, parapets, canopies, slab edges and steel connections where materials like concrete and steel bypass insulation layers.

As modern buildings become more thermally efficient and airtight, the impact of these weaker points becomes more significant. Even relatively small areas of thermal bridging can cause detrimental effects; in residential developments particularly, thermal bridging can have consequences beyond energy performance alone. Surface temperature reductions around poorly insulated junctions can increase the likelihood of condensation forming, contributing to mould growth

and long term moisture issues. This can negatively impact indoor air quality, occupant wellbeing and building durability, while also increasing future maintenance requirements.

For housebuilders and developers focused on achieving net zero targets, this presents an increasing challenge. Improving building efficiency is no longer solely about specifying more insulation or incorporating renewable technologies, there is increasing recognition that the continuity of the insulation layer is equally important.

Addressing thermal bridging effectively requires consideration at the earliest stages of the design process. Once structural connections and junction details have been established, opportunities to improve thermal continuity can become more limited and potentially more costly to resolve in retrofit projects.

A fabric-first approach is increasingly viewed as one of the most effective strategies for improving long-term building performance which prioritises the thermal qualities of the building envelope itself, rather than relying solely on mechanical systems or renewable technologies to offset inefficiencies. This includes improving airtightness, insulation continuity and junction detailing to minimise uncontrolled heat transfer.

However, thermal performance should not be considered in isolation. Structural requirements, compressive strength, fire ratings and long-term durability must also be considered when selecting materials for structural junctions. It's also important to note that different applications may require different solutions depending on loading conditions, environmental exposure and overall building design.

A building may achieve strong theoretical calculations, but if thermal bridging is not adequately addressed during specification and construction, operational outcomes may fall short of expectations. As regulations surrounding operational energy use continue to evolve, the gap between designed and actual building efficiency is also receiving increased scrutiny.

This is particularly relevant as developers seek compliance with updated Building Regulations and sustainability frameworks designed to reduce carbon emissions across the built environment. In most cases, improving junction detailing and reducing thermal bridging can contribute to lower energy consumption without requiring major design changes elsewhere in the project.

The issue is becoming increasingly important in smart building design with intelligent building systems

intending to optimise energy use through responsive controls, occupancy monitoring and automated environmental management. However, these systems can only operate effectively if the building fabric itself performs efficiently. Where uncontrolled heat loss persists, heating and cooling systems may work harder to maintain stable internal conditions, reducing the effectiveness of otherwise advanced technologies.

For developers balancing sustainability targets with long term operational costs, this highlights the importance of viewing building performance holistically. Smart technologies, renewable systems and insulation strategies should not be considered independently from structural detailing and thermal continuity.

Across the industry, there is growing awareness that achieving net zero will require greater collaboration between architects, engineers, developers and manufacturers from the earliest design stages. Companies which specialise in structural thermal break solutions are increasingly involved earlier in the design process, as project teams place greater emphasis on improving thermal continuity and long term operational performance.

Paul Beech is general manager at Armatherm

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New products in **Vectaire's** range are the Cool Breeze and Cool Breeze Plus. These units mitigate overheating in residential properties during the summer months by automatically sensing the room temperature and that of the incoming fresh air to determine when cooling is required. By removing the heat from the supply air and allowing the MVHR to distribute cooled air a comfortable indoor environment is ensured for people both 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.

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HOW HOUSEBUILDERS UNLOCK VALUE THROUGH EARLY DRAINAGE DESIGN

Shahir Mahmood at Polypipe Building Products explores how early focus on drainage design is helping SME housebuilders improve planning outcomes, maximise land value and future-proof developments.

For SME housebuilders, delivering viable developments increasingly means balancing planning requirements, land optimisation and long-term resilience. Surface water management now sits at the centre of that challenge, with sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) becoming an essential part of successful site design. In many cases, the effectiveness of a drainage strategy can directly influence planning outcomes, land value and overall scheme viability, particularly on constrained or technically complex sites.

As pressure grows on the UK's ageing sewage infrastructure, effective surface water management is becoming an increasingly important consideration for housing developers of all sizes. With weather extremes becoming more common, developments must now be designed to manage water sustainably and more resiliently than ever before. This shift is also being accelerated by increasing scrutiny from Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs) and planning bodies, who expect clearer evidence-based drainage strategies at earlier stages of submission.

When we talk about drainage infrastructure, often it's the large-scale developments that immediately come to mind. However, this is a critical consideration for developments of all sizes. Unlike larger national developers, SMEs often have less access to dedicated drainage design resources and may be managing multiple technical disciplines through smaller project teams. As a result, sustainable drainage systems play a crucial role in helping SME developers deliver compliant, practical and future ready water management strategies. For SMEs competing on tighter margins, getting drainage right at the design stage can also help avoid costly redesigns, delays and approval bottlenecks.



EARLY COLLABORATION IS CRITICAL

One of the most common challenges smaller developers face when specifying below-ground drainage systems is balancing compliance requirements with commercial and practical limitations. Site constraints, ground conditions, planning requirements and programme pressures can all impact the suitability of drainage solutions.

Early engagement with drainage manufacturers and technical specialists can help to overcome many of these challenges in advance and, crucially, before they become costly issues later in the project lifecycle. This proactive approach can also unlock opportunities to simplify installation, reduce material costs and optimise below-ground layouts. By involving manufacturers during the initial design and concept phase, developers can gain valuable guidance on systems,

attenuation requirements, installation considerations and adoptability.

This collaborative approach is particularly important given the evolving regulatory landscape around SuDS. Alongside evolving policy discussions around Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act and wider planning requirements, sustainable drainage continues to receive greater attention across the industry.

For SME developers who aren't fortunate enough to have dedicated drainage design teams, navigating these requirements can be especially challenging. Working closely with experienced manufacturers and full-system providers can provide reassurance that proposed solutions are both compliant and practical to deliver onsite. It also allows developers to future-proof designs against potential regulatory

changes, reducing the risk of having to revisit approved schemes.

DESIGNING FOR SITE-SPECIFIC CHALLENGES

No two development sites are the same, which means drainage strategies must be tailored to the specific characteristics of each project. Factors like soil permeability and whether sites are brownfield in nature, or have any existing drainage infrastructure, all influence the most appropriate SuDS strategy.

For example, sites with permeable ground conditions may benefit from infiltration-based solutions, while more constrained or impermeable sites may require attenuation and controlled discharge solutions. Space restrictions on smaller housing developments can also make below-ground solutions particularly attractive, allowing developers to maximise sites without compromising drainage performance. This is particularly valuable on high-density schemes where every square metre of usable land contributes to overall project value.

By assessing these variables early, and working collaboratively with manufacturers, developers can identify solutions that are not only technically effective, but also commercially viable and easier to install.



SUPPORTING LONG-TERM PROJECT VIABILITY

There's often a perception that SuDS increase upfront project costs. However, focusing only on initial expenditure risks overlooking the wider, longer-term value that these systems can provide. Effective surface water management can help to reduce future flood risk, minimise maintenance issues and reduce planning delays associated with surface water management which all contribute



to improved project resilience and long-term performance. Well-designed SuDS can also enhance environmental credentials, supporting biodiversity net gain objectives and improving the marketability of new homes to increasingly environmentally conscious buyers and renters.

For SME developers operating in an increasingly complex regulatory and commercial environment, achieving this balance between buildability, cost efficiency and compliance is key.

As housing delivery continues across the UK, the role of SuDS within small and medium-sized developments will only continue to develop. Through early engagement, improved collaboration and access to specialist technical guidance, developers can implement drainage strategies that don't just meet regulatory requirements, but also support more resilient, sustainable communities that are ready for the future.

Ultimately, smarter drainage design is not just a compliance exercise. It is a strategic tool that can unlock value, improve buildability and strengthen the long-term success of SME developments.

Shahir Mahmood is drainage design engineer at Polypipe Building Products



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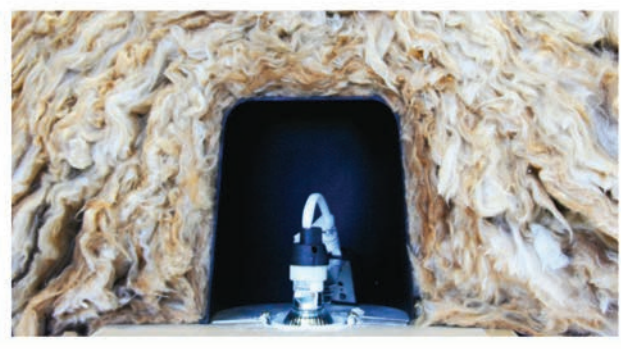


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New radiators from Stelrad...



The arrival of a number of new and extended radiator ranges from **Stelrad** over the past few months has been warmly welcomed by the heating industry. First off the line was the new extended range of cast iron radiators followed by the new 500 mm high range of Compact radiators and finally the exciting new Column radiator

range. To find out more about any of these new radiator offerings, please visit the Stelrad website. Alternatively, you can also see regular updates from Stelrad on X @Stelrad and Facebook @StelradRadiators.

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Nuaire launches new website in landmark year



Launched during **Nuaire's** 60th anniversary year, the new website combines a fresh, modern design with improved functionality, enabling consultants, contractors, developers, housing providers and facilities managers to quickly find the products, information and support they need. Visitors can

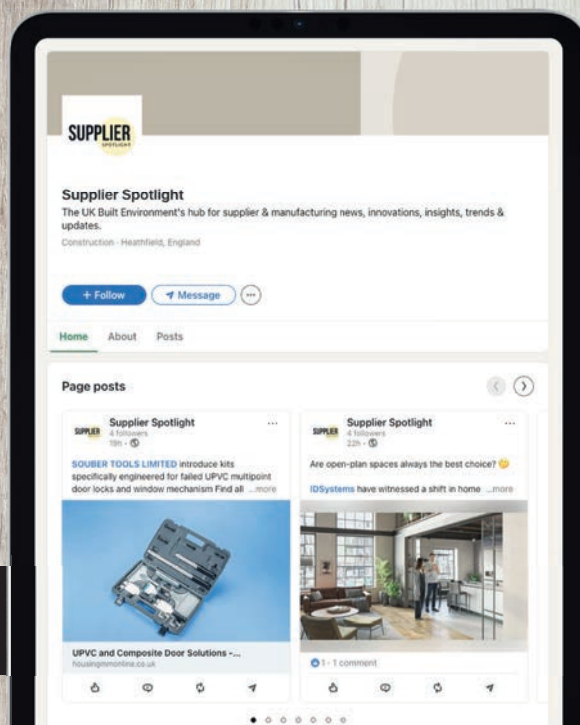
explore Nuaire's market-leading residential and commercial ventilation solutions, including its popular MRXBOX MVHR range, Drimaster positive input ventilation systems, XBOXER commercial air handling units and the latest commercial and residential heat recovery technologies. One of the key features of the new website is its streamlined navigation structure, making it easier to identify the most suitable solution for a project.

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Smarter bathroom heating for modern developments

As homebuyers increasingly expect smart technology and energy-efficient features as standard, bathroom heating is becoming an important part of the specification. Electrorad's Wi-Fi Electric Towel Rail has been developed to deliver both everyday comfort and intelligent control, making it an ideal choice for new-build homes and residential developments.

More than just a towel warmer, the Electrorad towel rail provides effective room heating with the flexibility to control either the bathroom temperature or the rail temperature, allowing homeowners to prioritise room comfort or perfectly warmed towels. Featuring an accurate electronic thermostat, seven-day programming, Comfort, Eco and Frost Protection modes, plus open window detection, it helps reduce unnecessary energy use while maintaining a comfortable bathroom environment.

Built-in Wi-Fi connectivity, powered by Tuya technology, allows users to control their heating remotely via the Smart Life app or through Amazon Alexa and Google Home, giving homeowners the smart functionality they increasingly expect in today's homes. Fully compliant with UK Lot 20 legislation and available in stylish white or chrome finishes, the range complements a wide variety of bathroom designs.

For developers and contractors, installation is simple thanks to the pre-filled, ready-to-fit design, while the IPX4 rating makes the rail suitable for bathroom environments. Available



in 400W and 700W outputs, Electrorad's towel rails offer a premium, low-maintenance solution that adds value to every property.

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Britain's water challenge is the new normal



As another exceptionally hot and dry summer places pressure on water resources across the UK, Cistermiser is urging the construction industry to make water efficiency a higher priority. Cistermiser's range of water-saving technologies,

including infrared sensor controls, direct flush systems and intelligent urinal flushing products, are designed to reduce unnecessary water use without compromising hygiene or user experience. By ensuring water is used only when required, these solutions can help facilities managers and building owners achieve substantial reductions in water consumption across offices, schools, healthcare facilities and other commercial premises.

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Setcrete products now on Data Yard



Setcrete's range of floor levelling compounds, tile adhesives and grouts are now listed on Data Yard, the builders' merchant industry's centralised product data exchange platform.

Data Yard provides a single source of

manufacturer-verified product information from over 140 supplier members to simplify product selection, improve efficiency and satisfy increasing demands for compliance, transparency, and traceability. The centralised platform enables manufacturers to publish product data once, in a standardised and structured format that allows authorised merchants and buying group partners to access consistent, validated information without the need for multiple bespoke templates or duplicate data requests.

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CAN SHOWERS SAFEGUARD AGAINST WATER SCARCITY?

Paul Ravnbo-West at Triton Showers discusses how pairing electric showers with waste water heat recovery systems (WWHRs) can help build long-term resilience against future shortages, while the industry awaits Regulation updates.

The statistic that the UK is facing an estimated shortfall of five billion litres of water per day by 2050 is as damning as it is well documented. In September 2025, it was revealed that plans to build almost 30,000 new homes are currently being blocked by concerns over inadequate wastewater infrastructure. Two months later, research found that water scarcity could hamper the UK's ability to reach its net zero targets.

Last year brought substantial droughts, with reservoir levels at their lowest for a decade. To suggest we are approaching a water crisis would be inaccurate – we are already in one. Households are facing exponentially rising utility bills, though the onus to cut consumption cannot fall solely on them. This comes at a time when the Government is exploring whether the Building Regulations 2010 should be amended to tighten water efficiency standards, enabling customers to use less water and reduce both water and energy bills.

The consultation is looking to reshape how new housing developments are built to be more water efficient, mandating tighter limits on per capita consumption and encouraging the wider adoption of water reuse systems – supporting complementary sustainable technologies such as solar panels and heat pumps. Put all this aside, and the fact that it has never been more important to reduce both water and energy consumption still remains. What is the starting point?

SIMPLE YET SIGNIFICANT

As the largest domestic consumer of water, showers are an obvious target for reducing consumption. While electric showers are known for their energy efficiency, their water-saving potential is equally significant. By heating water on demand from the cold mains supply, electric showers remove the need to run taps while awaiting hot water – one of the most common sources of waste.



Electric showers tend to operate at lower flow rates than mixer showers, saving around 37.5 litres of water per shower without risking comfort. These features combine to make them an ideal solution for housebuilders where new homes are required to be more water

efficient than the optional Building Regulations standard of 110 litres per person per day (l/p/d).

This tighter limit – lower than the standard 125 l/p/d – is being adopted by a growing number to future-proof developments against water scarcity, with



widespread droughts likely for this year and beyond.

A DREAM TEAM

The performance of instantaneous electric showers (IES) is amplified when paired with a waste water heat recovery system (WWHRS). These systems capture the heat from used shower water, which is typically lost down the drain, and use it to pre-warm the incoming cold mains water. The preheated water then enters the electric shower unit, substantially reducing the energy needed to reach the desired temperature.

This 'passive' process lowers a household's CO₂ emissions and energy bills while maintaining a consistent showering performance, especially during colder months when mains water temperatures drop.

When the shower is connected to a WWHRS, the operational carbon emissions, compared to a mixer shower, can negate its own embodied carbon footprint, including that of the WWHRS, in as little as three months.

It also delivers a spray of around five litres per minute, meaning user satisfaction is delivered.

The duo also supports grid resilience by lowering peak energy demand, particularly during morning and evening usage spikes. For developers, it offers a practical route to achieving compliance with Part L of the Building Regulations, outperforming mixers in key SAP metrics like the Dwelling Emissions Rate (DER) and Dwelling Primary Energy Rate (DPER).

TURN THE TIDE ON WATER WASTE

As the nation's water crisis appears to be more of a perennial problem, the urgency to rethink how we use water in our homes has never been greater. By adopting electric showers and pairing them with WWHRS, developers and homeowners alike can take significant steps towards reducing water and energy consumption, gaining resilience against future scarcity in the process.

Paul Ravnbo-West is market development manager at Triton Showers

THE CONSULTATION IS LOOKING TO RESHAPE HOW NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS ARE BUILT TO BE MORE WATER EFFICIENT

Frontline Bathrooms expands Aqua Glass collection with major new product investment

Frontline Bathrooms has significantly expanded its Aqua Glass collection for 2026, adding new enclosure configurations, larger sizes and further finish options to create one of the most comprehensive stock-backed showering ranges available in the UK.

The development forms part of Frontline Bathrooms' ongoing Aqua brand and product refresh and builds on the established Aqua Glass collection, which spans the 6mm Purity enclosure range, 8mm shower enclosures and the premium 10mm Elite wet room collection.

A substantial investment in new tooling has enabled Frontline to introduce several completely new 6mm models, including single-door quadrants and offset quadrants across the key sizes commonly required within residential developments. The range also gains double-door sliding enclosures in the most popular configurations, giving housebuilders greater specification choice across compact en suites, family bathrooms and larger showering spaces.

The existing Purity collection has been extended with additional offset two-door quadrants and corresponding tray sizes, alongside a wider choice of sliding doors. New 1700mm, 1800mm and 2000mm options allow developers to cater for the growing demand for more generous showering areas without moving into a bespoke product category, helping to maintain greater control over costs

and lead times.

New 1000mm pivot and bi-fold doors have also been introduced, strengthening Frontline's offer for plots where available wall space or door clearance can make specifying a standard enclosure more difficult. The wider choice allows different bathroom footprints to be accommodated while maintaining a consistent product family across a development.

The launch also includes a new collection of bath screens in a broader choice of brassware-finished finishes. Gunmetal and bronze options join the range, allowing housebuilders to create more coordinated bathroom specifications and offer customers a choice beyond a traditional chrome profile.

Frontline has also expanded its successful 8mm Mineral walk-in collection, which matches the award-winning Mineral brassware range. New brushed bronze and gunmetal finishes have been introduced alongside additional panel sizes, widening the number of layouts that can be created using the range and making it easier to coordinate glass, brassware and wider bathroom finishes.

Aquashield protective glass coating is supplied as standard across the Aqua Glass collection, helping to make the glass easier for homeowners to maintain. The range is supported by a lifetime guarantee, an extensive replacement parts service and Frontline's



dedicated customer support team, providing additional reassurance both during installation and after completion.

Frontline Bathrooms holds the Aqua Glass collection in UK stock, with nationwide next-day delivery available through its established distribution network.

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The original boiling water tap



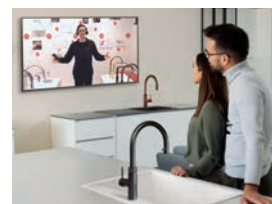
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Innovation that delivers: Why smarter appliances are creating new opportunities for housebuilders



Vijay Bhardwaj, Marketing Director, UK & Ireland, Beko

We've become used to waking up and finding that our phones have quietly updated overnight. A new feature has appeared, the interface feels a little smoother, or the device is doing something it couldn't do yesterday. We don't think of this as unusual, instead expect our technology to keep improving long after purchase. Now imagine that same principle in the home.

A washing machine that can receive software updates introducing new functionality. An appliance that can be monitored and controlled remotely, with diagnostics that can identify potential issues before they become faults. Technology that continues to develop throughout the life of the appliance, rather than remaining fixed from the day it is installed. This is the potential of connected appliances and over-the-air (OTA) software updates.

Take Beko's HomeWhiz platform as an example. The Wi-Fi-enabled technology allows compatible appliances to receive software updates that introduce new functionality and enhancements over time. Homeowners can also monitor and control appliances remotely, receive notifications and access features designed to make everyday tasks easier.

Connected technology is also becoming more responsive. Features such as Beko's Adaptive Wash use user feedback to tailor future wash cycles, while Intelligent Guidance helps

consumers get the best performance from their appliance and supports ongoing care and maintenance. Predictive Maintenance can also identify potential issues before they become bigger problems, helping reduce disruption and keep appliances performing for longer.

That matters at a time when householders are paying closer attention to what their homes cost to run. Research shows that 82% of UK adults are paying attention to saving energy at home and 64% are looking to reduce their water consumption. HomeWhiz's Energy & Water Management gives consumers greater visibility over their energy and water use, helping them make more informed decisions over time.



For developers, this creates a different way of thinking about specification. Connected appliances don't simply meet buyers' expectations on the day they receive the keys; they can continue to provide useful functionality throughout ownership through software updates, diagnostics and personalised features.

Connectivity is only one part of Beko's wider approach to innovation. Technologies such as EnergySpin are designed to help reduce energy use during everyday washing, while AeroPerfect™ AirFry Technology gives homeowners greater cooking flexibility without the need for an additional countertop appliance. Together, these technologies focus on practical benefits that homeowners can experience every day.

Ultimately, smart technology should deliver more than connectivity for its own sake. The value comes from what it does for the homeowner: making everyday tasks easier, providing greater visibility and control, and supporting the appliance throughout its ownership.

As understanding of smart-enabled appliances continues to grow, developers have an opportunity to specify technology that does more than add features on day one. It can help create homes that continue to meet homeowners' needs long after they have moved in.

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The tile trend bringing colour back into the bathroom

The latest ceramic and porcelain collections from **Tile of Spain** demonstrate how combining two colours creates bathrooms that feel stylish, timeless and effortlessly individual. María D Arráez, Director of Tile of Spain UK, comments on the trend: "Bathrooms don't have to be neutral to feel timeless. Choosing two colours that work together gives you far more flexibility and creates a room with more character – whether you choose soft earthy tones or a bolder contrasting combination. We are seeing more homeowners looking to add personality with pattern – and vanity areas and showers are key spaces to do this. Providing opportunities to be playful yet sophisticated with bathroom design, introducing tiles in alternating stripes and checkerboard layouts is proving popular, naturally drawing the eye in and making everyday areas more of a statement. Instead of covering every surface in the same tile, combining two different colours helps define different zones within the bathroom. It's an easy way to introduce colour without feeling like you've committed to something too bold. A darker shade in the shower or in a niche above a bath creates a focal point, while lighter tiles elsewhere help keep the room feeling bright and spacious. This works particularly well in family bathrooms, where tiles can be used to separate areas without the need for partitions or walls."

www.tileofspain.com



PWS launches new 'Total Order Rewards' programme

PWS has introduced a new customer incentive scheme called Total Order Rewards. The new 'Total Order Rewards' initiative encourages customers to consolidate purchases across multiple product categories, with additional discounts available based on overall spend. Designed to reward customers for purchasing a broader range of products from PWS, the scheme offers discounts of up to 5% off the total order value, helping businesses increase margins while simplifying procurement through a single supplier. To qualify, customers must purchase a minimum of £900 of fascias, £300 of Kesseböhmer storage and spend at least £150 in two additional qualifying categories across sinks & taps, handles, Blum, drawer organisation, waste management, lighting and cabinet components. Orders totalling £1,500 or more across four product categories qualify for a 2.5% discount, while customers spending more than £3,000 can enjoy the full 5% discount. The initiative reflects PWS's ongoing commitment to supporting customers with competitive pricing, product choice and added value across its extensive portfolio. The Total Order Rewards programme is available exclusively on orders placed through the PWS website.

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HOW BNG ALSO BRINGS NET GAINS FOR DEVELOPERS

Olivia Dear at Wates Developments explains why Biodiversity Net Gain is now a strategic consideration which can deliver lasting benefits for communities.

The relationship between development and the natural environment has become an increasingly important consideration for the housebuilding sector. There is a growing recognition by the sector that, like housing numbers, nature is struggling. We all need to play a role in helping to reverse the staggering decline in biodiversity and create healthier, more resilient landscapes for future generations.

This is the challenge Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) was designed to address. It introduced a new approach to planning that requires developers to leave biodiversity in a measurably better state than before development began. While initially viewed by some as an additional planning obligation, BNG is increasingly being recognised as a framework capable of supporting better placemaking, environmental resilience and long term value creation. For housebuilders, understanding why BNG matters, the benefits it can deliver and how to deliver it successfully without compromising project delivery is essential.

WHY IS BNG IMPORTANT?

The UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world, with habitats and wildlife facing increasing pressure from urbanisation, climate change and changing land use patterns.

Biodiversity underpins healthy ecosystems, providing benefits that range from flood mitigation and improved air quality to carbon storage and public wellbeing. Historically, developers were asked to minimise environmental harm. But now, it's about leaving behind measurable and lasting improvements; not just reducing impact. The aim of the BNG legislation is not to prevent development. It is about providing developers with a mechanism for nature recovery and development to co-exist.

For housebuilders, this represents a significant evolution, both in planning policy and in how outcomes for nature are considered in a project's conception, viability, delivery and long term management.



Importantly, BNG encourages a more strategic approach to site planning. By considering ecological opportunities early in the design process, developers

can often identify solutions that not only deliver environmental benefits, but support local stakeholder sentiment and planning, as well as commercial benefits.

WHAT BENEFITS DOES BNG DELIVER?

While compliance is often the initial driver, the wider benefits of BNG extend well beyond meeting planning requirements.

At a local level, the impact on nature from development is often a significant concern for stakeholders. However, with BNG considered strategically from the outset, communities can benefit from better quality green and blue infrastructure and placemaking. This in turn supports wellbeing through access to nature on the doorstep as well as welcoming, natural spaces for people to meet, connect and build community. Further to this, considering a development's BNG aims in the wider local context of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy set by the Local Planning Authority can demonstrate to locals that a development isn't being considered in isolation.

For housebuilders, BNG can provide practical benefits too. Well designed green infrastructure helps manage surface water, improve climate resilience, reduce urban heat effects and contribute to healthier living environments. As environmental performance becomes an increasingly important consideration for local authorities, investors and communities, delivering meaningful biodiversity outcomes can also support broader sustainability objectives.

And then, of course, there is the impact at a national level. The Environment Act and the BNG policy are the UK Government's primary drivers to support the restoration and creation of habitats that stave off the nature and climate crisis we are living in. New woodlands, species-rich grasslands, wetlands, ponds and hedgerows contribute to healthier ecosystems and stronger ecological networks across the country.

HOW DOES THE SYSTEM WORK?

At its core, Biodiversity Net Gain requires most developments in England to demonstrate a minimum 10% increase in biodiversity value compared to the site's baseline condition before development takes place.

This increase is measured using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric, which assesses habitat size, quality, distinctiveness and location. The metric converts these characteristics into biodiversity units, creating a consistent methodology for calculating losses and gains.

The process begins with an ecological assessment of the site. Existing habitats are surveyed and their biodiversity value established. The proposed development is then assessed to determine how it will



FOR HOUSEBUILDERS, BNG CAN PROVIDE PRACTICAL BENEFITS – WELL DESIGNED GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE HELPS MANAGE SURFACE WATER AND REDUCE URBAN HEAT

affect those habitats and what measures can be implemented to achieve the required uplift.

Developers are expected to follow the 'mitigation hierarchy' throughout this process, which means that the first priority is to avoid impacts wherever possible. Where impacts cannot be avoided, efforts should be made to minimise harm and enhance biodiversity within the development itself.

Many schemes can deliver a significant proportion of their biodiversity gains onsite through measures such as habitat enhancement or creation, native planting, green corridors, ponds, pocket parks, and green verges. Integrating these features early in the design process can often deliver both ecological and placemaking benefits.

However, site constraints mean onsite delivery is not always sufficient. High-density housing schemes, brownfield developments and sites with limited available green space can struggle to achieve the required uplift within their boundaries.

In these circumstances, offsite 'biodiversity units' provide an important mechanism for compliance. Delivered through dedicated habitat creation

schemes, they enable developers to secure the biodiversity gains they need while supporting nature recovery elsewhere. As the market continues to evolve, many housebuilders are finding that early planning and engagement are critical to ensuring the right units are available when required.

A defining feature of BNG is its long-term approach. All onsite and offsite habitat creation and enhancement must be maintained and monitored for a minimum of 30 years with oversight from the Local Planning Authority or a Responsible Body. The 30-year commitment is secured through the Section 106 or a Conservation Covenant. Housebuilders need to think very carefully about how the onsite habitats will be managed, whether these long term costs have been factored in, and critically whether the management company has the skills necessary to ensure their survival.

LOOKING AHEAD

As the industry adapts to Biodiversity Net Gain, the most successful projects are likely to be those that view biodiversity as an integral part of development rather than a final-stage planning consideration.

For housebuilders, early engagement with ecologists, planners and biodiversity specialists can help identify opportunities, reduce uncertainty and support smoother project delivery. Equally, understanding how any biodiversity shortfall will be addressed can provide valuable certainty as planning applications progress.

While many developments will achieve substantial biodiversity gains onsite, offsite provision will continue to play an important role where physical constraints limit what can be delivered within a scheme. As demand for BNG units grows, developers are increasingly seeking partners that can offer not only habitat units, but also confidence in long-term delivery, stewardship and compliance.

This is where specialist providers are helping to bridge the gap between development and nature recovery.

Ultimately, Biodiversity Net Gain represents more than a regulatory requirement. It provides a framework for balancing the delivery of much needed homes with the restoration of the natural environment. By embracing that opportunity and planning strategically from the outset, housebuilders can create places that not only meet housing demand, but also leave a lasting positive legacy for communities, wildlife and nature alike.

Olivia Dear is sustainability & Wates Wildscape director at Wates Developments

Meadfleet win at Unlock Net Zero Awards



Meadfleet has won the Biodiversity and Nature Award at the Unlock Net Zero Awards 2026, recognising its role in helping housebuilders and developers create nature-rich, sustainable residential communities. Managing more than 545 acres of open space across 350 residential developments in

England and Wales, Meadfleet embeds biodiversity into long-term estate management. Its Buzz & Flutter programme delivers practical habitat enhancements, including native tree and hedgerow planting, wildflower areas and wildlife features, while encouraging residents to connect with and support nature. The award highlights Meadfleet's ongoing efforts to create greener neighbourhoods where both people and wildlife can thrive.

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Building for what's next

LOW CARBON CEMENT – FIT FOR THE FUTURE

Garry Gregory at Tarmac explores how innovation in lower carbon cement is helping developers and contractors reduce emissions without compromising performance, programme certainty or build quality.



The pressure on the construction industry to decarbonise continues to intensify, with housebuilders increasingly expected to demonstrate measurable reductions in embodied carbon across residential developments.

While operational efficiency remains a key focus, the materials used during construction are now under greater scrutiny than ever before. Cement in particular plays a significant role in embodied carbon across housing projects, making specification decisions increasingly important for developers seeking to meet sustainability targets and wider ESG commitments.

As a result, the conversation has moved

beyond compliance alone. Developers, contractors and specifiers are now looking for practical, scalable solutions that can support carbon reduction while maintaining the consistency, reliability and performance required for modern residential construction.

THE VALUE OF EARLY ENGAGEMENT

One of the most effective ways to reduce embodied carbon on residential developments is through early collaboration across the supply chain. Bringing manufacturers and material specialists into discussions at the specification stage allows sustainability objectives to be considered alongside

structural performance, buildability, availability and cost.

For housebuilders, this early engagement approach can help avoid unnecessary over specification while identifying opportunities to reduce embodied carbon through more informed cement selection. Small specification decisions made early in the process can have a significant cumulative impact across large-scale developments where material volumes are substantial.

Early engagement also provides developers with greater confidence around product availability, technical performance and programme certainty, helping lower carbon solutions become

ADVANCEMENTS IN UK STANDARDS ARE SUPPORTING WIDER ADOPTION OF LOWER CARBON CEMENT TECHNOLOGIES

part of mainstream delivery rather than standalone sustainability initiatives.

SUPPORTING CONSTRUCTION

As the industry works towards net-zero ambitions, innovation in cement manufacture is playing an increasingly important role in helping reduce embodied carbon across construction projects.

Advancements in UK standards are supporting wider adoption of lower carbon cement technologies, including Portland Limestone Cement, which reduces clinker content while maintaining the strength, consistency and reliability required for residential construction.

Within this evolving landscape, trusted brands are helping support the transition towards lower carbon building practices through cement solutions designed to integrate into established construction processes. By reducing clinker content, lower carbon cements can help achieve embodied carbon savings while continuing to meet the practical demands of housing delivery.

Importantly, these solutions are increasingly suitable for mainstream residential construction, rather than being limited to flagship sustainability projects. For developers and contractors, scalability and supply chain confidence



remain essential considerations, particularly as demand for sustainable materials continues to grow.

Alongside product innovation, manufacturers are also continuing to invest in improvements across production and logistics operations, including increased energy efficiency, renewable power use and more sustainable transport solutions, helping to further reduce emissions across the wider cement supply chain.

DATA & TECHNICAL SUPPORT

For developers operating across multiple sites, access to transparent carbon data is becoming increasingly important, both for internal reporting and to meet evolving investor, client and regulatory expectations.

At the same time, technical guidance

from manufacturers is playing a valuable role in helping project teams navigate specification choices and identify practical opportunities to reduce embodied carbon without introducing unnecessary complexity into the build process.

DELIVERING LOWER CARBON HOUSING AT SCALE

Decarbonising residential construction will require collaboration across the entire supply chain, from developers and contractors through to manufacturers and material suppliers.

The good news is that many of the foundations are already in place. Standards continue to evolve, lower carbon cement technologies are becoming more widely available, and improved data and monitoring tools are helping project teams make more informed decisions.

The challenge now is accelerating adoption at scale. By embedding lower carbon material choices into mainstream specification and delivery, the housebuilding sector can continue making meaningful progress towards reducing embodied carbon while still meeting the growing demand for new homes.

Garry Gregory is packed products director at Tarmac



Egger protect the board of choice for Strata Homes

The Grace development, a new housing scheme by Strata, became one of its latest projects to take advantage of EGGER's Protect structural flooring boards. Darren Palmer, project manager at Strata, explained: "As a housebuilder, there are a variety of things we must consider when specifying building materials. First and foremost is sustainability, with the environment central to what we do at Strata. High quality products are another 'must have', as well as being easy for our site teams to install. With all of this in mind, Strata had looked for organisations and suppliers that align with our own values and EGGER UK fit the bill perfectly. The EGGER Protect boards worked well for Grace, with the boards offering up to 100 days weather protection. This was essential considering that the main construction works were taking place during the wetter winter months, with added protection against the elements proving invaluable. What's more, EGGER's structural flooring boards can be easily cleaned, ready for the plot to be handed over to other trades for the next phase of internal works. They also come with an easy-to-follow fitting guide and tongue and groove joint, meaning our onsite team can easily fit them together using EGGER's Joint & Joist Adhesive."

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BEWI supports cutting-edge ICF project

BEWI Thermomur® Insulating Concrete Formwork (ICF) Building System and BEWI Jackodur® Atlas Foundation System have made possible the construction of a new cutting-edge energy-efficient home in Berkshire. The project, which was in the past shortlisted for the BuildIt Awards, comprised the stunning transformation of a 1960s bungalow into a superb and unique family home of 418 sq m internal area. BEWI Thermomur® 350 Super ensures an outstanding thermal performance (with a U-value of 0.15W/m²K) and also enables a fast and efficient build. It was used on this project in conjunction with the BEWI Jackodur® Atlas Foundation System, which features an innovative interlocking design to eliminate thermal bridging and ensure superior insulation, combined with stability for the foundation slab. Both the contractor and the homeowner, Charles Vickery, particularly liked the strength of the block, both in terms of the ease of construction and also the minimal bracing of the blocks required prior to each concrete pour. The BEWI high density cavity closure product was also used on all four sides of every external door or window opening. The result is a building with a total construction cost of just under £1m, which has an outstanding thermal and acoustic performance and highly insulated structural walls and floors.

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Britain must believe that water is not a limitless resource

Cold, wet summers are becoming a distant memory.

The recent run of UK summer hot, dry spells means that water usage restrictions, such as hose pipe bans and requests from water companies to minimise usage are becoming an annual occurrence. Despite this there is still a perception by many that as a natural resource, water should be freely available.

'Behaviour change' campaigns have limited success beyond immediate response to crises – but regular water usage must be cut if the UK is not to enter a water crisis.

Compared to 1990 summers are hotter and up to 60% drier. The reality is that with the growing population, increasing daily consumption and changing climate the UK will experience significant water shortfalls. In England this is predicted to be 5 billion litres per day by 2055.

Without the threat of an immediate crisis, behaviour change is hard, and water usage is not understood. In the UK average daily usage is 142L, but 46% of people believe that their household uses under 20L per day. Water meters, especially smart meters, can help understanding of water usage and has been shown to reduce consumption.

GROUNDBREAKER – THE BEST LOCATION FOR SMART METERS

Groundbreaker is an insulated, surface mounted enclosure for a secure water management system and smart water meter. This locates the meter above ground, providing a better environment for smart technology over traditional underground boundary boxes, extends signal transmission and allows easy meter exchange.

The unique location of the Groundbreaker water management system future proofs the network and minimises the risk of developing future leaks. The position of the meter allows for an unjointed water supply, hence maintaining the integrity of the supply. The use of an uninterrupted supply has been recognised as best practice by Water UK and the Home Builders Federation.

SAVING WATER, WITHOUT BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

Water meters are a start. However, to significantly reduce UK consumption of water further, savings need to be built in. With Groundbreaker's NRv2 LoFlo, we can reduce our water usage every time we use a tap, without even noticing.



Water companies are regulated to provide a minimum standard of pressure and flow of water, but in many areas due to network structure and gravity fed systems supply is much greater. So, run a hose for five minutes at the bottom of the hill, and your lawn will be greener than the gardener that does the same at the top. These 'time controlled' uses, e.g. teeth cleaning, taking a shower, running a tap to rinse dishes could be standardised down if all households received the same acceptable, 'standardised' supply.

Groundbreaker's NRv2 LoFlo regulates the level of flow entering customer premises – regardless of network pressure, meaning a reduction in the level of water used by customers when 'variable use' appliances are used. As the flow of water into the premises is limited, then the amount used by the customer is also limited – but without providing a degradation of service, and more importantly not requiring any intervention or behavioural change on the part of the customer, leading to 'natural' reduction in per capital consumption.

SAVING WATER, SAVING MONEY

Designing water efficient homes can be a financial benefit as well as protecting the environment and water supplies.

In all new properties, developers will be given financial rewards for designing in basic water conservation measures, including low volume dual flush toilets, low flow taps and showers and water efficient washing machines and dishwashers. Known as the Common Environmental Incentive, developers will receive a rebate of £172 per property for achieving these standards.

In addition, some water companies offer extra financial incentives for the installation of a whole site flow regulator. Meeting the enhanced incentive standard, can mean receiving an additional rebate of £100 for an outlay of a maximum of £30.

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