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ADJACENT PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL TODAY

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IN THIS ISSUE: An extensive range of articles within our building control section covering asbestos, CDM, BIM, fire legislation and Parts A, E, L and P. Also featured is a summary of the Building Regulations with links to the latest Approved Documents.

The coastal challenge

Phil Evans, Head of Policy and Analysis for VisitEngland, examines the planning challenges facing seaside resorts



Permitted development rights start at home

Clive Betts Chair of the Communities and Local Government Committee discusses the changes to planning rules for homeowners



The real threat to archaeology

Dr Chris Cumberpatch, Vice-chair of RESCUE warns that economic cut-backs risk a return to the bad old days of development without archaeological mitigation

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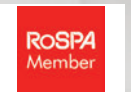
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Introduction

Welcome to the first edition of *Adjacent Planning and Building Control Today*, a new quarterly digital publication containing informative articles and in-depth analysis in the areas of policy, planning, regeneration, development management and building control. Each edition will contain the latest commentary dedicated to these topics, to develop and inspire debate.

This inaugural edition opens with Clive Betts, Chair of the Communities and Local Government Committee providing his thoughts on changes to the planning rules for homeowners. Many questions remain unanswered with concerns still being raised about the level of control councils have in their own area. Although the changes are to run initially for three years, the Planning Minister, Nick Boles, insists that he prefers to wait and see what happens before adjusting any policy. Clive Betts, among others, argue that this is risky at best.

An insightful article from Dr Chris Cumberpatch of RESCUE – The British Archaeological Trust warns that economic cut-backs risk a return to the bad old days of development without archaeological mitigation. Anecdotal information collected by RESCUE

indicates that heritage services are amongst the first to be targeted by local authorities when cuts are required to meet central government spending targets.

Elsewhere, we have a contribution from The London Borough of Brent discussing how CIL can work for developers and planning authorities alike, in addition to our extensive building control section examining issues such as: BIM, asbestos safety, and an examination of building regulations including Parts A, E, L and P.

The editorial team welcomes feedback from those in the field who would like to contribute to *Adjacent Planning and Building Control Today*. We are more than happy to consider suggestions on topic areas that you feel would add to current debates. ■

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Permitted development rights start at home

Chair of the Communities and Local Government Committee Clive Betts gives thought to changes to planning rules for homeowners...

A year has passed since Eric Pickles announced a relaxation of planning rules for homeowners. In that time his controversial plans have been out to consultation, criticised and changed. His original proposal – doubling the size limits on the depth of certain single-storey extensions to houses in non-protected areas for three years – will go ahead. But as a result of considerable concern among the public and from MPs on both sides of the House, councils will now be able to review proposed extensions if an adjoining neighbour objects.

But, the rationale and impact of the changes leave many questions unanswered. Will the government's local consultation scheme pit neighbour against neighbour – while ignoring the wider community and the environment? Will planning departments have the resources to deal with objections and what are essentially neighbour disputes? And where is the evidence that the new rules will contribute to the original aim of the policy – economic growth? After all, it was part of the government's Growth and Infrastructure Bill, which is now on the statute book.

The Secretary of State's announcement in September 2012 was made as part of a general review of the planning system. Giving homeowners more scope to extend their properties without planning permission naturally attracted the attention of the House of Commons Communities and Local Government Select Committee.

When the original proposal was put out to consultation in the autumn of last year, my Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat Committee colleagues and I were sufficiently concerned to make our own

response to the government's consultation. We concluded that the government's impact assessment of the proposed changes was inadequate and, they had failed to address or evaluate the social and environmental arguments against the proposed changes. Even on economic grounds I found the government's case far from convincing. We therefore concluded that the proposed changes required thorough and rigorous examination.

The results of the government's own consultation on the proposals had not been published by the time the Lords sent the Growth and Infrastructure Bill back to the Commons for final approval. Members were unimpressed however, and after a backbench rebellion threatened to sink the proposals the government was forced to revise them at the eleventh hour. MPs eventually agreed to the new rules – by a reduced majority of 44 – on the basis of a pledge from the government to bring forward plans for a light-touch neighbour consultation scheme.

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) finally published the results of its November-December consultation in May this year. It was no surprise that it showed 85% of respondents were against the original plans. Despite knowing this, the government had intended to continue with its original proposals; it only changed them in light of a possible defeat in the Commons. Such an approach does raise a question about the value of public consultation.

On the same day in May the government introduced the legislation for its neighbour consultation scheme



and my Committee decided to invite the Planning Minister, Nick Boles, to answer some questions.

The first question was regarding the economic benefit. In November 2012 the government said “20,000 new extensions could generate up to £600m of construction output, supporting up to 18,000 jobs.” It also suggested “each family who benefits will save up to £2,500 in planning and professional fees, with total savings of up to £100m a year.” But 6 months later, DCLG estimated, using, bizarrely, 1970s US house buying data, there would be only 2,900 additional extensions. It also revised down the potential savings. With the cost of preparing an average application at £1,190, and with between 20,000 and 40,000 households a year no longer being subject to planning permission requirements, it suggested the gross saving to applicants would be between £24m and £48m.

Appearing before the Committee, the minister argued that government could not predict exactly what would happen but governments had to be prepared to take risks when introducing policy.

There is some merit to this argument, but it might have been better made at the start of the process before the government had to scale back its projections so drastically.

Our concerns went deeper than the financial, however. When a local council receives plans for an extension, it will give immediate neighbours three weeks to object. If no one does, the council itself cannot intervene. This raises questions about the level of control local people and, indeed, local councils have over what happens in their area. Delving into the detail we uncovered an absurd process. A neighbour 100 yards away whose back garden adjoins an applicant’s property will be able to object, while a neighbour 10 yards away whose property does not adjoin the applicant’s will not.

Our call for questions to the minister on Twitter revealed another apprehension. A respondent asked: “What if the person proposing the monstrosity waits until his neighbour goes on an around the world trip and will be out of time to object?”



Clive Betts MP, Chair, Communities and Local Government Committee

In response Boles focused on the good fortune of people who have 100 yard back gardens and who are able to take three-week holidays. But that misses a number of points. First, people can be away from home for more than 21 days for a number of reasons

including family, health or business. The principle is one of due process, and it is now hit and miss and about how well neighbours get on. Second, although immediate neighbours will have a voice, communities will no longer have a say in the character and appearance of their area.

If a neighbour does object, the council will have to review the application free of charge. The minister suggested that given the cost of processing planning applications, fewer of them will mean a saving to local government. But planning departments should be self-financing with the costs of planning applications meeting running costs. How can there be a saving? Nor could the minister predict how many neighbour-initiated reviews councils might need to carry out. Only time will tell whether the workload of local planning departments goes up and whether their revenue goes down.

The big question is where does this leave localism? This government's approach looks inconsistent at best. Many more decisions about extensions will now be taken away from local authorities. Even where there is an objection councils will only be able to consider a proposed extension's impact on the 'amenity' of adjoining neighbours. They will not, as they can with most other planning applications, consider wider social and environmental concerns. How this ties in with the government's commitment to sustainable development is unclear.

The changes have an initial shelf life of three years. What happens then is currently anyone's guess. The government say the changes will be monitored on an on-going basis with a view to determining whether the three-year period should be extended further.

The minister told the Committee he was innately sceptical about projections of how people are going to behave. Boles said he preferred to try something, see what happens and, if people's objections are proved, adjust the policy. That is a risky approach with planning and development. Once something is built, once a neighbourhood's character has changed, it will be next to impossible to reverse. ■

Footnote: this article was drafted on 17 July 2013

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NPPF: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

Eighteen months from publication Suzan Yildiz, Head of Planning at Olswang LLP considers the operation of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in practice...

From its very conception, the NPPF incited hyperbole from the pro-development and environmental lobby alike. The (then) planning minister proclaimed “development is growth”, its authors declared it ‘a nearly perfect planning framework’ and the Campaign to Protect Rural England prophesied erosion of environmental protection. Did the NPPF herald an era of growth or mend ‘a broken planning system’? To answer those questions, we must consider its objectives and separate reality from hyperbole. The stated rationale for planning reforms¹ was:

- To restore collaborative democracy and local control;
- To rebalance the system in favour of sustainable development;
- To produce a simpler, quicker, less bureaucratic system;
- And as is widely acknowledged, to plan for growth.

Plan-Making

Overall, the NPPF functions effectively as ‘a consolidation’ of national planning policy but questions remain as to its impacts. The primacy of the local plan was rightly preserved in making decisions unless material considerations dictate otherwise². The sum of the NPPF’s aims places crucial importance on an up-to-date development plan. A planning system that is “genuinely plan-led, empowering local people to shape their surroundings, with succinct local and neighbourhood plans” is among twelve core planning principles³. In default of an up-to-date plan or a policy lacuna, a presumptive approach to sustainable development dictates the

grant of planning permission unless adverse impacts demonstrably outweigh the benefits (paragraph 14, NPPF).

Arguably, a positive impact on effective and timely plan-making is the litmus test of the NPPF’s success and its localist leanings. Conversely, if at its best the NPPF operates primarily to redress failings in the local planning process through a presumptive grant of permission, it smacks of the centralism it disavowed. Albeit that the principle of not delaying sustainable development due to short-comings in plan-making is sound.

Ironically thus far the NPPF is failing in the plan-making arena. According to research by Savills⁴, 50% of 190 LPAs lack a fully up-to-date plan. In terms of providing a five year housing land supply, a central tenet of national housing policy, performance is evidently poor rendering LPAs vulnerable on housing appeals. 33% of LPAs lack a five year housing supply. 34% have to apply the punitive 20% buffer due to persistent historic under-performance. At a time of housing crisis and stiff competition for land, the South-East has seen an overall 8.8% reduction in housing allocations. The plan-making process is not keeping pace with housing market realities. It is reported that as few as 6.8% of 164 LPAs have prepared a statement of compliance with the NPPF. Planning Inspectorate figures show that since publication of the NPPF, only 7 out of 66 strategic development plan documents submitted have proven sound. This compares lamentably with the figure of 50 adopted development plan documents in 2009 under the predecessor regime – itself a poor outcome.



The Cooperation Conundrum

Arguably progress with local plans was hindered by a double-whammy of abolishing Regional Strategies and a plethora of planning reforms which did not aid planning certainty. In lieu of Regional Strategies, Section 110, the Localism Act 2011 introduced a 'duty to cooperate' with neighbouring LPAs in respect of strategic cross-boundary issues, such as plan-making.

The rationale for abolishing Regional Strategies was a localist one – the impacts are less so. In the absence of central housing targets and diminishing resources, LPAs have struggled to prepare strategic plans and targets particularly at district level. On one hand LPAs are required to steer a localist course (e.g.

neighbourhood planning), on the other, to summon the political will to cooperatively plan for strategic housing and growth. Seeking release of Green Belt land for housing from one authority for the benefit of another's housing targets is a political 'hardsell'. Hence, the cooperation conundrum as exemplified between Birmingham and Coventry City Councils in promoting their respective local plans. Just over 50% of Birmingham's 80,000 housing target by 2031 can be met within its urban area. Birmingham, therefore, depends on its neighbours to meet its housing targets. Its ambitious plans for growth in turn require sufficient housing. In March 2013, Coventry was forced to withdraw its Core Strategy for failure to cooperate with Birmingham in preparing a Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

The duty can seem like a conundrum, but it is doubtlessly an opportunity that LPAs must rapidly realise. The 2011 Act is criticised for lack of prescriptive clarity, yet with a purposive approach to interpretation the duty begins to take shape. The draft National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)⁵ offers some guidance. The duty is evidently active and ongoing with a view to maximizing the effectiveness of outcomes on cross-cutting issues. It is more than mere consultation and permeates the plan-making process from evidence stage through to formulation of policies and adoption. Unless there is meaningful engagement, non-compliance will delay and undermine the soundness of plans. In this light, if Coventry engaged positively with Birmingham on housing targets, its communities would in turn benefit from the jobs and growth within Birmingham's boundaries.

In a post-NPPF world, the duty demands a long-term view. It presents an opportunity for creative and collaborative democracy with a view to strategic cross boundary growth. Political buy-in will be challenging, but the alternatives of permissive appeals and unsound plans are in danger of disempowering local communities. Put simply, LPAs must espouse a new mindset "United we stand, Divided we fall". Failing this, or possibly in any event, more legislative reform is likely to follow to address the housing crisis, perhaps mandating new settlements through legislation.

The government can do more to help. Rather than punitive intervention, 'collaborative democracy' between central and local levels is needed. It is conceivable, and would be far more productive, to establish task-forces to aid LPAs short on resources or expertise with plan-making functions. For example, to prepare viability evidence or strategic market assessments or compliance with the duty to cooperate, some instructive case studies in the new NPPG would be a good place to start.

Conclusion

The impacts of the NPPF range between the good, the bad and the ugly. The NPPF is emphatic about

'the plan-led system', but its impact on speeding up plan-making has been lacklustre. This undoubtedly constitutes 'the bad' among its impacts. As seen in the appeal context (to be considered in my next article) the NPPF bares its teeth when there is a lacuna in local policy. This is an inherent tension between the localism agenda and its centralist impact on appeal. There are no winners when plan-making fails. Success through appeal is short-term at best. Planning by appeal is an ineffective way to promote strategic growth or housing, and perceived negatively by local communities. Out of date plans do not provide developers and investors with the requisite certainty to promote development. Success on appeal is a poor substitute for planning certainty. The government's aims of improving a sluggish system cannot be judged a success. There is room for improvement at the top. ■

¹ "Open Source Planning", Conservative Party, Policy Green Paper No. 14
² Section 38(6), the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Also, para 150 and Annex 1, NPPF
³ Second bullet of 'decision-taking' part, paragraph 17, NPPF
⁴ "Assessing the impact of the NPPF", March 2013
⁵ Published online in Beta version and open to consultation until 14 October 2013

The next installment of 'NPPF: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly' will appear in January's edition of Planning and Building Control Today.

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The real threat to archaeology

Dr Chris Cumberpatch, Vice-chair of RESCUE warns that economic cut-backs risk a return to the bad old days of development without archaeological mitigation...

In July 2013 a report on local government staff resources allocated to archaeology and building conservation was issued jointly by English Heritage, the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers (ALGAO), and the Institute of Historic Building Conservation¹. The report outlined unequivocally the significant decline in the availability of the specialist advice that local authorities require if they are to deal properly and responsibly with our archaeological and built heritage. The downward trend in the provision of services began in 2006 and has seen the numbers of archaeological advisors, including Historic Environment Records (HER) officers, fall by 28% while the decline in the numbers of Conservation officers has been marked even more at 33%. In the past 12 months the number of archaeological specialists has fallen by 3% and conservation officers by 4%. There is no sign of this ceasing and with further cuts to local authority budgets planned for the financial year 2013-2014, the situation will continue to worsen.

A crisis in the planning system

The report shows the ongoing drop in the capacity of local councils to deal adequately with archaeological and historic sites within our towns, cities and countryside. The findings from the report confirm the anecdotal information collected by RESCUE over the same period, which indicates that heritage services are amongst the first to be targeted by local authorities when cuts are required to meet central government spending targets. Specific examples include the closure of the Merseyside HER and the withdrawal of advice to five local authorities (Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens & The Wirral) in a region that includes the Liverpool Waterfront World Heritage Site. Other areas affected by severe cuts

include Portsmouth and the West Midlands where Sandwell and Dudley no longer have HERs, Walsall has no archaeological officer and the archaeology and historic buildings of Birmingham are now the responsibility of one individual. Such actions are directly contrary to the government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)² which states:

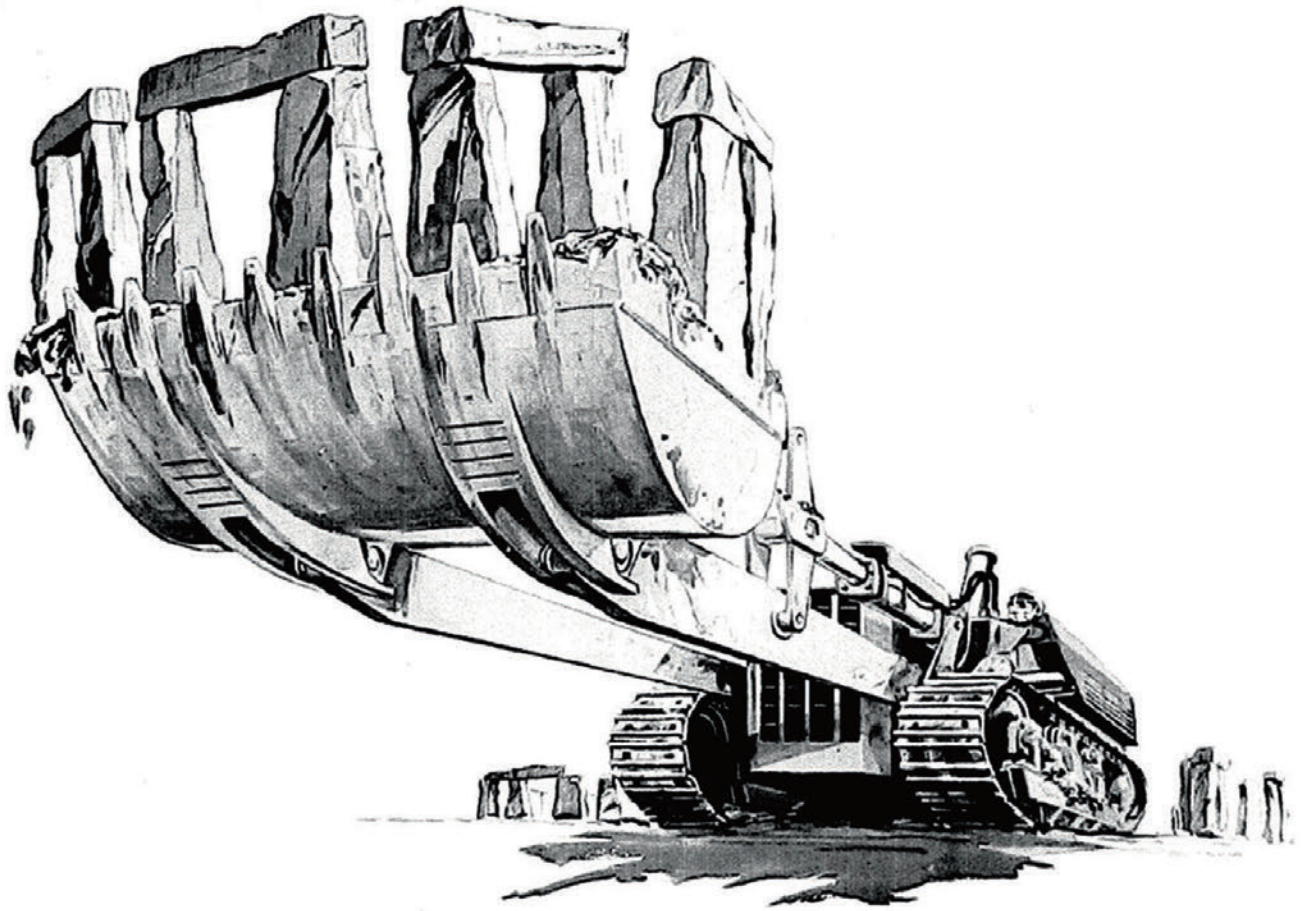
'Local planning authorities should have up-to-date evidence about the historic environment in their area and use it to assess the significance of heritage assets and the contribution to their environment. ...Local planning authorities should either maintain or have access to a historic environment record (NPPF paragraph 169).'

Government and the value of culture

In a speech delivered at the British Museum on 24th April 2013³, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, Maria Miller, drew attention to the immense value of culture (including heritage) to the economy. RESCUE questions the logic of emphasising the economic importance of our heritage while at the same time allowing spending to fall to the extent that the historic environment is no longer effectively protected⁴. The loss of local authority staff posts, a direct result of the government's imposition of unrealistic spending limits on local authorities, indicates a catastrophic gap between rhetoric and reality.

Why does it matter?

An effective, professionally staffed HER and advice service is critical to ensuring that threats to archaeological sites posed by development are recognised, that appropriate mitigation schemes are put in place, and subsequent fieldwork is of a high standard to



Tomorrow maybe too late.
Rescue

allow accurate and worthwhile interpretation of the results. Without the capacity to undertake these functions developers are at risk of being under-prepared for encountering archaeological material during construction works, and important new archaeological sites, such as the spectacular Anglo-Saxon princely burial at Prittlewell (<http://www.museumoflondonarchaeology.org.uk/Services/PCaseStudies/UK-projects/-Prittlewell-Prince/>) and the large Iron Age and Roman site recently discovered in Peterborough (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cambridgeshire-16512512>) will be damaged or lost as a result.

The government has responsibilities under international agreements (notably the Valetta Convention⁵) to ensure that heritage is protected. By failing to

ensure the existence of a robust system of planning and development control they not only abrogating their responsibilities to international commitments, but also risking the loss of unique heritage assets resulting in cultural and economic impoverishment.

Facing up to the crisis

In order to halt this decline, a cross-party commitment to the following reforms of heritage protection is required:

- To make the provision of conservation and archaeological advisory services charged with the safeguarding of the historic and built environment a statutory obligation on all local authorities;
- To make the provision of a fully resourced HER a



Dr Chris Cumberpatch
Vice-chair
RESCUE – The British
Archaeological Trust

statutory obligation on all local authorities;

- To make access to a HER free for all citizens, community groups, research students, academics and others with a legitimate interest in the historic environment.

It is essential that local and regional museums are adequately resourced in order to be able to undertake the care and conservation of the written records, artefacts and other material that are the result of all archaeological fieldwork.

A future for our past?

RESCUE believes that Britain is close to the point at which the provision of services designed to safeguard our historic environment is no longer adequate to meet the challenges that present themselves on a day-to-day basis.

“Local planning authorities should have up-to-date evidence about the historic environment in their area and use it to assess the significance of heritage assets and the contribution to their environment.”

In spite of the publication of reports by heritage organisations and expressions of concern when a specific archaeological site or historic building is lost, the catalogue of losses continues to expand. At what stage will we decide to act collectively to support under-resourced and vulnerable services and thus ensure that our historic sites and landscapes receive the protection that they require through the planning process?

Will we rise to meet this challenge as we did in the early 1970s or will future generations look back on the early 21st century as the time when we abandoned our past to short-termism and financial expediency? ■

¹ A summary of the content and a link to the full report can be found here: <http://ihbconline.co.uk/newsarchive/?p=6410>

² National Planning Policy Framework: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/60777/2116950.pdf

³ Testing Times: Fighting culture’s corner in an age of austerity <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/testing-times-fighting-cultures-corner-in-an-age-of-austerity>

⁴ Testing Times: Fighting culture’s corner in an age of austerity A response by RESCUE – The British Archaeological Trust <http://rescue-archaeology.org.uk/2013/04/26/testing-times/>

⁵ Details of the terms of the Valetta Convention can be found here: <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/143.htm> . RESCUE contends that Britain is in breach of Articles 2 (i), 4 (iii) and 5 (i, ii and iii) of the Convention as a direct result of government policy.

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A sustainable CIL approach

Angus Saunders Principal Project Officer at Brent Council highlights how CIL can be used for sustainable growth and development...

Brent recently introduced the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), being amongst one of the first London boroughs to do so. We have plans for extensive growth in both homes and jobs over the next 13 years and we recognised the opportunity CIL offered to us to deliver growth in a sustainable way, and to attract investment in the borough.

Before CIL, Brent operated a tariff levied on new residential and commercial development secured by a S106 agreement, and the money received could only be used to mitigate the impact of the development from which it was collected. Whilst the tariff gave developers a degree of certainty about the amount of money they would have to pay, the restrictions on S106 prevented the council from using the money strategically. CIL is a step-change from this old regime, a far more flexible tool that allows for pooling of large sums of money potentially to deliver large, strategic pieces of infrastructure. CIL also offers a chance to reshape the relationship between development and infrastructure investment and to combine other funding sources, giving Brent an opportunity to provide more of the new infrastructure that the borough needs to cope with new development, and to attract new investment.

Brent's regeneration strategy is focussed on five parts of the borough, planned to deliver 22,000 homes and 14,000 jobs by 2026. Our approach to CIL has been focussed on how we can use CIL to attract development to these areas whilst also making sure both new and existing residents have the facilities they need for Brent to be an attractive place to live and work.

At an early stage, we decided that the purpose of CIL should be to support sustainable growth and regeneration and to help to pay for the infrastructure that is a priority for the borough. Before we started work on our CIL, we had a Core Strategy that is a plan for growth, and we drew up an Infrastructure and Investment Framework (IIF) that detailed the social and physical infrastructure requirements the borough needed to support that growth.

With significant regenerative change in parts of the borough like Wembley, considerable amounts of new infrastructure is required to support this level of growth. When it came to setting the rates we would charge, we sought to strike a balance between helping to fund new infrastructure and the potential effects on financial viability of development across the borough, using evidence such as local market information and comparables to inform a viability study. Whilst we did not want to deter investment through a high CIL charge, we equally did not want to deter inward investment by an inability to provide the physical and social infrastructure new residents, customers and businesses will require.

The evidence showed a clear variance in economic viability of different development types, with residential development being more viable than office development. In response, we opted to set different rates according to different uses, an approach we feel better reflects the reality of development in Brent.

We knew from the IIF what infrastructure was needed and we could demonstrate the extent of the funding gap that needed to be met over the coming years. We had to set the rates at such a level that we could

“There is a potential to tap into a virtuous cycle of infrastructure investment, development and more investment.”

fund a significant amount of that essential infrastructure, but that did not make it so expensive to develop in Brent that the plan would not be implemented.

Following the adoption of the charging schedule, we have been working on a Strategic Infrastructure Plan (SIP) that will help the council to both choose what pieces of infrastructure need to be provided, and what developments are most important to the borough. We began by looking at the development sites that are crucial to delivering our growth plans and then investigating those key sites to find out what barriers there are to their development, and what the council can do to help to overcome those barriers. As our strategy has progressed, we have started investigating how CIL can be used to bring about those developments that in turn generate the greatest benefit for the borough, in both financial and regenerative terms. There is a potential to tap into a virtuous cycle of infrastructure investment, development and more investment.

With our new civic centre at the heart of a regeneration area that already hosts Wembley national football stadium, and is soon to host the London Designer Outlet store, we are well aware of the role the council can play in helping to attract inward investment. We are looking at ways that new infrastructure, perhaps a new public space to make key sites attractive to future residents and businesses, can be provided by initial CIL payments; in turn the development of those sites will generate CIL receipts and also New Homes Bonus and business rates – money which the council can re-invest in other infrastructure in the area to help unlock the next wave of development sites.



Angus Saunders
Principal Project Officer
Brent Council

We are also looking at how we can involve the community more in the way the council decides to invest money in their area; the flexibility of CIL and the ability to pool large sums of money means we can respond to infrastructure in a strategic rather than a piecemeal manner, and that demands a response that involves our councillors and listening to our communities.

CIL also presents challenges: under CIL, the council is likely to have to orchestrate the delivery of more infrastructure than under the old S106 regime, where developers could agree to build the infrastructure themselves, and it is a challenge for local authorities to build the capacity needed to deliver large pieces of infrastructure.

CIL is a significant change for developers and councils alike, presenting a number of challenges, but it is also a chance for local authorities to think and act strategically and unlock the potential for growth. It's crucial to strike the balance between generating enough CIL revenue to pay for the infrastructure needed to support growth, but also to not deter investment by setting that rate too high. We believe we have rates that reflect the economic reality in Brent, and we believe we have a plan to invest that revenue in a way that will attract further investment into the area. ■

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A finer class of grass

One of the largest turf-growing enterprises in the country...

Grasslands are long established turf growers based in the Garden of England, supplying quality seed grown turf into the landscape, sports and amenity market throughout the South East of England. Romney Marsh has had a reputation for growing quality grass since medieval times. In those days, the grass was for grazing sheep and cattle which continues to the present day, but for the past thirty or so years, we have moved the goal-posts somewhat by growing grass specifically for turf production. Using highly rated cultivars from the latest breeding programmes, we produce turf which is perfectly suited for the varying soils of the South East. Most of the land on which we grow is below sea level and when the Romans arrived in Kent some 2000 years ago, it was still being washed by the tides twice a day. Draining the marsh and keeping the sea out began in earnest some 800 years ago and the resulting soils are made up of sands (from the sea), organic loam (from vegetation that grew there), together with a bit of clay (washed off the land) resulting in a superb growing medium... especially for grass.

From small beginnings, Grasslands has expanded into one of the biggest turf producers in the UK. Quality is always in the forefront of our aim to supply turf into a wide variety of landscape situations throughout our area of operations. In order to achieve this, we use the latest technology and state of the art machinery to ensure that all the turf we despatch to customers is of uniform thickness and dimensions. This all makes for



Work undertaken at the Natural History Museum

easy installation by our many landscape customers. Our continuing investment in new machinery ensures that consistency of product is maintained throughout the production year. Modern overhead irrigation equipment is essential in order to bring our turf fields to harvest in tip-top order, and to ensure that our irrigation routines are maintained, a new reservoir was built and brought into use in the last few years.

Even transport does not escape our drive to maintain our "green" credentials, with continuing investment in our Euro 5 compliant fleet of delivery vehicles which have extra low emissions to comply with the latest requirements. All our delivery vehicles carry on-board fork-lifts, making offloads to difficult locations more straightforward to achieve. By carrying out all our own deliveries, we quite literally control every aspect of our product from seeding to delivery.

Today we have extended our area of operation to include the installation of turf to large-scale

projects. These vary from large lawns for substantial private homes, school playing fields, high quality lawns and grass areas in housing developments and top end visitor destinations such as Kew Gardens, the Tower of London and the Natural History Museum. On these projects, turf is installed mechanically in "big roll" format which lays fifteen square metres of turf in much the same time as a single square metre would be laid by hand.

In the past twelve months, following the hugely successful London 2012 Olympics, Grasslands has supplied many acres of turf into Greenwich to replace turf damaged beyond repair. This area includes Greenwich Park and the Old Royal Naval College, as well as the National Maritime Museum which we almost entirely returfed to restore it to its customary immaculate condition.



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Finding the Files

The importance of local authority archives...

County record offices and borough archives used to be obscure places, but the past decade has seen increasing interest from the general public, keen to research their ancestors or the history of their neighbourhood. Ideally these places should be the collective memory of their community, and at least retain the long-term records of the local authority and its various departments.

However there are practical problems, not least the space required as documents accumulate, which might result in part of the collection being stored at a different site. There is also the tricky issue of when files can be considered dead and consigned to the archives. Should the original department retain its own buffer store for ready reference to matters that might only be dormant? Finance is a growing pressure: central archives tend to be part of library services, which are struggling to retain a share of council budgets. If departments want to be sure their records will survive, it's increasingly likely they will have to contribute to the cost.

Building Records

Many of us prepare feasibility studies for adapting or extending existing buildings, but at certain stages of my career I have found myself responsible for archives of various kinds, so I see both sides of the problem.

For the construction industry, there is much useful material to be retrieved from archives, saving on survey and site investigation costs.

It may not avoid these costs entirely, but it can help steer efforts more efficiently.

In my work of adapting or repairing existing buildings, finding an original plan is a great help, though the quality and detail varies widely. It may only be a rough sketch attached to an 1870s drainage form, while a slightly later example may show the complete roof construction.

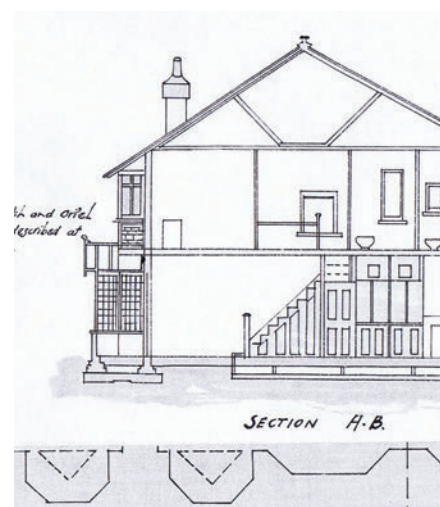
Even for erecting new buildings, knowing what lies beneath can avoid an archaeological rescue dig disrupting the building programme!

Digital obsolescence

A challenge for any archivist is the variety of formats and materials that need to be stored, from medieval parchment rolls to large-format building plans. There have been great efforts to improve accessibility and reduce bulk by digitising material. Successive changes of media make it difficult to retrieve information from only a couple of decades ago – remember floppy discs? In contrast, microfilm, first adopted in 1870 to fly correspondence out of besieged Paris by balloon, has proved relatively resilient to changing times.

Picture this

A century ago was the golden age of the picture postcard. Photographers would record any respectable street, knowing that they could sell a worthwhile number of postcard views to residents. Shopkeepers would pose



outside their business and use the resulting card for promotion purposes.

Many of these cards survive in archive collections or among local history groups, and I can vouch for their value in restoring original features.

Contact Alan Piper for advice on single properties or groups of buildings.

Alan Piper Consultancy

Alan Piper

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Isle of Wight- a Unitary authority with a wide range of resorts that is re-inventing its product offer

The coastal challenge

Phil Evans, Head of Policy and Analysis for VisitEngland, examines the planning challenges facing seaside resorts...

Two years ago VisitEngland, the national tourist board, launched a series of Tourism Action Plans together with the wider tourism industry to help take forward some of the long-term priorities identified in England's first Strategic Framework for Tourism (launched in 2010). The Framework was created to help bring together the many disparate elements of the wider visitor economy and enable them to contribute to a national growth agenda. Some specific areas such as seaside resorts were identified as locations facing a particular set of challenges and worthy of special attention.

Coastal resorts are one of the most misunderstood types of location and yet the very essence of an English summer seaside holiday represents the epitome

of how we see our domestic tourism 'product'. Most people over thirty, as children, have probably experienced an English seaside holiday and most will look back on it with a degree of affection. The media has, on the whole, had less empathy with the English seaside holiday concept, and despite the regular images of packed summer beaches whenever we have a mini heat wave, they are just as likely to highlight moody shots the following day if the weather breaks or to focus on a dilapidated holiday infrastructure.

The truth is that despite the additional problems that many resorts face, on the whole they have survived and still deliver their original function (in a few cases they are now into their third century). Through adaptation and diversification, resorts can both succeed as

“The importance of maintaining and refreshing public realm cannot be underestimated because it attracts and encourages private sector investment in redeveloping existing, and creating new businesses.”

great places to live, work and play, whilst offering an ideal way to accommodate sustainable growth, recognising that tourism is a key element to help us climb out of an economic recession, and providing jobs at all levels in a way that few other industries can match.

There are some great resorts in England and they come in all shapes and sizes. Part of the problem in trying to define a model of best practice, both for planners and tourism managers, is that no two resorts are alike – they all have a unique heritage, patronage, physical development, natural features and degrees of attractiveness. One of the key advantages our resorts have over foreign competitors is that they are not homogenised concrete ‘book shelves’ of the kind one sees in both contemporary and developing overseas coastal destinations – they are each a special place and most have strong individual identities. Think of Brighton, Bournemouth, Blackpool, Torquay, the Isle of Wight, Scarborough – the list goes on. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) identified 37 ‘principal’ standalone seaside towns, but VisitEngland has identified over 100 such resorts that depend on tourism as their main industry. The Seaside Resorts Action Plan (referred to above) clarifies how collectively we can help maintain the prosperity of these destinations. Local government, in particular the planning sector, can play a central role in this process.

More than any other type of destination, seaside resorts are defined by their public realm. The infrastructure needed to support coastal locations such as piers and promenades also creates a sense of place that unifies what would otherwise be a collection of disparate and often competing

Blackpool has invested £800m on infrastructure improvements including a new tramway, sea wall, promenade and town centre improvements plus private sector investment in major attractions



businesses. The importance of maintaining and refreshing public realm cannot be underestimated because it attracts and encourages private sector investment in redeveloping existing, and creating new businesses. This has been reflected in Blackpool where major investment in the Tower and the Pleasure Beach has followed the substantial public sector investment in the promenade and other public realm. Larger resorts however, also face disproportionate costs owing to their scale, but this is not always forthcoming in terms of their eligibility for funding.

On top of the infrastructure issues there is also a disproportionate cost of other provision provided by local authorities in coastal areas. This can range from welfare costs, supporting higher than average ratios of people receiving benefit, through to the needs of caring for the elderly and infirm. These factors are



Brighton- branded as 'the city by the sea'-an example of the unique aspects of each resort location

not fully recognised and therefore appropriately funded, resulting in a greater demand for support from within local authorities and from their own budgets.

The long-term decline in the need for hotels in seaside resorts has created an additional problem related to welfare issues. As surplus stock becomes redundant, local authorities are pressurised into allowing change of use and often this will be to Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs). Whilst this might satisfy a short-term need and facilitate access to housing, HMOs are frequently found in or within close proximity of the commercial hub of the town (or to the seafront), and this has a negative impact on both the tourism identity of the resort and on other tourism-related businesses being able to trade effectively.

Conversely, there is a need for good quality, affordable housing to allow workers in the full range of jobs that service the tourism sector to both live and work long-term in resorts, many of which have higher than regional average housing prices, due to their appeal as holiday destinations. As there is no 'one size fits all' solution to coping with some of these problems facing resorts, how can planners and public administrators ensure that they contribute positively to the future prosperity of such destinations?

The first thing to remember is that this is far from being a lost cause. Resorts have always had to adapt, so there is a degree of resilience they have unlike other towns. While Government is focussed on paths to economic recovery, they can contribute, through increased visitor expenditure, to play a



central role in growing the national economy.

Perhaps the key focus for planners to consider should be the issue of change of use. It is a complex matter in seaside towns especially amongst Victorian or Georgian accommodation stock, because most property is fulfilling a role it wasn't originally designed for and has already evolved over previous decades. For example, a large number of resort hotels were originally large detached houses or 'villas' which have been extended over the years and which have had to accommodate new kitchens, stairwells, fire escapes, en-suite facilities and even indoor swimming pools. Many will have been sub-divided into smaller rooms and will have ad hoc extensions and Mansard roofs added. Many guesthouses and B & Bs will have been smaller private homes, very often terraced, with limited parking facilities.

Coastal resorts have been losing serviced accommodation for a number of years and there remains over-capacity in numerous locations. In some ways, it is a good thing that surplus stock is changing back to its original use, and especially to fulfil the needs of the housing market. The problem is that it is largely the wrong type of accommodation that has the potential for being lost to housing. In resorts this will often be prime seafront property that can command a high price for development or demolition into flats. It is not always the lower end, poorer stock that is granted change of use but generally middle-range (3-star) accommodation which has a larger land envelope, and which commands higher prices. Destinations are thus at risk of being left still having overcapacity issues and a downgrading of their hotel offer.

Whilst it is a matter for destination managers – the tourism specialists, to re-shape their product, offer and to adapt to new growth markets, their task will be near impossible if further loss of potentially good hotel accommodation continues at the rate it has been doing.

England's seaside resorts are a unique gift we have inherited and we must not let them be lost into becoming expensive to maintain towns that happen to be beside the sea. ■

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A seafront transformation

As investment in coastal areas grows, Cabinet Secretary at Sunderland City Council, Mel Speding, discusses how regeneration in the North East city is gaining speed...

Sunderland's Seafront Regeneration project was launched in 2009, with the aim of transforming the waning fortunes of the city's twin resorts of Seaburn and Roker.

Since then, the project continues to develop and grow with visible results.

This delivery owes much to a widespread and early consultation process that established a vision for a shared regeneration vision and clear strategic planning.

Some people outside of the North East may not know that Sunderland's coastline north of the River

Wear boasts two stunning and sandy North Sea beaches at Seaburn and Roker.

However, falling demand for domestic holidays and the growing popularity of cheap foreign package holidays meant that both Roker and Seaburn suffered from the under-investment and decline that has been too common in many UK coastal resorts.

The importance of addressing this seafront issue has long been recognised within the city council. There is a corporate and strategic understanding that regenerating and realising the potential of the seafront would in turn have wider benefits for Sunderland by:

- Emphasising one of its most valuable and distinctive

assets, highlighting Sunderland's sense of place and the quality of life it offers;

- Transforming the way people feel about where they live – boosting the sense of pride and ownership, promoting healthy living and retaining residents in the city;
- Developing investment into the visitor and cultural economy;
- Playing a role in diversifying the range of employment opportunities in a city largely dominated by individual large scale employers; and
- Encouraging private sector investment, boosting market values and addressing current pressures in the property market.

The Seafront Regeneration project has been led by the Planning Implementation Team at Sunderland City Council and began with an extensive city-wide consultation. This looked at what the people who live, work, and visit Sunderland felt should be the vision for the future of their seafront.

This included hands-on 'planning for real' activities, which encouraged people to consider different aspects of seafront regeneration. Hard to reach groups including disabled and older people's groups were targeted, with workshops and site visits tailored to their needs.

More than 2,500 written responses were generated and this was one of the highest responses ever to council consultation. This all helped the council gain a valuable insight into the community's seafront aspirations.

The consultation directly informed 3 city council planning policy documents which now underpin the entire Seafront Regeneration project.

These are an overarching Seafront Regeneration Strategy (2010) providing strategic direction and investment guidance identifying a series of 'Character Areas' and development.

The other two – the Seaburn Masterplan and Marine Walk Masterplan (for Roker) – provide development and planning guidance.

Seaburn has traditionally been the focus of leisure activity. The Ocean Park site, formerly home to a fun-fair and other leisure facilities, is now an opportunity for a modern and sustainable leisure-led development and the master plan sets out an indicative layout and design code reflecting the council's ambitions.

The Marine Walk Masterplan provides specific design guidance for this area of Roker. Its focus is culture-led regeneration, comprising artwork and public realm improvements enhancing Roker's rich heritage and natural environment.

So far, the strategic planning documents have played a vital role in the successful regeneration.

This is because:

- Today, there is a collective understanding of the shared aspirations for the seafront, allowing for a more focussed and efficient direction of resources as well as more consistent decision making;
- Therefore the entire regeneration project has been far more than beautification as it has taken major steps in improving the management and

maintenance of the seafront and developing a strong events programme – two areas of particular concern to local residents;

- The robust approach to strategic planning allowed strong values such as Design Quality to be placed at the heart of the project. The arts and culture-led approach of the Marine Walk Masterplan has been singled out by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) as an exemplar piece of work;
- Associated with this and from a planning (development management) perspective, the master plans have given planning officers more clarity and a robust basis for encouraging appropriate regeneration uses;
- The development of a regeneration strategy and master plans, accompanied by far reaching consultation has raised the profile of the area. As the regeneration project has gained momentum over the years this interest has grown and is beginning to crystallise in the form of planning applications for leisure/visitor facilities. For example, a development partner has been secured and planning permission obtained for the redevelopment of a former disused seating shelter at Seaburn to a mixed café restaurant use;
- Linked to this, the increased profile and interest in the area has also kick started the development of an improved and expanded events calendar; and
- Finally local seafront plans have been crucial in securing external funding to help deliver projects on the ground. External funders have responded positively to the clear strategic direction and vision.

In 2010 the project team successfully secured £1m from the CABE/English Heritage 'Sea Change Fund'. This was matched with £500,000 from the City Council to deliver a first phase of improvements identified in the Marine Walk Masterplan at Roker.

Improvements included:

- New artist designed gates for the Grade II listed Roker;
- Major public realm and landscaping improvements;
- Award-winning feature lighting scheme designed with school children, and;
- Artist designed Roker PODS. The mobile PODS are designed to reflect the area's unique cannon-ball limestone rock formations, provide visitor facilities including a refreshments kiosk, plus events and education opportunities.

Early this year a further £2m was secured from the Government's Coastal Communities Fund. The proposals of the bid were established through the Seaburn Masterplan and matched with almost £1m of city council funding.

The project seeks to deliver three phases of vital infrastructure improvements, enhancing the visitor experience and paving the way for the comprehensive redevelopment of the Ocean Park Site by a developer. Interventions include:

- Phase I – Promenade improvements including hard and soft landscaping, viewing platforms and new street furniture. This work is now nearing completion;
- Phase II – Implementation of traffic management



measures and environmental improvements to the pedestrian area at Whitburn Road, the key route along the Seaburn's Seafront and gateway to the area. These works are now out to tender;

- Phase III – Green Infrastructure improvements including measures to address flooding and surface water drainage, as well as creation of improved habitats and areas of natural play.

A £1.35m rolling programme of restoration for the 110 year-old Grade II listed Roker Pier began this August, commencing with repairs to the lighthouse Lantern-house. In September the city council was successful in securing further project development funding of £53,200 from the Heritage Lottery Fund. This will be used towards developing a £500,000 bid over the next two years for the full restoration of the

pier lighthouse, and the pier's access tunnel with a view to opening them to the public.

This is a really exciting time for the seafront. We've seen a number of improvements since we first held our seafront consultation in 2009 and plans are really starting to gather pace. This is borne out by the level of private sector interest we're beginning to attract. ■

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Councillor Mel Speding
Cabinet Secretary

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Asbestos – the hidden assassin

Wayne Bagnall MBE, chartered member of the Institution of Occupational Health and Safety (IOSH) specialising in asbestos, takes us back to basics and warns how to spot the hidden killer...

Asbestos is the name given to a group of naturally occurring minerals that are contained within rock. These natural resources appear as masses of strong, flexible strands that can be separated into thin threads and woven. Heat or chemicals do not affect asbestos fibres, and they do not conduct electricity. They are tougher than steel and quite resilient.

Being carcinogens, all types of asbestos are hazardous. However, the Rotterdam Convention – a treaty signed by a number of sovereign states to control the importation of hazardous chemicals – does not list chrysotile asbestos on its prior informed consent list. This is certainly a talking point because strong scientific evidence indicates the substance can cause asbestosis, lung cancer and mesothelioma.

The risks from asbestos arise when the substance is disturbed without the necessary controls in place. When this happens, fibres break into tiny airborne particles that float in the air and stick to clothes etc. These fibres are easily inhaled or swallowed and can cause serious health problems, with the lungs being the main organs at risk. Where the fibres penetrate body tissues, they eventually cause permanent damage to the organs 10 to 50 years after the exposure. Diseases caused by exposure are usually inoperable or have no cure mostly resulting in a premature death.

In the UK, more than 4,000 people die each year as a result of contact with asbestos, and this figure is estimated to keep rising for the next 20 years. A quarter of these deaths result from indirect exposure, with tradesmen such as electricians, joiners, plumbers and demolition trades being at high risk.

Asbestos remains in numerous older commercial, industrial and residential buildings in the UK. It can also be found in equipment, vehicles and buried in the ground – particularly where landfill was poorly managed.

The government introduced the duty to manage asbestos provision in all non-domestic buildings in 2004 as part of The Control of Asbestos Regulations 1987 (introduced in 2012). The new provision required duty holders to identify, manage and communicate the extent, condition and locations of their presumed or known asbestos containing materials to anyone who is likely to come into contact or disturb it.

In practice, this translates to asbestos surveys and management plans being compiled, managed and communicated. Anyone intending to work invasively or disturb the fabric of the structure on any pre-2000 building must enquire about the presence of asbestos before any work commences.

All employers including the self-employed, have a duty to ensure adequate information, and that instruction and training is provided to anyone who is likely to disturb or be exposed to asbestos. Anyone likely to be working with, or near asbestos, needs to attend an appropriate asbestos training course, which should be delivered by an accredited organisation. ■

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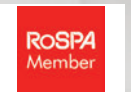
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There are five companies in the Group:

- SMH Equipment: our manufacturing company, which includes the brands of Progard and Harley Scientific;
- SMH Training and Scientific Services: through this company we deliver asbestos and other scientific surveys, sample and data analysis, and specialist training for those who work in contaminated environments;
- SMH Products: this includes our network of nine branches across the UK providing local sales, hire, testing and repair services;
- SMH Equipements: our company which supplies a full range of products across Europe; and
- SMH Australia: which supplies the whole Asia Pacific region.

Formed in 1970 as GRP Polyester Plastic moulders, SMH began the manufacture of decontamination units in South Shields in

1984. With a full design and manufacture capability, SMH can provide our customers with bespoke products to meet their individual needs and requirements.

As well as this manufacturing facility, we operate nine branches across the UK, providing a local sales contact and a full stock holding of all our products and consumables, a local collection and delivery point, and a local hire, service, testing and repair facility. SMH Equipements SARL, our European business, was formed in 2005, with the latest addition to the company, SMH Australia, being formed in 2011, meaning we can provide our customers with a high quality service worldwide.

SMH provides high quality products and it is essential that they are properly maintained to ensure they perform to their full potential. We provide a full after-sales service, with servicing, repairs and testing facilities worldwide delivered by our team of trained engineers based across our branch network. This means that wherever our equipment is being used, there is a branch nearby to keep it working to its maximum potential.

From our beginnings in manufacturing equipment for sale and hire, SMH has expanded to offer a full range of decontam-



ination and containment products, which includes full respiratory protection, masks, coveralls, gloves, and head and foot protection. SMH offers all the site set-up equipment that decontamination workers require, including enclosure material and ancillaries, making us a true 'one stop shop' for the decontamination industry.



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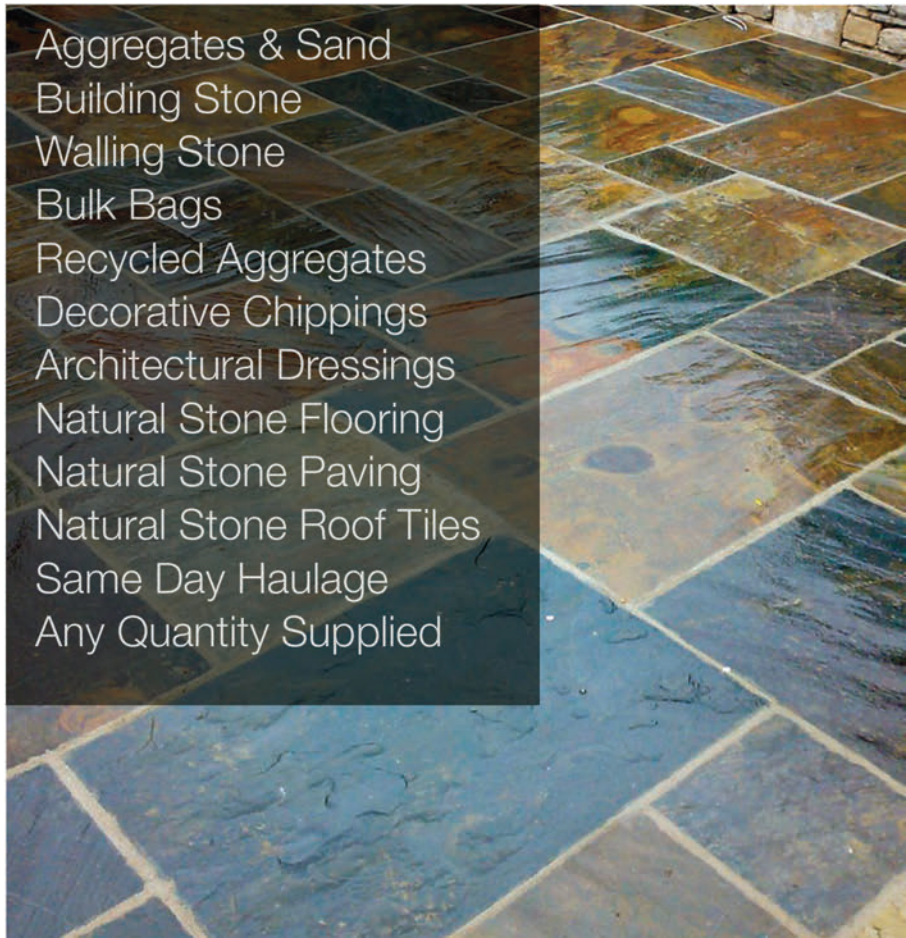
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Tackling the construction skills 'time bomb'

William Burton, interim chief executive at CITB explains the importance of up-skilling the next generation of workers to meet growth in the construction sector...

As the UK construction sector is beginning to turn a corner, the time to recruit new employees to replace more than 400,000 retiring workers and offset a skills 'time bomb' is now.

Recent reports from the Markit/CIPS Index show that the construction industry has not only grown again for the fifth consecutive month, but that it is outperforming other UK sectors in re-balancing the economy.

While this is positive news for the industry as a whole, labour market intelligence published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), shows that the UK construction sector is facing a skills 'time bomb'. Indeed, the industry needs to replace almost 1 in 5 of the current working population in the next 5-10 years – equivalent to just over 400,000 people.

Additionally, the figures also show the industry is suffering with a shortage of young people coming into the industry, with the number of 16-35 year olds making up just over a third of the sector's workforce and just 10% of those aged under 25.

Ignoring this growing obstacle is no longer an option and it is now imperative that employers do all they can to up-skill the next generation of workers and ensure that the level of skills within the sector is sufficient to meet the growing demand.

As an industry that is larger than the financial services sector, construction is a vital engine for the country's economic growth. In fact, it returns £2.84 for every £1 invested in it, so has the ability to kick-start a very strong recovery. However, without a

pipeline of skilled workers to deliver planned projects, the sector may be unable to fulfill its potential.

Many of you will remember the skills shortages that plagued the industry in the early to mid 2000s, before the economic downturn really hit hard, and urgent action is now needed to make sure we do not end up in the same situation in the next couple of years.

To address the issue, CITB, the Industry Training Board and Sector Skills Council, is working hard to change the image of the industry and deliver training to meet the skills needed and bring fresh blood into the construction sector.

We must get young people interested in construction while they are still at school; ensuring that we tap into the pipeline of talent and begin to influence where it matters – in the classrooms.

On that basis, we have a network of Construction Ambassadors working across the country, who are experienced industry professionals 'on the ground' in secondary schools, sharing their positive experiences with pupils – with the aim of inspiring them to see the wide range of opportunities that construction offers.

Then, once interest in the industry is secured, it is our role to provide the skills and training the industry needs. It's imperative that the qualifications and training provided to young people are as good as they can be.

Last year, CITB supported over 17,000 construction apprentices and delivered more than 3000 into jobs.

Furthermore, the National Construction College – the training arm of CITB – is the leading construction training provider in Europe, delivering qualifications to meet the needs of employers across the sector.

We must also recognise that construction is a constantly evolving sector, and its training infrastructure must also evolve to meet changing needs. That’s why, based on a consensus that many young people were entering the industry without enough academic acumen to complement their practical skills, we have been a driving force behind the creation of the West Midlands Construction University Technical College (WMCUTC).

Developed in partnership with a large number of industry stakeholders, the WMCUTC will provide a ‘vocademic’ style of education – combining practical skills with key GCSE’s and work placements to ensure that its graduates have a good blend of attributes. The institution opens its doors in September 2014 for its first cohort of 14-19 students.

As young people begin employment in the industry, we believe it is fundamentally important that businesses are able to take control of their own training needs. With this in mind, CITB offers training grants to construction firms to ensure the long-term growth and development of their staff. Indeed, last year, CITB provided more than £78m in grants and helped hundreds of employers to create training plans to meet their skills needs.

Our various initiatives will undoubtedly help to ward off the possible skills shortages, but local authorities also have an important part to play.

A client-based approach can also assist with achieving the outcomes for apprenticeships, employment and skills. It is an industry-backed blueprint which provides best practice guidance for those responsible for procuring construction work, and even ensures that skills legacies are created in local areas once work is completed on construction projects.

Finally, the government’s ‘city deals’ programme provides a massive opportunity for councils in major cities to enhance the skills of the local construction industry.

Later this month, CITB will launch its Joint Investment Strategy for the core cities (Bristol, Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester Newcastle, Nottingham and Sheffield) facilitating greater working partnerships between the public and private sectors. This unique process will give local business the ‘know how’ when it comes to gaining access to funding to overcome skills issues specific to their area, and every £1 committed by one side will be matched by the other – effectively doubling the investment in local employment and skills.

Construction is one of this country’s greatest industries, employing around three million people and providing some 8% of GDP. To preserve this position, we must be sure to take every action available to diffuse the ticking ‘time bomb’ of skills. ■

.....
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Interim Chief Executive
 CITB
www.citb.co.uk



Defending the Jurassic Coast

Jane Burnet of the West and South Dorset Green Party explains the implications of a rubber crumb plant to the Jurassic Coast...

West and South Dorset Green Party opposed the initial plans for a palm oil power plant on Portland due to the detrimental environmental impact of such a project at both the global and local levels. However, since the application was granted, W4B Portland has applied to change the feedstock to rubber crumb. The impact of using rubber crumb on the global environment is less certain but the change of feedstock has meant this will now be part of a waste management operation and, as such, an inappropriate land use for the Heritage Coast.

The global concerns associated with palm oil production are well documented. Burning biofuels does not reduce total carbon emissions, results in the widespread destruction of the tropical rainforests and is associated with human rights abuse against people living in these regions. Biofuels from palm oil cannot be considered to be a sustainable solution to our energy crisis.

Although using rubber crumb from old tyres could be seen as overcoming the damage resulting from palm oil plantations, a shortfall of 3m tonnes in natural rubber production is forecast for 2020. This shortfall will come from the automobile industry and unless old tyres can be kept within this industrial cycle by using them to manufacture new tyres, instead of energy, demand for more rubber plantations will soar and we could be facing the same scenarios we associate with palm oil.

Local concerns about the original application for a palm oil power plant were centred on air pollution and the geography of Portland Port. Unlike most coastal industrial sites which are surrounded by flat land, allowing the chimneys to take emissions away from populations, the site at Portland is at the foot of the cliffs. These chimneys, emitting nitrous oxide and sulphur dioxide, (the emissions are similar for both feed stocks) are immediately below cliff top, residential

properties. The chimneys will expel their waste below these homes and, for this reason, this coastal location has always been problematic.

However, the new feedstock and the by-products will be brought in and removed by road and the Green Party argues this seaport location is now unnecessary. We also question the sustainability of transporting rubber crumb by road; all the way from Avonmouth to Portland.

Another concern of the Green Party is that the new feedstock represents a change of use. Rubber crumb is classified by the government as waste, and not a renewable source of energy. The original permission was granted for a renewable power plant. In their own words, W4B are moving the recycling of tyres up the waste management hierarchy, meaning this is now to be a waste management facility.

The National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) states clearly that planning should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and seascapes. Given that this facility will be visible along the Heritage Coast, we believe the application does not meet this requirement.

Furthermore, in relation to sites such as the Heritage Coast, with national designation, Policy 5 of Dorset County Waste Policies states; 'Planning applications for waste development which are likely to have an adverse impact on sites of national importance will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the reasons for the waste development outweigh the national nature conservation interest'.

Industrialising this part of the coast with a waste management facility will have an adverse impact on the seascape and coastal views, which are fundamental to its designation as a World Heritage Coast. We also fear that once a plant such as this appears on the Heritage Coast, more development and roads will follow.



Industrial development, including this plan for a power plant, runs the risk of fundamentally changing the very nature of this fragile Jurassic Coast, and diminishing the unique features that gave rise to its Heritage status in the first place. ■

.....
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Connect, Engage and Involve

Claire Cope, Head of Local Engagement at Turley Associates gauges the true value of community engagement programmes...

The government's localism agenda requires that developers lead community consultation programmes before any planning application is submitted. But what does a good community engagement programme look like?

The Localism Act 2011 establishes a clear requirement for pre-application consultation to be carried out. The Act sets out that you must:

- Publicise the proposed application to bring it to the attention of the people who live in, or have an interest in, the affected area;
- Consult with those people to gain their feedback; and
- Acknowledge and incorporate the response to the consultation within the resulting proposals and provide feedback.

Failure to comply with the regulations could result in legal challenges on planning authorisations through judicial review, adding significant cost and delay to a scheme.

It is important that each engagement strategy is planned carefully to help achieve a successful result. Each strategy must be bespoke and flexible; there is no one-size-fits-all engagement programme as the issues, complexities and locality of a site will vary each time.

Improved engagement and working in partnership with local communities is vital in overcoming challenges and unlocking opportunities. Feedback is essential at all stages of this iterative process. Many

clients reflect that, in the long run, good consultation saves them time and money as well as creating better, more successful and sustainable developments.

Engagement strategy

The engagement process should be considered at the earliest possible stage in the project and must be pre-application. A good engagement strategy should include the following:

- The role and objectives of community engagement;
- Engagement methodology;
- Stakeholder audit;
- The engagement toolkit;
- Timescale of engagement; and
- Reporting process.

Many local authorities have formal Statements of Community Involvement (SCI) and these should be consulted to inform the engagement strategy. A key outcome of SCIs has been to encourage 'front-loading', meaning that consultation with the public should begin at the earliest possible stage. The approach to the preparation of an SCI, tends to vary widely between each local authority, particularly in terms of the guidance related to how developers and landowners should engage with stakeholders and the community.

Many local planning authorities also have Community Umbrella Groups that connect and provide strong links with local resident and community groups,



including those that are considered hard to reach. Hard to reach groups include young people, people with disabilities, certain ethnic groups and those living within rural communities. Early contact with such groups and the local planning authority will ensure that all of the relevant stakeholders are identified and included in the engagement process.

Audiences in a community engagement programme tend to be those directly affected by the proposals, for example, residents living immediately adjacent to a development site boundary, or local residents' groups and parish or town councils that are well versed on the development and local plan processes. In terms of stakeholders, a good working definition is 'those who are affected by, or significantly affect, an issue and those who possess information, resources and expertise'. It is worthwhile agreeing with the local planning authority the list of stakeholders with whom you intend to engage and to record this within the Statement of Community Engagement, submitted as part of the planning application process.

Many people will consider themselves to be stakeholders in the process because they are interested in or have a view on the proposed development. It is, therefore, important to be open and transparent about the overall approach to engagement and provide opportunities for the general public to obtain information and provide feedback. Public exhibitions, drop-in sessions, project websites and social media are good examples of ways to engage the wider community.

Engagement toolkit

An engagement programme should be appropriate and proportionate to the nature and scale of the proposals. For a major development where there is likely to be a lot of interest a number of stages within the programme are recommended to provide an opportunity to consult, receive feedback and then report after each stage.

In these circumstances focus groups or design workshops are a good way of discussing a particular issue and obtaining feedback and ideas from people who know the site and the area first-hand. Place-check or walk-and-talk events held on site and within the locality can also result in useful information and ideas and are highly interactive. These types of events ensure inclusion in the project from the outset often resulting in buy-in and support later on.

Milford Haven

This technique was employed in relation to the redevelopment of Milford Dock, Milford Haven, where the port authority is considering major redevelopment and regeneration proposals to diversify and strengthen the dock. A four-stage engagement programme was devised to ensure that the views of local residents and the business community could be captured and incorporated into the master plan.

As part of the ongoing process of engagement Turley Associates and MHPA followed a comprehensive programme that has included to date:

- The creation of a project website and a social media programme;



- Information and exhibition invites to the local catchment – approximately 6,000 letters distributed;
- Workshops, focus groups, public drop-in sessions and public exhibitions were advertised within the local press;
- Public exhibitions held in accessible locations to enable the emerging proposals to be viewed easily and for attendees to provide feedback at the exhibition, online or by post; and
- Meetings with individuals, local groups and local politicians.

Due to them being open to all, public exhibitions still have a role to play and are useful in ensuring inclusivity. They can also form a good starting point in making contacts and facilitating smaller workshops on a one-to-one basis.

Websites and social media have a strong role in an engagement programme, providing up-to-date and live information about a proposal, as they allow anyone, particularly younger people, to get involved. Social media is responsive and constantly adapting to its environment ensuring that the information that appears is up-to-date and accurate. It allows engagement in a proactive discussion that has the potential to spread the right message and influence discussions. It provides developers and landowners

with the ability to quickly address misconceptions circulating within the community. In addition, it is a powerful listening tool presenting an opportunity to clearly understand the thoughts and desires of local residents and interested parties.

Feedback from engagement activities should be reviewed, considered and reported, with feedback to be given in person, at events, on-line, via email and by post. This reporting process is formalised through the Statement of Community Engagement that is submitted as part of the planning application – a document that is required on the local planning authority's validation checklist. This document must demonstrate how comments received have been considered and, where appropriate and viable, incorporated into the scheme.

Community engagement has to now be seen as more than just another box to tick – local planning authorities require it and local communities deserve it. ■

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Building for the better

Paul Wilkins, chief executive of Butler and Young Group, turns the spotlight onto the value of building control and the importance of early involvement...

The perception of the building control process has evolved over the last 20 years or so, from being seen as a confrontational barrier to development to a valued contributor to the design and construction process. There is no doubt that this was driven by the introduction of the wider private sector in the mid-1990s and the positive reaction to this, in terms of service delivery improvement by the public sector.

An independent customer research report titled 'Value of Building Control', published in January 2012, highlighted that while some 40% of respondents regarded the building control processes as challenging, 93% believed that an independent third-party check of compliance was of value of the industry.

Satisfaction with the building control service was high, with average scores of eight out of 10, which is high compared to other parts of construction industry. Only 6% could be described as being dissatisfied, with the main areas of dissatisfaction being response times and technical consistency between building control bodies and individual surveyors.

This excellent feedback from the industry has been achieved as building control professionals have become a effective and collaborative member of the pre-construction and construction teams.

It is my view that in these difficult economic times for the industry, even greater value can be driven from the building control process, thereby making an effective contribution to the construction capital and whole life cost reduction targets set out in the Government Construction Strategy and the recently published industrial strategy Construction 2025.

Proactive and positive intervention by building control professionals at the earliest control professionals at the earliest possible opportunity in the design process can identify compliance risk issues and identify alternative cost-effective methods of compliance. Part B and Part L tend to provide the greatest opportunity in this regard – Part B by considering alternatives to code compliant solutions, and Part L by taking a holistic approach to carbon and energy targets. In some instances, these interventions can even positively impact the viability of a development by maximising lettable floor areas or reducing capital and whole life costs.

The essential driver for this added value is to engage the involvement of the building control professional at the earliest possible stage. The appointment of a building control body is often seen as something that needs to be addressed when outline design has been completed and planning approval has been achieved. The reality is intervention at the outline planning or even the feasibility stage can have the most impact in driving value from the building control process.

To summarise, a high-quality proactive building control service appointed at the earliest opportunity can have a significant impact on reducing compliance risk and reducing capital and whole life costs. The absolute key is early involvement. ■

.....
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Health and safety training provision

Over 25 years providing effective and efficient health and safety advice and training to the construction industry and others...

Callsafe Services Limited has been providing health and safety advice, assistance and training to our clients, and our clients' projects, since 1987. Our clients have included many central and local government organisations, and private industry clients, designers and contractors.

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Our consultants consistently ensure effective communications on projects and within health and safety management systems, with the minimum amount of paperwork produced, continuously questioning why a document is required and whether it is any use in effective management.

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with policies and procedures for compliance with British health and safety law, particularly the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations (CDM); including non-British organisations.

The policies and procedures developed by Callsafe Services Limited are effective in terms of protecting the health and safety of people, protecting the organisation from prosecution and loss of reputation, and the costs of implementation and maintenance.

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We primarily supply training in-house, where the trainer travels to our client locations. In-house courses also allow the training to be tailored to the particular work types performed by the delegates and may include our client's specific procedures and examples.

Accredited training is also available as in-house courses and occasionally as public courses. Callsafe Services Limited provides courses accredited by:

- Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH)
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- Association for Project Safety (APS)
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The current accredited courses are:

- IOSH Managing Safely in Construction
- IOSH Management of the Construction Design Process in the Republic of Ireland
- IOSH Safety for Senior Executives
- CIEH Level 3 Award in Health and Safety in the Workplace
- APS Design Risk Management
- SPA Passport – Core

Callsafe Services Limited is also the sole supplier of health and safety training to Thomas Telford Limited, the training arm of the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE), who supply public and in-house training courses.

Our trainers are experienced construction health and safety professionals, with construction engineering backgrounds, so



enabling them to provide examples of how the legislation can be implemented for particular scenarios.

The course programmes available can be viewed at: <http://www.callsafe-services.co.uk/training/>. These programmes can be adapted to the particular needs of an organisation.

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Callsafe Services Limited are a Registered CDM Co-ordinator Practice with the Association for Project Safety (APS), so can demonstrate our commitment to continuous improvement of our, our clients' and our projects' processes.

Our consultants/trainers are all practicing health and safety professionals working within the construction industry, and have extensive experience as health and safety advisors/officer/managers for client, designer and contractor organisations.

Our clients include the Environment Agency and Veolia Environmental Services (UK) plc.

If you need an organisation that understands the requirements of CDM, projects, other health and safety requirements, and how these requirements can be achieved in a cost-effective way, to act as your CDMC, provide health and safety advice and assistance and/or provide effective training; please contact Callsafe Services Limited to discuss your requirements.



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BIM and all it embodies

Daniel Doran, Senior Consultant at BRE examines the impact and new opportunities BIM offers...

Building information modelling (BIM) opens up fantastic new opportunities for construction professionals to understand the environmental impact of the buildings they work on. Most will be aware that BIM energy modelling is an effective way to assess operational carbon emissions, but in terms of a building's environmental footprint, this is only half the story.

Powerful new BIM tools are now available to assess the embodied environmental impact of the building itself. A building's embodied impact is the sum of the impact caused by all the construction material production plus the transport, installation, maintenance and repair, and end-of-life disposal. Embodied carbon is the best known embodied impact indicator, but other examples include water, resource use and toxicity.

Embodied vs operational carbon

The relationship between operational carbon and embodied carbon is an integrated design consideration. For example, triple glazing has improved insulation and should reduce operational carbon, but the extra layer of glass means more embodied carbon. The question is – how many years of operational savings are needed for the extra embodied carbon to start having a net benefit?

As an illustration, if a building's overall operational carbon emissions are 50kgCO₂/sq m/yr and embodied carbon is 1,000kgCO₂/sq m it would take a couple of decades before the operational savings catch up with the building's embodied carbon. If grid decarbonisation happens in the UK (so energy generation emits less carbon, as is required to

achieve statutory UK targets) this time period will increase substantially.

What's more, the embodied carbon from production of construction materials is all upfront, contributing to global warming even before the building is opened. So, with only a short time – if any – to avoid dangerous climate change, it is clear that embodied carbon should be taken very seriously.

Reducing embodied impacts

The embodied impact of different construction materials varies enormously and consequently the decisions made on a small scale can add up to a substantial difference at the building level. If material A has half the embodied carbon of material B then, all other things being equal, A would represent a significant saving overall. Unfortunately, it is rarely that simple.

“As the uptake of BIM has grown over the past five years a number of new embodied assessment tools have emerged. However, the level of BIM integration is variable, which has implications for workflow.”

Material B may be inherently stronger than A, so less is required to achieve the same function. Or, A might be a sheet material that requires an additional substrate C for structural integrity. Alternatively, A might have a long service life, while B needs to be completely replaced halfway through the life of the building. When all materials in a building, the relationships between them, varying quantities, different service lives, etc, are taken into account, assessing embodied



impacts can be a complex and time-consuming task.

To simplify and make the process of manual embodied impact assessment manageable for construction professionals, the Green Guide to Specification has been widely used for many years, in BREEAM and the Code for Sustainable Homes, for example. It is a quick-reference element-level assessment method and, as with all simplified solutions to complex tasks, does have some drawbacks. However, for many design teams, it remains a manageable approach to manual embodied impact assessment.

Using BIM

With the wider use of BIM it is now viable to produce software tools that offer automated building-level assessment. With this automation comes the processing power for greater functionality, better accuracy, integration, a detailed breakdown of results and compliance with new European standards, in particular, BS EN 15978.

The ability for BIM to include material information, to measure quantities from drawn geometry and

number crunch the results – the essential ingredients to embodied impact assessment – means what would have taken days manually can now be done in seconds. As the uptake of BIM has grown over the past five years a number of new embodied assessment tools have emerged. However, the level of BIM integration is variable, which has implications for workflow.

Standalone embodied assessment tools require scheduled quantity data or a model to be imported from a separate BIM modelling application each time an assessment is carried out, resulting in an inefficient workflow. This can be overcome by opting for embodied assessment tools that are incorporated within (or are a plug-in to) widely used BIM applications. However, the holy grail of BIM is for information – and therefore collaboration – to flow freely between different organisations that use different applications and platforms. At the forefront of this is the OpenBIM Industry Foundations Classes (IFC) initiative. The scope of IFC is ever increasing and work is soon to be completed on including comprehensive embodied impact information.

Building-level assessment – the benefits

Beyond speed and workflow integration, the ability to carry out automated building-level embodied impact assessment has added major advantages. Building-level assessment means results are building specific. Rather than selecting from a library of pre-assessed element constructions (generic wall type A versus generic wall type B) the user is able to enter building specific detail for each material including thickness, density, service life, site waste and transport distance.

For example, service life can vary considerably depending on installation, weathering, wear, imposed stress and, not least, early replacement due to churn or commercial branding changes. All these criteria are specific to a given building design and are best known by the design team. As service life directly affects the number of replacements over the life of the building (a carpet with a 10 year service life will be replaced 5 times over a 60 year life), these details can make a substantial difference to the building's overall impact.

Building-level assessment allows building specific high-impact elements like substructure to be included, which cannot be adequately assessed generically. This is because the design of a sub-structure system largely depends on the specific ground conditions and overall building design.

Integration with assessment schemes

The benefits of building-level embodied impact assessment are recognised by building environmental assessment schemes like BREEAM. BREEAM New Construction now rewards the use of robust building-level embodied assessment tools through two new exemplary level credits. These credits are awarded for using these tools (to certain quality criteria) rather than being linked to quantified performance.

To assess quantified performance it is a prerequisite that benchmarks are developed first – so there is

something to measure performance against. It is widely accepted that insufficient building-level data exist to produce robust benchmarks now. Therefore, BRE will gather data from BREEAM schemes applying for the exemplary credits. Once a sufficient sample of real project data exists, BRE intends to produce and publish benchmarks for different building use types. BIM based building-level assessment can then be phased in as a means for assessing the main materials credits in BREEAM.

Conclusion

So, the industry is increasingly aware of embodied impacts (particularly carbon) and BIM has enabled powerful new tools to emerge that can integrate embodied assessment into existing workflows. The building-level assessment standard BS EN 15978 has been published and assessment schemes like BREEAM are now rewarding building-level assessment. As such, forward thinking consultancies are increasingly offering these services. The stage is set for building level embodied impact assessment to soon become a mainstream activity. ■

Daniel Doran is senior consultant at BRE leading the IMPACT project. IMPACT is a specification and dataset for the incorporation of building-level embodied impact assessment and life cycle costing into BIM applications.

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Be BIM ready

Tony Millichap, Technical Manager at Kingspan Insulation Limited gives thought to Building Information Modelling (BIM)...

Building Information Modelling (BIM) is a growing part of the construction landscape; Level 2 BIM is already a pre-requisite for all Ministry of Justice contracts, and from 2016 it will be mandatory for all government funded projects, as will the use of Government Soft Landings (GSL). Anybody involved in planning and building control needs to have a good understanding of how these tools should work in order to make the most of the very real, long term benefits that can be delivered.

What is BIM?

BIM is essentially a means of organising a wealth of information to model a building in detail, in 3D. This can then be easily accessed and manipulated, allowing greater efficiencies to be identified in procurement, build, and in-life cycle use. It carries the potential to achieve significant savings in both materials and time, and to track as-built performance, providing valuable data to inform later projects.

The modelling process makes it easy to identify quantities, and to look at, for example, the impact of changing different components of the building envelope or services. It can define the best logistical sequences of the construction process, and optimise the maintenance and operation of the building.

In short, when used properly and collaboratively as intended, BIM has the potential to cut costs, improve quality and drive lifetime efficiency. From a building control point of view, the proper use of BIM should help to ensure that 'as built' is the same 'as designed', with no last minute changes to material specification, and a clear roadmap to follow.

Digital Construction

One of the key attributes of BIM modelling is the ease with which the impacts of introducing different product types can be examined. These might include building performance or operational costs. The product types are represented by 'objects' which are dropped into the BIM programme to provide performance data.

These objects are usually generic, but some manufacturers have started to produce specific product objects to provide far more detailed and accurate information. Whilst generic objects can go a long way towards reaching overall building performance levels, it is the information relating to actual products that will help to swing specification when the design gets down to the fine detail.

GSL

Government Soft Landings powered by BIM is intended to make sure that the end user gets the building that they want and need, rather than something that may be over engineered or unsuitable in use. It drives early engagement with all stakeholders and focuses on achieving operational value over the lifecycle of the building. It too will be mandatory for government funded projects from 2016.

Planning and Building Control

The success of BIM will depend entirely on the ability of all the different stakeholders to collaborate effectively, from the earliest stages of planning right through to operation of the building. The opportunities to build better, more efficiently, and to create constructions that really meet people's needs are huge. Planning and building control have a vital role to play in making that happen. ■

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Steeling the lead

Dr Graham Couchman, CEO of the Steel Construction Institute, explores the increased use in recent years of steel in healthcare construction...

When developing new, modern healthcare facilities, one of the key aims, particularly where hospitals are concerned, is to make the buildings as flexible as possible to meet future, as well as current needs.

But, with many building techniques requiring the use of load-bearing internal walls, this adaptability is often hard to achieve in practice.

One of the exceptions to the general rule is steel, which enjoys a 70% share of the non-residential, multi-storey buildings market, and, prior to the general downturn in building construction, had seen significant growth in the healthcare and education sectors in particular.

This popularity is down to the flexibility that can be achieved using long span options, which minimise the need for load-bearing walls and internal columns that break up usable space. Recent developments in understanding design have enabled it to be demonstrated that so-called 'light weight' steel floor solutions can, and indeed do, work. Lots of steel floor solutions facilitate service integration with the structural system and this is particularly important in highly serviced healthcare buildings. SCI offers a series of steel design guides to help designers and specifiers satisfy the various performance requirements of healthcare and other buildings, such as 'Design of floors for vibration a new approach, (revised edition) 2009.'

Sustainable developments

But one of steel's most attractive benefits is its sustainability, which is a key consideration as the NHS

strives to lower its carbon footprint and become more environmentally friendly.

The growth in awareness of sustainability over the past decade is advantageous as with steel there is greater flexibility for future applications, rather than knocking down and building again.

Steel construction also has a negligible impact in terms of pollution, both on-site and in-service, as pre-fabricated components are produced in factory-controlled conditions using energy-saving and pollution-reducing technologies. Pre-fabrication of building components in this way means waste on site is greatly reduced.

More than 40% of the world's production of 'new' steel is actually made from recycled steel with no compromise on quality. Steel itself is 100% recyclable, which appeals to many developers, particularly in this marketplace.

Other sustainability benefits include:

- Rapid 'dry' construction with high accuracy;
- Steel is lightweight meaning building can take place on poor ground;
- High levels of thermal insulation;
- Reduced storage of materials in comparison to brickwork, for example;
- Galvanised steel is free from deterioration, rot and shrinkage;
- Worker safety is improved due to the speed of



Dr Graham Couchman, CEO
Steel Construction Institute

construction and the need for fewer on-site staff;

- Steel is easy to dismantle, re-use or recycle.

Healthcare construction tends to be subject to strict timescales and tight budgets, which clearly plays to the advantages of using steel.

This type of construction achieves high levels of productivity and therefore labour costs are reduced in comparison to site-based construction. It is a high quality material produced to exacting standards and components are dimensionally accurate when manufactured and installed. This leads to improved accuracy and long-term reliability and less time on site making changes.

Light steel can be used for infill walling, both internally and for the facades, and the material is also useful for internal products such as bathroom pods, which can be made off-site and brought in when needed.

But the most popular use is for traditional steel framing where, by producing a steel skeleton, the need for load-bearing interior divisions is avoided. With this approach office space could just as easily become a new ward if healthcare needs change over time.

Adaptability

Steel construction has good performance characteristics in comparison to traditional building materials. It is manufactured accurately and has guaranteed material properties that are unaffected over time. It's a very strong material with a

strength-to-weight ratio meaning longer spans can be achieved to provide a more adaptable space.

Additional benefits over other popular techniques include:

- Steel offers excellent acoustic insulation and even higher levels of thermal insulation, leading to reduced heating costs;
- Unlike timber, no cracking or long-term movement occurs due to shrinkage which, in turn, reduces maintenance costs;
- Steel does not decay if properly protected and can offer a high level of fire resistance;
- Construction programmes can be reduced by 30% to 70% compared to traditional methods and connections and attachments can be made relatively easily in the future.

Often, architects are concerned about the building's appearance that can be achieved using steel, thinking they may be limited in their options, but a variety of high-quality cladding and external finishes are available so there is great flexibility.

When modular construction is adopted, with part or even complete rooms delivered from the factory to site, the strength of steel framing allows clear internal spans of up to 12m and internal walls are non-load-bearing. This is important for buildings to be future-proof, allowing internal spaces to be reconfigured to meet changing local needs and new healthcare strategies. ■

Find out more about the SCI and the importance of design team integration in construction at our annual event: <http://www.steel-sci.com/SCIServices/Information/Events-Training/Course-Details/SCIAnnualEvent2013/>

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An invitation to the Party

Chairman of the Faculty of Party Wall Surveyors (FPWS), Alex Frame, sheds light on the Party Wall Act and its message to local authorities...

The Party Wall etc. Act 1996 was first implemented on 1st July 1997, and even now in its sixteenth year, the existence and workings of the Act is still slowly coming to the attention of all those undertaking building or neighbouring works.

The introduction of the Act has brought about many problems, despite being in operation under the former London Building Acts for many years. This new Act is the same one that was operational in the Inner London Boroughs.

Building control departments within local authorities are best placed to help with problems that lie with the professionals who do not inform building owners of their legal obligations which are required by the Act.

The Act is invoked by the service of a notice of which there are three types; Section 1 of the Act deals with the building of a wall on or astride the boundary, which the Act calls The Line of Junction; Section 2 deals with various types of work to the party structure (walls and floors), and Section 6 deals with excavations within 3 and 6 metres of the adjoining owners buildings.

The Faculty of Party Wall Surveyors (FPWS) receive many calls on a daily basis from people who are involved with building works, both from the building owner and more often from the adjoining owner. The Faculty is constantly being told that 'they were not informed about the Act by the Council' and feel that they should have been told.

Local authorities do not hold such responsibility, but they can help, and many in fact do so by drawing

the attention of the building owner to the Act when approval is given. Some town planning authorities also give such information to applicants, all of which is helpful.

“Currently there are no fines or penalties incurred for non-compliance, and due to this many owners either deliberately ignore the process or simply do not read what they have been given in their approval pack.”

Building inspectors should have some knowledge of the Act and its workings, due to them often being on the 'front line' when works begin on site. Armed with at least the basic knowledge they can inform and guide the parties without becoming too involved.

An explanatory booklet published by The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in June 2013, informs applicants about the act at plans deposit stage, thus helping at the beginning of the project.

It would be beneficial to ask at this stage if the Party Wall etc. Act has been considered, much in the same way that many authorities ask if town planning has been applied for. The matter is of course a little more difficult with a building notice as only 48 hours is required before works may commence.

Whilst some local authorities do all or some of the above, the matter is still the responsibility of the building owner to act accordingly. Currently there are no fines or penalties incurred for non-compliance, and due to this many owners either deliberately



Alex Frame
Chairman
 Faculty of Party Wall Surveyors
 (FPWS)

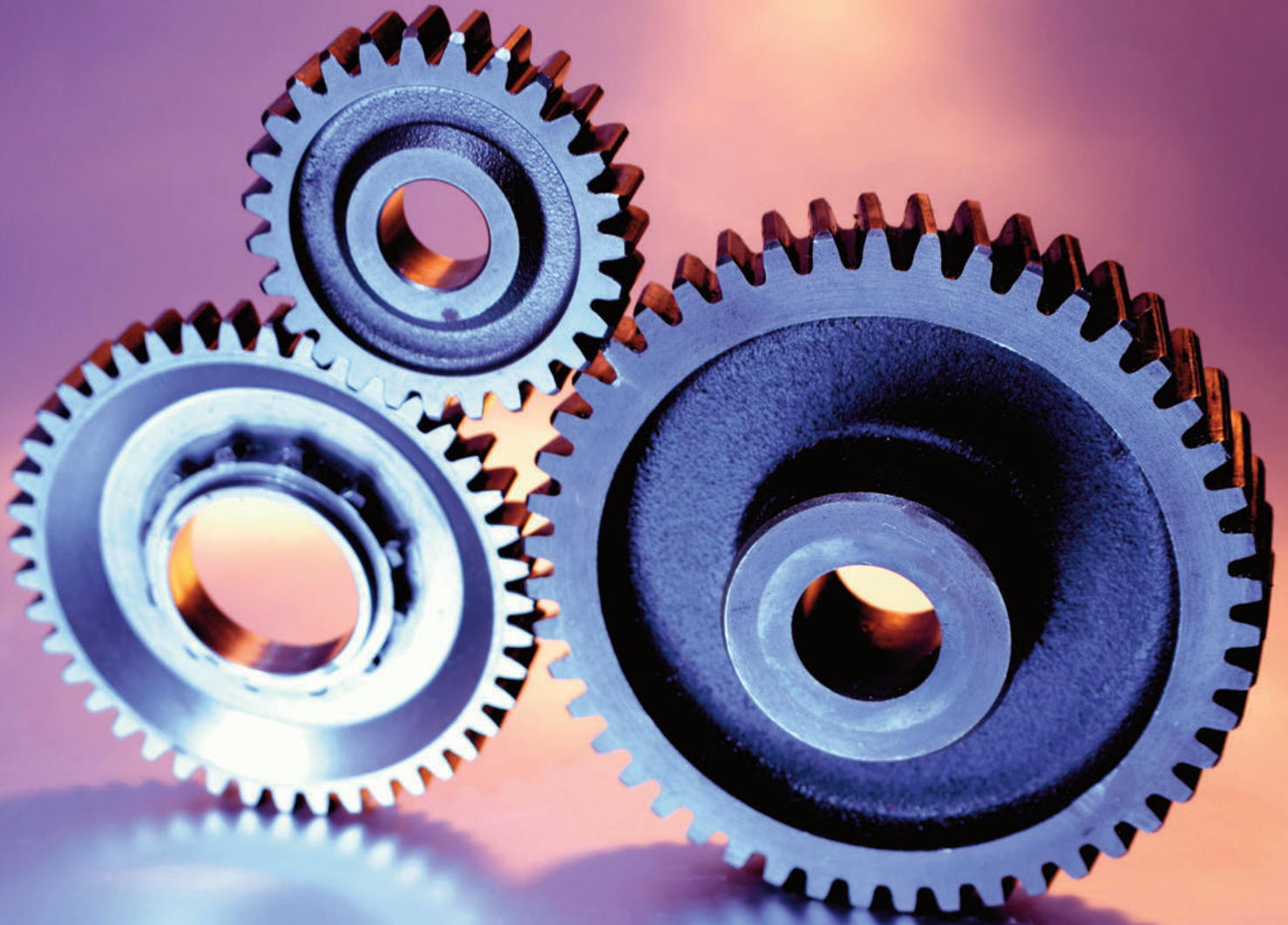
ignore the process or simply do not read what they have been given in their approval pack.

This is unfair on the adjoining owner, who, under the Act has rights too. If the building owner fails to serve a Notice of his intention of work under the Act, the adjoining owner could obtain a court injunction to have the works stopped should he feel that his property might be affected. This can be quite expensive, and with the uncertainty that the costs will be recovered, the adjoining owner more often cannot afford to take this route. It is in fact a legal obligation for anyone undertaking works that are covered by the Act to serve a Notice.

The ideal situation is for the adjoining owner to be informed by the local authority and this suggestion has been put to the DCLG as a better working solution. We are sure that the adjoining owners would appreciate this and the notice could merely take the form of a standard letter informing them of the proposed works. ■

Application forms and further information can be obtained from the FPWS – Head Office at PO Box 96 Rye TN31 9BN Tel: 01424 883300. E Mail: enq@fpws.org.uk Web: www.fpws.org.uk

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Nurturing engineers of the future

Paul Jackson, Chief Executive of EngineeringUK explains the importance of attracting young people to STEM subjects to guarantee a skilled workforce...

GCSE and A-level results are becoming like wine vintages. Not because they drive you to drink – you could be forgiven for assuming – but because of the variable nature of their results. With wine, one cold summer followed by sunshine the next can make it virtually impossible to compare like for like. And, what with marking blunders one year and harder marking schemes the next, analysing trends or establishing meaning from GCSE and A-level grades has become a very difficult task.

EngineeringUK programmes are also maturing, and the results are showing themselves through the

subject choices made by young people and rapidly improving public perceptions. Much is written about the shortage of engineers in society but, now that we are doing something about it on a large scale, through The Big Bang and Tomorrow's Engineers, we're starting to see the rewards.

We were pleased to see the increased take up of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) A-levels and the increase in young people studying GCSE physics, as part of triple science, and maths. The increase is crucial for the UK economy – these young people are our engineers and scientists of the future.

While it was great to see such a significant rise in the number of girls taking GCSE physics, this is evidently not translating through to more girls taking the subject at A-level. The low number of female students taking physics A-level this year (20.7%) underlines that there is still much to be done to guarantee that the UK continues to develop the skilled workforce needed to drive growth.

With the demise of Connexions and the current lack of an effective replacement for careers information and guidance, The Big Bang and Tomorrow's Engineers are bridging the gap left behind. Both programmes provide careers information and resources, and the opportunity to get direct advice and guidance. This is an essential part of an effective careers service, and through our programmes, young people are able to speak to people employed in a wide range of STEM careers.

The evaluation of The Big Bang UK Young Scientists & Engineer Fair in 2013 found that 9 out of 10 11-19 year-old visitors learnt a lot at the Fair. Over half spoke to exhibitors about careers, and nearly 3 quarters said they now know how to access further information on careers in science and engineering as a result of their visit. Attitudes towards careers in science and engineering were positively influenced by the event with 75% of 11-14 year-old visitors seeing science as a desirable career and 65% viewing engineering in the same light. This contrasts with 29% of all 12-16 year-olds in the UK who think engineering is an attractive career.

Half of teachers said that the Fair made them view science, technology and engineering more positively, and two fifths felt similarly about maths. Around three fifths of parents said they viewed science, technology and engineering more positively and a half viewed maths more positively. At least 60% of teachers and 56% of parents said they were more likely to recommend a career in any STEM area.



Paul Jackson
Chief Executive
EngineeringUK

Next year The Big Bang Fair is at The NEC, Birmingham, where we expect to welcome over 70,000 visitors. The programme is expanding its regional and local model of Near Me Fairs, last year reaching over 20,000 young people. Tomorrow's Engineers is working with businesses to create tailor-made school engagement schemes per region, engaging over 50,000 pupils per year, and growing.

As you can see, by working together, we're continuously striving to reach more young people with positive STEM messaging and are making an impact on STEM subject choices and career decisions. We can only continue to effect change with the support of engineering businesses, government, professional bodies and the wider engineering community. If you want to get involved, get in touch! ■

www.thebigbangfair.co.uk

www.tomorrowsengineers.org.uk

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Fire safety first

London Fire Brigade's Deputy Commissioner Rita Dexter explains why fitting fire suppression systems should be a priority for those responsible for care homes and sheltered accommodation...

London Fire Brigade firmly believe that sprinklers are a potentially life saving tool that help to reduce the number of deaths and injuries from fires. They are highly effective in preventing fires from spreading and putting them out quickly. That is why it is important for all local authorities to consider installing sprinklers or water mist systems in the homes of those people who may be more vulnerable in the event of a fire.

Research and experience tells us that older people, as well as people with mental health problems and those with mobility issues, are the groups most at risk. We are concerned by the number of people like this who are still harmed or killed by fire in places where they should be safe.

Figures released this year reveal that in London during 2012/13, there were 540 fires in care homes and sheltered accommodation – the majority housing older people, with 2 people dying and 26 people injured as a result.

The number and regularity of care home fires attended is clear evidence that builders, developers, local authorities and private providers need to stop ignoring the benefits of sprinklers.

In Scotland, the Building Standards require all new build residential care buildings to have sprinkler systems installed, and in Wales, a new Legislative Competence Order will require the installation of sprinklers in a wide range of dwellings including new build and refurbishments. There should be a similar level of protection in the capital, and we are proactively campaigning and promoting opportunities for




Rita Dexter
Deputy Commissioner
London Fire Brigade

councils and housing providers to supply sprinklers as a cost effective way of saving property and protecting the lives of residents most at risk from fire. The cost of fitting sprinklers need not be prohibitive. In Sheffield, the city council retrofitted sprinklers in a 38 year-old social housing block, mainly occupied by older residents. Work was completed without the residents having to move out of their homes, and the 47 flats were fitted with sprinklers at a total cost of just over £55,000.

Although our primary concern is always lowering the risk to life from fire, fire suppression systems can also bring with them other benefits that designers and developers may not have considered. For example, sprinklers or water misting systems may allow more flexibility in designing a building and therefore free up valuable space.

By continuing to publicise and promote their life saving benefits it is hoped that builders, developers, local authorities and private providers will all begin to realise that installing fire suppression and sprinkler systems in care homes and sheltered accommodation should be seen as a priority, and integral to the safety of the people in their care. ■

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No smoke without fire

Graham Ellicott, CEO of the Fire Industry Association (FIA) explains why more research is needed to drive down the number of false alarm callouts...

Worldwide there are problems with false alarms from automatic fire detection systems. In the UK this problem has come further under the spotlight because of the Localism Bill which, with some caveats, gives Fire and Rescue Authorities the right to charge for attendance. For example, London Fire Brigade estimate that if they charged for attending all false alarms, an extra £1.3M of revenue would be achieved, with nearly £700,000 alone coming from hospitals who, in general, are the worst offenders.

However, it's not all bad news. Official UK government figures show that there has been a steady decline in false alarm numbers over the past 10 years with even more systems being installed. Nevertheless, everybody agrees that false alarms are a total waste of time and money for the Fire & Rescue Services, and an inconvenience to the user.

The problem is further compounded by the absence of a single automatic fire alarm (AFA) Fire & Rescue Service attendance policy in England. This lack of consistency makes it difficult for both end users and fire alarm maintenance companies, whereas in Scotland there is one policy and this has been further reinforced by the setting up of a single fire service.

Another area of concern is the Weston-Super-Mare Grand Pier fire, where the judgment is certainly of interest to the alarm receiving centre industry. In this case, the judge recommended a 'default rule' of calling the Fire & Rescue Service, even if the automatic fire alarm signal cannot be confirmed. However, due to the Localism Act, there could be the situation where the Fire & Rescue Service is threatening to charge for a false call and, in extreme cases, take the caller to court.

In view of the continuing false alarm situation the Fire Sector Federation Technology Workstream has brought together a group of stakeholders, including the FIA, and a three-stage research project has been agreed:

- Clearly identify the problem; look at the data and accurately determine the cause of false alarms;
- Look at what technology is available to provide reliable fire detection;
- Having proved that improvements can be economically made to the fire alarm system, then set about changing the way fire detection is used in the built environment.

The Building Research Establishment has commenced

stage one, to look at the causes of false alarms. These can include: poor management and maintenance, steam, toasters, thrips, cooking, system testing, system faults, unsuitable design, dust, power surge, smoke cloak etc. The amount of 'good' available data is limited but the insurers and the Fire & Rescue Services are generally managing to provide enough information for the project to get underway.

Having found the possible causes for false alarms, the next step is to find ways of using technology to help solve the problem. In order to do this it will be necessary to identify problem sites and to bring the relevant technology, such as recent systems software/hardware updates, to bear.

A major key to success will be the management of the site and the commitment of occupiers to change what happens in their building. The possibility of Fire & Rescue Services charging may help focus management's attention here. Other techniques that can be utilised are: on-site filtering; fire warden investigation; the linking of systems (fire and intruder); and multi criteria fire detectors. For example, the latter can overcome many issues including hotel shower steam, burnt toast, exhaust in a loading bay and even cigarettes in prisons. The added benefit with multi criteria fire detectors is that if something changes in the monitored area, the sensor can often be re-programmed to suit the new scenario.

But where do we go next? Today's fire panels can provide the address data from a detector that has triggered. This could be sent to the fire appliance while on its way to the call. There is also the possibility of linking detection points, e.g. the system may have one point in alarm and two others showing a rapid temperature increase.

All this will cost money to implement but just think how much could be saved year on year without all of the false alarm call outs.

In order to drive down the number of false alarms, all involved in our industry will need to change and

come together for a common good, for example:

- Builders need to fit what is suitable for the building rather than the absolute minimum;
- Installers need to ensure that they understand the building and how it will be used;
- Manufacturers need to develop simple ways to set up and, if required, change the system's detection parameters;
- Users need to understand what they have fitted, how to best use it and the requirement to change as their business changes;
- Legislators need to understand that calling for the absolute minimum may not be the most cost effective in the long term.

Last but not least Fire & Rescue Services need to understand where they fit into the sector.

This research project will take time to prove successful but it is possible and it must be achieved.

Further information concerning driving down false alarms from automatic fire detection systems can be found on the FIA's website (www.fia.uk.com) in the 'Cut False Alarm Costs' micro-site. This has been developed for the end user and it contains a lot of information plus 'signposts' to further advice. ■

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DuPont™ Tyvek® FireCurb™...

...enhancing safety and sustainability at a new Hotel in Norway

The impressive Lerkendal Hotel project, part of the 'Lerkendal Stadion' complex in Trondheim, Norway, aims for the highest standards of safety, efficiency and sustainability. With a volume of 35,000 square metres and a height of 75 metres, the 20 storey structure encompasses 400 bedrooms, plus state-of-the-art leisure and conference facilities.

Designed by Voll architects (working with contractor Hent AS and energy consultants Rambøll), the new building has been planned to conserve power both passively, through structural elements such as optimum airtightness – and actively: through solar heated water; returned energy from elevators and cooling units; and by encouraging and rewarding guests to save energy. The aim for total energy use in the hotel is a maximum of 50kw per square metre per year.

This forward-thinking project called for specialist and innovative solutions to protect the building, both during the construction phase and once in use. Apart from minimising carbon footprint while maximising interior comfort, another key factor is, naturally, occupier safety – and the structure benefits from both in the form of DuPont™ Tyvek® FireCurb™ Housewrap.

This pioneering new building product features a patented technology designed to improve fire safety and reduce costly fire damage, while providing an environmen-



© Photo courtesy of Isola, all rights reserved

DuPont™ Tyvek® FireCurb™ Housewrap breather membranes with flame retardant Performance have been installed to the external envelope of the new landmark Lerkendal. Hotel development in Norway



© Photo courtesy of Isola, all rights reserved

DuPont™ Tyvek® FireCurb™ Housewrap breather membranes offering flame retardant performance combined with optimum airtightness for improved thermal performance have been installed at the new 400 room Lerkendal Hotel.

tally-friendly breakthrough solution that delivers a hi-tech breather membrane at a competitive cost.

Supplied with technical support, both off and on site, by Isola (distributor of DuPont™ Tyvek® products for Scandinavia) and approved by Norwegian safety consultants COWI AS, 12,000 square meters of DuPont™ Tyvek® FireCurb™ Housewrap have been installed into the building envelope to meet stringent requirements for airtightness, thermal performance and moisture control. The adoption of this DuPont product would also limit flame propagation within the façade structure, restricting damage and potentially saving lives in the event of a fire.

Adding superior flame retardant performance to the renowned properties of DuPont™ Tyvek®

The new technology potentially limits or stops the spread of fire through the external envelope using innovative technology to reduce the flammability of polymer based substrates. This solution dispenses with halogens, using instead a phosphorous containing agent to promote the formation of a

‘char’ layer at the surface when it is in contact with an ignition source.

This thin layer of carbonized polymer is highly flame retardant and forms a barrier, slowing the release of flammable materials into the fire. Starved of fuel, the flame spreads over the membrane more slowly or not at all – and if the membrane does ultimately burn, it produces less smoke – another vital advantage for human safety. Rigorously tested, DuPont™ Tyvek® FireCurb™ Housewrap has a fire rating of class B-s1,d0 according to EN13501-1.

Light-weight, robust and easy to work with, DuPont™ Tyvek® FireCurb™ Housewrap was installed to the external envelope of the structure in the form of ‘ready-wrapped’ and carefully sealed panels, built off-site as separate elements in a facility owned by Skanska, about 100 km north of Trondheim.

Elin Tørlen Lønvik of COWI AS, the appointed fire safety consultants for the project, comments “Our risk analysis on this project raised the concern that, due to the height of the structure, any external fire that might spread through the façade would be very

challenging to control and extinguish, so it was necessary to impose special requirements on the facade design and materials, in terms of specifying flexible wind barriers. Such membranes, used to help achieve density requirements, can adversely affect fire safety in certain circumstances. We were therefore pleasantly surprised when the contractor found a product with the necessary documentation that could fulfill all the key requirements, and we consider this a very positive development.”

Ground was broken on the Lerkendal project in June 2012 and the hotel aims to welcome its first guests on May 16th, 2014, just in time for a crucial Rosenborg home game on Norwegian National Day. The overall budget for the build is NOK kr. 640 mill (approx 80 mill Euro) and once complete the hotel will be operated by the Scandic group, the largest hotel chain in the Nordic countries.

To learn more about DuPont™ Tyvek® FireCurb™ technology, please visit www.FlameRetardant.tyvek.com



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Sounding out good school design

Andrew Parkin Acoustics Partner at Cundall, highlights the developments in Building Regulations E4 for schools...

Starting in late 2008, many Acousticians have given up a lot of time and resources with the noble aim of revising and refreshing Building Bulletin 93 (BB93). Since its release in 2003 and adoption as a means of compliance with Part E4 of Building Regulations, BB93 has had a positive impact on the way we have designed schools, giving a sensible and practical framework for school buildings. Although only applicable to infant, primary and secondary education, BB93 has been adopted by many further and higher education providers, in addition to forming the basis of BREEAM credits.

However, the way schools are designed now is not the same as in the early 2000s. The strain started to show during Building Schools for the Future (BSF) when it was found that BB93 could not give adequate tools to design open plan teaching (remember transformational learning anyone?). Recently during the second Academies Framework, where many schools have been refurbished, further problems occurred as the scope of BB93 does not adequately cater for refurbishment and change of use.

In essence, there was nothing really wrong with BB93 – it just remained static whilst educational premises changed. After many frustrating false starts and draft revisions, the Education Funding Agency (EFA) published 'Acoustic Performance Standards for the Priority Schools Building Programme (PSBP) (v1.1)' in September 2012. This document is freely available on the Department for Education (DfE) website, on the PSBP Baseline Design pages. Since initial publication in 2012, the document has been revised and issued as v1.7 in June 2013. This document forms the acoustic section of the Output

Specification, replacing the performance criteria of BB93 for the purposes of this building programme. Although published by EFA, this document is authored by Institute of Acoustics (IOA) and Association of Noise Consultants (ANC) members.

It should be noted that this document only applies to PSBP. Also, as the first PSBP capital expenditure-funded schools are procured under the Academies Framework, they are bound by previous Output Specifications, and therefore BB93. The revised document, in addition to all the other new Output Specifications (including new daylighting and thermal comfort criteria) came into force in the second wave of PSBP, being procured under a PF2 (PFI) framework. It is possible however, to use the revision to BB93 on all schools now, with it being invoked as an Alternative Performance Standard (APS) under Section 1.2.1 of BB93.

In order to be formally adopted as a means of compliance with Part E4 the document will need to go through a statutory 10 week consultation period. This period is due to start on 7th October 2013. BB93 is therefore likely to be formally superseded as a means of compliance with Part E4 in March 2014.

One subtle change with the new documentation and revision to Schools Premises Regulations (SPRs) is in the 'policing' of open plan spaces. Previously, it was the responsibility of the Building Control Officer to assess and sign off speech intelligibility designs for open plan spaces, in addition to sound insulation, reverberation times and indoor ambient noise levels. Speech intelligibility for open plan is now covered by SPRs and has therefore been taken out of the

Building Regulations package, which will be a relief to Building Control.

The basic framework of the new document is not significantly different to BB93. However, content has been updated and revised as considered necessary by the contributors, based on experience of using BB93. Key features include:

- Clear scope of where, when and how the document applies;
- Specific criteria for refurbishments;
- Limits on the extent of APS, whereby they can be no more extensive than conditions for refurbishments;
- Comprehensive description of what constitutes Special Educational Needs (SEN);
- Minor revisions to target indoor ambient noise levels, sound insulation (airborne and impact) and reverberation times;
- Sensible criteria for encouraging natural ventilation;
- More extensive lists of area use types;
- Defined links between indoor air quality (i.e. build-up of CO₂), indoor noise level and window openings;
- Replacement of $D_{nT(T_{mf,max}),w}$ with $D_{nT,w}$ (where $T_0 = 0.5$ seconds);
- Composite R_w value option for elements dividing teaching areas and corridors;
- Replacement of $L'_{nT(T_{mf,max}),w}$ with $L'_{nT,w}$ (where $T_0 = 0.5$ seconds);
- Wider frequency range than standard T_{mf} for SEN;
- Relaxation of T_{mf} in sports halls from 1.5 to 2.0 seconds, together with comprehensive guidance for compliance;

- Extended criteria for open plan, together with comprehensive guidance for compliance;
- Strong recommendations for pre completion testing, using the ANC Good Practice Guide for Testing as a reference.

This published document only gives performance criteria, with minimal explanation of how to meet the performance targets and no worked examples.

Section 2 onwards of BB93 is also in the process of being re-written. At the time of writing, a group of leading school design practitioners from the IOA and ANC are busy making necessary changes to the guidance sections of BB93, including writing new sections on Integrated Design and Refurbishment. The current plans are for this guidance document to be ready for publication in late 2013/early 2014. This is likely to be a joint publication between the IOA and ANC.

All in all, this progress in schools design guidance is welcomed by design practitioners. The changes between the old BB93 and re-write have little (if any) cost difference, but it suits the way schools are currently designed, making it an ideal document to start using now. ■

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A safe change

Jonathan Griffin Head of Market Development for Construction at BSI turns attention to the new Approved Document A...

The Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) announced at the end of July that the Building Regulations 2010 Approved Document A on structural safety will be amended to reference the current British standards known as Eurocodes. This will lead to much wider use of these technologically advanced standards.

The Building Regulations 2010 apply to building work within England and Wales; this includes the erection, extension, material alteration or change of use of a building, but also includes the filling of cavity walls, underpinning and provision of controlled services and fittings. These are in existence to ensure building work is safe, energy efficient and accessible to all.

There are currently 14 sections to the Building Regulations and these are complemented by an Approved Document which provides guidance on ways Building Regulations may be met. The purpose of an Approved Document is to provide common solutions to common construction problems. Although there is no obligation to adopt any particular solution contained in an Approved Document, this guidance details ways to satisfy the functional requirements of the Building Regulations, which benefits both the industry and control bodies.

Approved Document A – Structural Safety

Part A of Schedule 1 to the Building Regulations 2010 deal with the structural design of all buildings and Approved Document Part A – Structural Safety – contains guidance on how these provisions can be complied with. This Document is split into 3 sections:

- Loading;

- Ground movement; and,
- Disproportionate collapse.

First published in 1985, the last substantial change to Approved Document Part A occurred in 2004. This version was then amended in 2010 to reflect amendments made as a result of the Building Regulations 2010.

One of the biggest challenges in recent years has been the withdrawal of British Standards on 1st April 2010, whereby British Standards were replaced by standards based on Eurocodes. The process of withdrawal was undertaken as part of BSI's agreement with the European Committee for Standardisation. These withdrawn British Standards will not be maintained or updated, and therefore they are becoming increasingly out of date. This, in turn, could provide legal implications and challenges from the European Commission.

This legal issue has now been addressed by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), through their Sixth Statement of New Regulation, in which they have confirmed Approved Document A will be amended to reference British Standards based on Eurocodes. By amending Approved Document A to reference Eurocodes, the construction industry is offered an alternative up-to-date technical solution for meeting regulatory requirements. This change came into effect in October 2013 in England and Wales (The Technical Handbooks to the Building Regulations in Scotland were amended to reference Eurocodes in October 2010).



The reason for the change was set out in the consultation document which was published in January 2012, quoting that 'Referencing only the withdrawn British Standards may be seen as putting up barriers to trade as well as presenting an increasing risk that guidance would, over time, not deliver the level of structural safety intended.'¹

Eurocodes

The Structural Eurocodes are a set of harmonised European standards, created because of a request from the European Commission to provide solutions for the design of buildings and civil engineering structures. The 58 parts of Eurocodes deal with 10 Eurocodes covering the basis of design, actions, concrete, steel, composites, timber, masonry, geotechnical design, earthquake resistance and aluminium. The Eurocodes represent up-to-date knowledge and allow innovative and economic designs to be produced and are widely regarded as

the 'most technically advanced suite of structural design codes available internationally'.²

The Eurocodes are supported by their own nationally adopted Annexes and also Non-Contradictory Complementary Information (NCCI), which take into account regional variations, such as climate, seismicity and geography.

Eurocodes present a common approach to structural design across the EU. Their use will enable removal of barriers to trade and promotion of an open market for construction, construction products and construction design³. The design framework and implementation rules are not only applicable in Europe, but also internationally; Singapore implemented Eurocodes on 1st October, 2013 to co-exist with current British/Singapore Standards. They will become the only prescribed structural design standards from 1st October, 2015⁴. There are also plans for Malaysia and Vietnam to adopt Eurocodes. Professor Raman Narayanan, of Clark Smith Partnership, is confident that the transition to Eurocodes should not be confusing. He says, "Philosophically Eurocodes are similar to the British Standards and switching over is relatively easy. It is like an experienced driver changing his car"

There is a wealth of guidance offered by industry to the UK designer (e.g. the Concrete Centre, SCI, TRADA, BDA, IMS etc) to aid Eurocode implementation. BSI have also created an online tool that makes working with Eurocodes simple, through Eurocodes PLUS. This is the most advanced and convenient way to access Eurocodes without the need for sifting and cross-referencing multiple Eurocodes.

The position on withdrawn Standards

The government has provided guidance on the continuing use of withdrawn British Standards to comply with regulation through a Circular letter, issued on 29th July 2013. These standards were withdrawn by BSI in 2010 and have not been reviewed or maintained by BSI committees since. The use of the old standards will need to be justified to the Building Control Body and it should be noted that using out of date British Standards could increase the risk of negligence claims. Professor D A Nethercot (OBE,



Jonathan Griffin
Head of Market Development
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Other changes to Approved Document A and Approved Document C

In addition to the amendments to make reference to Eurocodes, the other changes to Approved Document A include guidance on disproportionate collapse, wind maps and guidance on strip footings. As a result of the amendment to Approved Document A, Approved Document C on Site preparation and resistance to contaminants and moisture is also being updated to include information on site investigation techniques under Section 1 to reflect Eurocodes geotechnical standards. ■

The Approved Documents may be downloaded free of charge from:
<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/buildingregulations/approveddocuments/>

For more information on Eurocodes, please visit <http://shop.bsigroup.com/en/Browse-by-Subject/Eurocodes/>

¹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/8397/2045945.pdf

² BSI Structural Eurocodes Companion, page 8

³ BSI Structural Eurocodes Companion, page 7

⁴ BCA BC 15.0.3

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FREng, FTSE Emeritus Professor of Civil Engineering Imperial College London, UK) explains why the use of Eurocodes is recommended over referring to withdrawn British Standards;

“The recent announcement that Approved Document A is to replace its reference to the now withdrawn British Standards by directly referring to the Eurocodes is an important signal to the UK Construction Industry that it should now be working to the Eurocodes. As the supporting infrastructure of design guides, manufacturers’ literature and computer software migrates to being Eurocode based, official endorsement that the ‘new era’ is now the ‘status quo’ should accelerate the industry’s transition. Whilst working to British Standards (or to any other acceptable approach) is still permitted, this change signals a distinct shift to an expectation that the ‘normal’ approach will be to use the Eurocodes and thus to benefit from their more comprehensive coverage and the associated newly created and up to date design aids”. Professor Raman Narayanan adds, “All research and development is now oriented towards Eurocodes and the withdrawn BS’s will not benefit from this.”



Putting the spark into Part P

Phil Buckle, Director General of the Electrical Safety Council (ESC) reviews the changes to Part P of the building regulations and their impact...

Part P of the Building Regulations for England, which has recently been amended following a government review, is the only legal framework which protects the consumer from unsafe electrical work in the home.

Sub-standard electrical installation work in homes can seriously injure or even kill, and electrical fires often bring a huge financial, as well as emotional cost. Each week in the UK, 1 person dies from an electrical accident and well over a quarter of a million (350,000) are injured every year¹. Government figures also show that almost half of all fires in UK homes – more than 20,000 each year – have an electrical origin.²

Part P was launched in 2005 to reduce the number of domestic accidents, deaths and fires arising from electricity. It was also seen as a way to improve competence in those undertaking electrical work,

and increase the awareness of a duty of care from both contractors and householders. It is the latter, and not installers, who are legally responsible for any electrical work in their homes, yet the majority are unaware of this.

Originally, Part P required all domestic electrical work – with a few minor exceptions – to be either reported to the local authority building control department, or to be carried out by an electrician registered with one of the government-approved schemes. The work could include new circuits, a new fuse box, or extensions to circuits in kitchens, bathrooms and outdoors.

In December 2010, the government announced that it would review Part P, with a view to reducing the regulatory burden and improving compliance. A public consultation followed in December 2011 and a final report was published a year later, with most of

the government's amendments to Part P coming into force in April this year.

During the review, the ESC was at the forefront of the fight to maintain the regulation. As a charity, our core concern is consumer safety, but we understood the importance of balancing the consumer's need for confidence in electrical work carried out in their homes and the industry's desire to avoid unnecessary red tape. In other words, we saw the need to reduce the complexities of Part P without compromising safety. To achieve this, we worked with a range of stakeholders, from consumer bodies to industry groups, and developed a number of forums so a range of views could be heard.

There was a possibility that Part P might be completely scrapped, thankfully it survived, but there were however, some key amendments. The first reduced the range of notifiable electrical work, that is, work that must comply with the Building Regulations. Now, electrical work undertaken in kitchens, bathrooms, or outdoors, is no longer covered by Part P unless a new circuit is required.

The second major change – which is due to come into operation shortly, but may be delayed – relates to using a registered third party to certify notifiable work as an alternative to using a building control body. Previously, an electrical contractor undertaking work covered by Part P, but who was not registered with a competent persons' scheme, had to notify their local authority's building control department, who would determine if the work met the regulations.

The ESC welcomed the amendment allowing third party certification, which will reduce time, costs and inconvenience to consumers and contractors. But there are concerns regarding the reductions in notifiable work.

Both statistical data and anecdotal evidence indicate that kitchens and outdoors are high-risk areas that require a particularly rigorous standard of electrical work. For example, kitchen fitters may undertake some electrical work when installing a new kitchen, but the Part P Impact Assessment of 2004 noted that some of the worst electrical work at that time had

been undertaken by these installers. Government figures show a high number of electrical fires originating in the kitchen – almost 15,000 in 2010-2011.³

The ESC also believes that electrical work outdoors should remain notifiable, as the effects of an electric shock can be far more severe outdoors since even when dry, the ground is a good conductor of electricity.

Part P will be reviewed in two years' time, during which the government will gather evidence on the safety implications of these new amendments. In the meantime, we are committed to working with the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) – the government unit responsible for the Building Regulations - and the competent schemes, to promote awareness of Part P to consumers and contractors alike.

We have also released a 'White Paper' on the changes to the industry landscape (such as the changes to Part P), which developed out of our Industry Summit in March of this year. The Summit was a milestone for the electrical industry in terms of taking a collaborative approach to policy issues.

The statutory requirements for electrical installations differ throughout the UK. In Wales, Part P (without the recent amendments) is operative; while Scotland requires electrical work to comply with the Building Standards system. Northern Ireland has no equivalent statutory requirement at this point in time. ■

¹ Data derived from Office of National Statistics, ESC Core Data Set and research by Populus, undertaken Sept-October 2011.

² Data derived from DCLG Fire statistics.

³ DCLG Fire statistics Great Britain 2010-2011

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The power of Part L?

Andrew Warren, Director of UKACE, explores the Part L building regulations and the anticipated changes to be made...

After a record-breaking 461 days of cogitation, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has finally decided upon the new energy standards for English buildings. These will not be implemented until April 2014, exactly one year later than promised by Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Eric Pickles.

The delay in reaching this underwhelming decision is believed to be the longest period of time any government department of state has ever taken to respond to a formal call for views. Sadly, whilst the wait we have endured has been the length of an elephant's pregnancy, the final announcement is effectively the size of a mouse.

Details are still to be published regarding the precise requirements, neither is there any revised economic impact assessment yet available. The headline savings figures are significantly lower than originally proposed. A 6%, rather than 25% improvement for new homes; and a 9% rather than 20% improvement for non-residential buildings based on 2010 levels.

DCLG have announced that there will be no immediate measures to tackle poor regulatory enforcement. This is despite this topic having been the subject of many ministerial speeches by (now former) building regulations minister Sir Andrew Stunell. And it was one of the main focuses of the original consultation document, issued back in January 2012.

Instead, the department refers to an interim report published in July by the Zero Carbon Hub. This does conclude that there is a lack of clear and consistent

evidence on this issue – an unsurprising conclusion as their sponsor DCLG (even under all its previous names) never really bothered to fund any serious research into whether any of its energy saving policies are actually working.

When other departments have undertaken research, such as the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) or the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC), have consistently established that it is a minority of new homes where whatever energy saving measures the district council agreed should be included, when granted permission to build, actually turns out to be what is found by the eventual occupants.

The Zero Carbon Hub report notes that building control officers frequently have other priorities, and even suggest they focus 'exclusively on health and safety issues'. I have to say that sweeping conclusion is rather unfair. There is a significant number of building control officers who do recognise the importance of energy efficiency measures. But equally, they know that if they acquire a local reputation for 'officiousness', the builder can always call upon an independent professional to verify instead.

This is particularly pertinent to the non-residential sector, where the money to be saved from a bit of skimping on less visible energy saving measures are much greater. There really has been a dearth of independent, let alone DCLG funded research into compliance in this commercial area.

This lackadaisical approach to those who break the law – even if unwittingly – is in strong contrast to

the criminal powers granted to the Department of Business' National Measurement Office. It polices energy standards for white household goods (like fridges and freezers) and brown goods like TVs. It pounces and prosecutes, and publicizes any transgressors.

“Sadly, whilst the wait we have endured has been the length of an elephant’s pregnancy, the final announcement is effectively the size of a mouse.”

Contrast that with the attitudes towards those who purchase buildings, frequently at many hundreds of times the cost of a freezer or TV. As Sir Andrew Stunell used to say nonetheless, nobody has ever been taken to Court for failing to comply with Part L, nor will they now, as he is no longer in office.

The official government statement points to £384m net savings in energy bills for homes and businesses relative to current standards. This is equivalent to average consumer savings of over £200 per year, and a £60,000 p.a. saving for a large new office. The measures are set to cut carbon dioxide emissions by 6.4m tonnes annually.

The government is also dropping proposals to improve minimum energy efficiency standards for home extensions and replacement windows. According to Minister Baroness Hanham, these “would be inconsistent with recent reforms to extend permitted development rights under the planning system. It is not the right time to impose additional costs on hard-working families trying to improve their homes.” The Minister made no

mention of the higher fuel bills, and hence more emissions that would also ensue.

Given the bellicose opposition to any changes being expressed by some of the many house builders, many commentators expressed relief that despite delays, their neanderthal lobbying had not succeeded in scuppering all changes.

Simultaneously, the Greater London Authority has announced its intentions to increase current minimum standards for all new London buildings by 40%. Given the large proportion of new non-residential construction, as well as new homes set to be built in Greater London, in many ways could be equally significant as the ‘mouse’ just issued by DCLG.

On a positive note, there was a time during the 461 day wait when many of us feared that the 2013 Part L changes would just never happen. They have, and I guess we must be resigned to concluding: ‘Better late than never’. ■

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Act now or lose £1¼m in tax relief

JCB Finance Ltd explains the significance of changes in tax rules and how the size and timing of any investment in plant and machinery requires careful planning...

December financial year end companies risk losing £250,000 in potential tax relief if no eligible plant and machinery has been purchased before 31st December.

One of the surprises in the 5th December 2012 Autumn Statement was a tenfold increase in the Annual Investment Allowance (AIA) from £25,000 to £250,000 from 1st January 2013. The devil was in the detail and 15 pages of explanatory notes left many heads reeling. Unfortunately it seems that some financial advisors have been slow in coming to terms with the new rules and some tax saving opportunities have already been lost. In addition, there seems to be some confusion in the plant hire sector with many plant hire businesses being advised that they are not eligible for the AIA. The seeds of this confusion may have been sown in April 2008 when First Year Allowances (FYA) were replaced by the AIA. Before 2008 many accountants had been caught out by HMRC disallowing FYA claims made on behalf of plant hirers because the business was supplying non-operated plant (plant supplied with an operator could claim the full FYA). This ruling was not carried over to the AIA so all businesses, including plant hire businesses, can claim the AIA – the only exceptions are mixed partnerships or trusts (i.e. those in which a company is a member) – this has been verified by HMRC.

What is the AIA?

The AIA is designed to encourage new investment in new or used plant and machinery against taxable profits in the year in which the qualifying expenditure is made. The same rules apply to all businesses, large or small, incorporated or not, for expenditure

incurred from 1st January 2013 and before 1st January 2015. The first £250,000 of expenditure is 100% allowable against tax, with any excess attracting the 18% annual Writing Down Allowance in the first year. This all sounds very good but what does it mean?

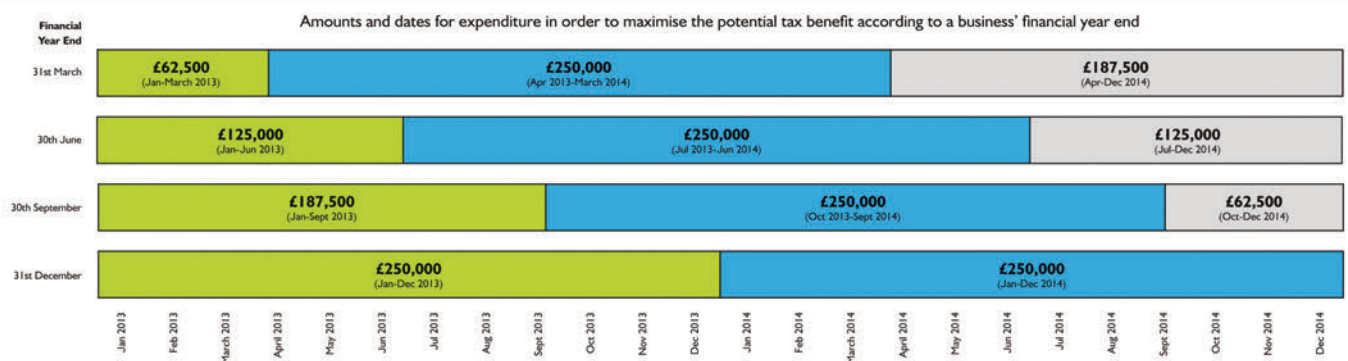
“The £100,000 expenditure in the first year equals the £100,000 tax bill saved, so HM Revenue & Customs has effectively paid for the partnership’s deposit and its first year’s HP payments.”

Imagine the following scenario: a plant hire business (a partnership of a father and his two sons) is rapidly approaching the end of its tax year and the accountant fears that a big income tax bill is looming. Even after claiming all available business expenses, a profit of £250,000 remains, which would attract the 40% income tax rate. The partnership’s financial year matches the tax year.

The accountant explains that, if the partnership invests £250,000 in replacement plant, from the 6th April 2013 onwards, then the full £250,000 AIA will apply. Paying a 10% deposit (£25,000) and borrowing £225,000 over three years on a hire purchase agreement equates to a £100,000 outlay in the first year, followed by £75,000 in each of the subsequent years (net of interest charges).

The £100,000 expenditure in the first year equals the £100,000 tax bill saved, so HM Revenue & Customs has effectively paid for the partnership’s deposit and its first year’s HP payments. Not only that, but the partnership has managed its cash flow in an exemplary fashion – claiming the maximum £250,000 AIA

£250,000 Annual Investment Allowance



but with an outlay of only £100,000 in the same tax year. Paying £250,000 in cash on day one would only net the same tax benefit.

“The devil was in the detail and 15 pages of explanatory notes left many heads reeling. Unfortunately it seems that some financial advisors have been slow in coming to terms with the new rules and some tax saving opportunities have already been lost.”

However, be warned because the above scenario is relatively simple to interpret. Different financial years that straddle the tax year and/or the 1st January 2013 and 2015 will result in very complicated calculations that will result in a lesser AIA being granted in that financial year. The chart above illustrates this by showing four different financial year end companies and how vital it is to spend the right amount within the right periods in order to maximise the tax benefits.

Other factors being equal, if your business is con-

templating purchasing plant in the near future, there are some strong tax-based and cash flow arguments to carefully plan plant purchases before 1st January 2015, so that you can maximise on the available £500,000 tax relief. ■

JCB Finance is not a tax or financial advisor – always seek advice from your accountant or finance director, because every business' circumstances are different. Businesses should not make investment decisions purely on a tax basis – there should be a compelling business case for the investment.

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Got something constructive to say?

Adjacent Planning and Building Control Today

acts as a platform for discussion, debate and information for its readers. The essence of each edition lies in its contributors and we welcome contact from all experts across the sector with an interest in making an editorial contribution.

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ADJACENT
DIGITAL POLITICS LIMITED

Disabled access – better by design

Providing access consultancy and accredited practical advice...

At About Access we take the view that prevention is better than cure, and thankfully that’s an opinion shared by most of our clients.

Anticipating obstacles through careful planning and a meticulous design process can save a lot of time and money and, when dealing with access for disabled people, it can also help to keep you out of court.

There is a common misconception that by designing a building to construction standards Building Regulations Approved Documents BS8300 you will automatically comply with the disability provisions within the Equality Act.

But there’s more to it than that, because the Equality Act is less concerned with buildings than with service. It requires that provision is made to overcome the discriminatory effects of any physical features of a building that place disabled people at a disadvantage, and that’s where our expertise makes the difference.

The Act aims to protect anyone who has or has had a disability, who is mistakenly perceived to be disabled or who is linked or associated with a disabled person. It covers buildings – large, small, new, old, listed – and outdoor facilities, and it extends to attitude, and how you deal with complaints about discrimination.

The onus is on service providers to anticipate



the requirements of disabled people – including customers and employees – and the adjustments that may have to be made for them.

Breaching the legislation can damage your business reputation and cost you money in fines, damages and expensive adjustments to buildings.

At About Access we’ve been showing people how to get it right since 2006, advising clients how to make their facilities accessible and open up their businesses to a broader customer base

The most effective way to approach the issue of disabled access is to build it into your organisation’s long-term plan, make it part of your culture.

We study accessibility provision from the earliest stage, with design appraisals which set out to ensure that an inclusive approach is achieved throughout the construction process.

We use our experience and understanding

to make recommendations that will assist a design team in incorporating features which will improve access, and we also help them save time and money by avoiding potentially costly corrections once a project is under way – or even complete!

Where the style, structure or age of a building makes it impossible to incorporate accessible features throughout the property we advise on the sort of measures that can be taken to accommodate the needs of disabled people.

It could be as simple as suggesting the provision of a meeting room on the ground floor for visitors to a building, but even that can be a significant saving in an environment where a little knowledge can be dangerous and expensive.

For further information on how About Access can help you and your properties please contact us.



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Building Regulations

Any person carrying out a building project that aims to create something new, or extend an existing building, has to comply with Building Regulations. The following summarises each regulation and includes a link to each approved document.

Part A - Structural Safety

Part A aims to ensure the integrity and stability of a building: loading, ground movement and disproportionate collapse must be addressed.

Part A covers technical guidance concerned with the requirements in regards to structural safety and incorporating any changes arising as a result of the Building Regulations 2010.

This includes the July 2013 amendments that came into force on 1 October 2013.

To view the document - click on the link below

www.planningportal.gov.uk/buildingregulations/approveddocuments/parta/documenta

Part B – Fire Safety volume 1 & 2

This section covers the technical guidance contained in Part B (Approved Document B) of schedule 1 of the Building Regulations concerned with the requirements in respect to fire safety.

Each volume deals with 5 specific areas:

- Means of warning and escape;
- Internal fire spread (linings);
- Internal fire spread (structure);
- External fire spread;
- Access and facilities for fire and rescue services.

Volume 1 – Dwelling Houses

This is the recent edition of Approved Document B – Volume 1: Dwellings. It supersedes the original 2006 edition by incorporating the changes made as a result of the Building Regulations 2010 and Building (Approved Inspectors etc) Regulations 2010. This is Volume 1 of the revised Approved Document B and should be used with Volume 2 for all applications received after 6 April 2007.

To view the document – click on the link below

www.planningportal.gov.uk/buildingregulations/approveddocuments/partb/bcapproveddocumentsb/bcapproveddocbvol1/

Volume 2 – Buildings other than dwellings

This is the current edition of Approved Document B – Volume 2: Buildings other than dwellings. It incorporates amendments made to reflect any changes arising as a result of the Building Regulations 2010. The changes mainly reflect regulation number changes as a result of re-ordering. There have been no amendments to the substantive requirements in Schedule 1 (ie Parts A to P) of the Building Regulations.

To view the document – click on the link below

www.planningportal.gov.uk/buildingregulations/approveddocuments/partb/bcapproveddocumentsb/bcapproveddocbvol2/

Part C – Site preparation and resistance to contaminants and moisture

The aim of Part C is to ensure the health and safety of the building's users with regard to the effects of pollution and contaminants. In addition, emphasis is given to resistance to moisture in terms of providing a barrier against ground water and the weather.

This current reprint of Approved Document C – Site preparation and resistance to contaminants and moisture, incorporates amendments made to the 2004 edition. This includes the July 2013 amendments that came into force on 1 October 2013. This reprint further incorporates editorial corrections and amendments.

To view the document – click on the link below

www.planningportal.gov.uk/buildingregulations/approveddocuments/partc/documentc

Part D – Toxic Substances

Part D examines the potential of cavity wall insulation to release toxic fumes into a building. The Document stipulates that fumes should not penetrate occupied parts of the building, and only where a continuous barrier is used, may potentially dangerous substances be used.

This current edition of Approved Document D (Toxic Substances) has been updated and replaces the previous 2002 edition.

It incorporates amendments made to reflect any changes arising as a result of the Building Regulations 2010. The changes mainly reflect regulation number changes as a result of re-ordering. There have been no amendments to the substantive requirements in Schedule 1 (ie Parts A to P) of the Building Regulations.

To view the document – click on the link below

www.planningportal.gov.uk/buildingregulations/approveddocuments/partd/approved

Part E – Resistance to the passage of sound

This document deals with 4 major areas including:

- Protection against sound from other parts of the building and adjoining buildings;
- Protection against sound within a dwelling house;
- Reverberation in common internal parts of a residential building;
- Acoustic conditions in schools.

This current edition of Approved Document E – Resistance to the passage of sound, has been updated to incorporate amendments made to reflect any changes arising as a result of the Building Regulations 2010.

To view the document – click on the link below

www.planningportal.gov.uk/buildingregulations/approveddocuments/parte/approved

Part F – Ventilation

The Part F document states that ventilation is the removal of 'stale' air from a building and replacement with 'fresh' outside air. This of course assumes that the outside air is of reasonable quality.

The Document states that ventilation is required for one or more of the following purposes:

- Provision of outside air for breathing;
- Dilution and removal of airborne pollutants including odours;
- Control of excess humidity (arising from water vapour in the indoor air);
- Provision of air for fuel-burning appliances (which is covered under Part J of the Building Regulations).

This 2010 edition of Approved Document F – Ventilation has been updated and replaces the previous edition.

To view the document – click on the link below

www.planningportal.gov.uk/buildingregulations/approveddocuments/partf/approved

Part G – Sanitation, Hot Water Safety and Water Efficiency

New requirements set out within the document include:

- Cold water supply;
- Water efficiency;
- Hot water supply and systems;
- Sanitary conveniences and washing facilities;
- Bathrooms;
- Food preparation areas.

To view the document – click on the link below

www.planningportal.gov.uk/buildingregulations/approveddocuments/partg/approved

Part H – Drainage and Waste

Part H states that adequate drainage systems must be provided in order to promote both personal and environmental health. Also highlighted, is the importance of a working sewerage infrastructure and maintenance, along with pollution prevention.

There are 6 main sections to Part H:

- Foul water drainage;
- Wastewater treatment systems and cesspools;
- Rainwater drainage;
- Building over sewers;
- Separate systems of drainage;
- Solid waste storage.

To view the document – click on the link below

www.planningportal.gov.uk/buildingregulations/approveddocuments/parth/approved

Part J – Heat producing appliances

Part J is concerned with all heat producing appliances that could produce health and safety hazards such as fire, explosion and carbon monoxide poisoning. Appliances such as boilers, room heaters and oil tanks are included, with the addition of liquid fuel storage systems.

There are 6 main sections to these regulations:

- Air supply;
- Discharge of products and combustion;
- Protection of building;
- Provision of information;
- Protection of liquid fuel storage systems;
- Protection against pollution.

To view the document – click on the link below

www.planningportal.gov.uk/buildingregulations/approveddocuments/partj/approved

Part K – Protection from falling

Part K is concerned with the health and safety aspects of areas such as stairs, ladders and barriers and also addresses the risk from falling. This edition has been updated by combining Approved Document N: Glazing and also some overlapping guidance that is in Approved Document M: Access to and use of buildings respectively.

This document deals with 6 main areas including:

- Stairs, ladders and ramps;
- Protection from falling;
- Vehicle barriers and loading bays;
- Protection against impact with glazing;
- Additional provisions for glazing in buildings other than dwellings;
- Protection against impact from and by trapping doors.

To view the document – click on the link below

www.planningportal.gov.uk/buildingregulations/approveddocuments/partk/approved

Part L – Conservation of fuel and power

Part L specifically refers to thermal efficiency standards and affects insulation and heat loss, aiming to improve the low-carbon efficiency of buildings. The changes listed in this document for Approved Documents L1A, L1B, L2A, L2B are made to take account of a recast of the European Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (Directive 2010/31/EU).

This document has 4 different parts to it:

- L1A – Conservation of fuel and power (New dwellings)
- L1B – Conservation of fuel and power (Existing dwellings)
- L2A – Conservation of fuel and power (New buildings other than dwellings)
- L2B – Conservation of fuel and power (Existing buildings other than dwellings)

To view all the documents click below

www.planningportal.gov.uk/buildingregulations/approveddocuments/partl/approved

Part M – Access to and Use of Buildings

Part M aims to provide inclusive access to, and circulation within all buildings, giving particular emphasis to the requirements for facilities and disabled people.

It covers 4 main areas:

- Access and use;
- Access to extensions to buildings other than dwellings;
- Sanitary conveniences in extensions to buildings other than dwellings;
- Sanitary conveniences in dwellings.

To view the document – click on the link below

www.planningportal.gov.uk/buildingregulations/approveddocuments/partm/approved

Part N – Glazing – Safety in relation to impact, opening and cleaning

Part N deals with all aspects of safety relating to glazing, with added requirements related to safe access for cleaning windows aimed to reduce the risk of injury when cleaning glazed surfaces, and the safe opening and closing of windows.

The 4 main areas deal with:

- Protection against impact;
- Manifestation of glazing;
- Safe opening and closing of windows, skylights and ventilators;
- Safe access for cleaning windows etc.

To view the document – click on the link below

www.planningportal.gov.uk/buildingregulations/approveddocuments/partn/approved

Part P – Electrical safety – Dwellings

Part P aims to reduce the number of domestic accidents, deaths and fires arising from electricity. It is also seen as a way to improve the competence of those undertaking electrical work.

This edition:

- Reduces the range of electrical installation work that is notifiable;
- Installers who are not a registered competent person may now use a competent person to certify work as an alternative to using building control;
- The technical guidance throughout now refers to BS 7671:2008 incorporating Amendment No 1:2011.

To view the document – click on the link below

www.planningportal.gov.uk/buildingregulations/approveddocuments/partp/approved

Building Regulation 7 – Materials and workmanship

This document requires that any building work shall be carried out with proper materials and in a workmanlike manner. It reflects the full implementation of European Regulation 305/2011/EU-CPR covering construction products referred to as the Construction Products Regulation, from 1 July 2013

To view the document – click on the link below

www.planningportal.gov.uk/buildingregulations/approveddocuments/workandmaterials/approved



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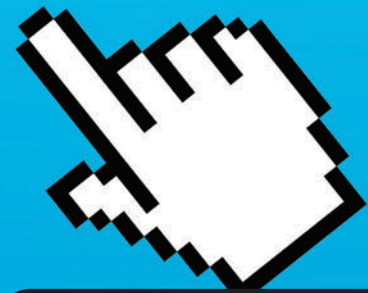
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Suppliers Guide

Our Suppliers Guide contains all key contacts within the planning and building control sector.

The interactive map will take you to the professionals that can satisfy your planning and building control requirements. Divided into regions for ease of use, simply click on the region of interest to view our contacts list. We also provide a national section that covers a wider area.

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If you wish to appear in the Suppliers Guide, please contact Ian Parker on 01270 502878 or iparker@adjacentgovernment.co.uk



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