

INNOVATION

[PIONEERING REPAIR WORK ON BLACKHEATH TUNNEL \(see story here\)](#)

SouthEastern Railway has completed a 10-week programme of essential repairs in the historic Blackheath tunnel between Charlton and Blackheath stations that will help to improve reliability and safety for passengers. The 175-year old Victoria-era tunnel has undergone a pioneering strengthening and waterproofing process, believed to be the first of its kind in the UK and potentially the world. Engineers injected expansive grout into the pockets of sand and gravel surrounding the tunnel to strengthen the ground. This innovative technique knits and compresses the loose material tightly together. A further layer of grout was applied to the back of the tunnel lining to waterproof the worst-affected areas, helping to preserve the brickwork and track, signalling, and other railway equipment in the tunnel for years to come. The techniques trialled and used successfully in the Blackheath tunnel during this closure will now be replicated across other parts of the rail network.

[SAINT-GOBAIN COMMISSIONS GRAPHENE RESEARCH \(see story here\)](#)

Saint-Gobain UK & Ireland has struck up a partnership with Manchester-based **Vector Labs**, to explore how advanced materials can be integrated into construction products to improve performance and reduce environmental impact. The focus of the initiative is the exploitation of nano-materials, including graphene, to maximise the functionality and performance of construction products. Initially the focus of the strategic partnership will be on Saint-Gobain's gypsum products, focused on use of more recycled content, reducing waste in its processes/on site and lowering the embodied carbon of materials.

[NETWORK RAIL SIGNS MOU WITH SNCF RÉSEAU \(see story here\)](#)

The agreement formalises a new research and development partnership between the two organisations, focused on tackling shared challenges and developing future-facing railway technologies. The two organisations will collaborate on a range of projects in the Control Period 7 pipeline, including artificial intelligence (AI), signalling, climate resilience, solid state interlocking (SSI), fibre optic acoustic sensing (FOAS), control, command and signalling (CCS) and drone technology.

TECHNOLOGY

[UPDATE FROM RSSB ON THE NATIONAL CCS DEFECT RECORDING, ANALYSIS AND CORRECTIVE ACTION SYSTEM \(DRACAS\) \(see story here\)](#)

The National CCS DRACAS is a management system that includes a set of processes designed to stop repeated subsystem faults from happening. It is a way of sharing and harnessing data to diagnose, correct, and prevent faults, failures, and defects far more comprehensively than is possible today. By doing this, it will boost safety and reduce risk. Similar systems exist in aviation, and in rail at a regional level, but, until now, not across the national rail network. It's estimated that the National CCS DRACAS will save the industry £231 million over ten years, as well as avoiding the estimated £351 million cost of doing nothing.

[TELENT HITS MAJOR MILESTONE IN SCADA ROLLOUT \(see story here\)](#)

Telent has reached a significant milestone in its nationwide rollout of its new SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) system for Network Rail, seeing several sites go live and the UK's first remote secure test completed. The remote securing technology enables safer working conditions for staff carrying out crucial maintenance tasks on the railway. This feature enables maintenance workers to prevent accidental re-energisation of segments of the track through a mobile phone app until their task is completed, with control rooms unable to override the app's command. This removes the risk of miscommunication between ground workers and control rooms and makes the working environment safer. It also maximises the potential time available for planned works, minimising downtime and limiting passenger disruption.

[CIVILS CONTRACTOR WOWED BY MACHINE CONTROL RESULTS \(see story here\)](#)

Scottish civil engineering contractor **Dalcon** has invested in four **Trimble** Earthworks excavator systems from **Sitech UK & Ireland**, a machine control platform is designed to improve productivity, cost efficiencies and sustainability onsite by integrating several advanced technology features. As a result the company has seen a considerable impact on productivity - one of the first projects using the technology was already eight weeks ahead of schedule, and on track to be completed in half the estimated time.

EQUIPMENT

[EUROVIA FITS COLLISION AVOIDANCE TECH TO ROLLERS \(see story here\)](#)

Eurovia Surfacing is claiming to be the first contractor in Europe to deploy **Bomag** 174 rollers equipped with both Safety Shield AI human detection and Bomag's emergency brake assist system. Safety Shield operates via sensors that monitor two

distinct safety zones around the machine: a five-metre caution zone and a two-metre critical zone. When movement is detected, the system triggers alerts both inside the cab and externally. An additional red 'Safety Shield halo' light on the ground provides operatives with a visual warning in low light. The emergency brake assist system identifies potential hazards, even in poor visibility conditions, slowing down the roller automatically, halting if necessary, then continuing at its original pre-defined speed once the person or object has left the critical area.

ADTS CONVERTED TO WATER CANNONS ([see story here](#))

Articulated dump trucks designed to carry construction spoil have been adapted for dust suppression duty. **Hydex Solutions**, which specialises in customising construction machinery, has adapted Rokbak RA30 and RA40 articulated haulers into high-capacity water trucks for customers in North America, working with US equipment dealer **Hills Machinery** to offer a solution that pairs articulated hauler performance with dust suppression capability.

ROBOT BRICKIE BUILDS DURHAM HOUSES ([see story here](#))

Five years after it was first unveiled in the Czech Republic, the WLTR computerised brick-laying machine, called Walter, has finally arrived in the UK, being used on a housing development by developer **JT Lifestyle Homes**. It is claimed that the robot, produced by **GreenBuild**, can lay up to 200 sqm of masonry per day (10 times typical skilled human output) constructing walls up to 3.5 metres high without scaffolding regardless of the weather conditions. It uses DryFix adhesive foam instead of traditional mortar.

MATERIALS/USES/METHODS

NORTH WALES MERCHANT INSTALLS THIRD CONCRETE VENDING MACHINE ([see story here](#))

Welsh builders' merchant **Thornccliffe Building Supplies** has installed a third Fibo Collect concrete vending machine at one of its depots. **Fibo Intercon** now has 15 machines operating across the UK and Ireland with more planned. The system is particularly beneficial for small and medium-sized contractors seeking high-quality mortars and non-structural concrete mixes in small, precise batches.

TITAN TO PROCESS FIDDLER'S FERRY FLY ASH ([see story here](#))

Peel NRE, the owners of the former Fiddler's Ferry power station have done a deal with Greek cement company, **Titan Group**, to repurpose some of the waste on the site. Titan will build and operate a processing and beneficiating facility, to extract and process lagoon ash to use as an ingredient in low carbon cement. The facility will be able to process 300,000 tons of wet fly ash annually, with the potential to double this capacity. The processed fly ash will meet the BS EN 450 standard that ensures the quality and consistency of fly ash when used as a pozzolanic addition to cement or concrete mixtures.

NATIONAL GRID TRIALS 3D PRINTED FOUNDATIONS ([see story here](#))

National Grid is trialling the use of 3D printing to make reinforced concrete substation foundations, working with **Hyperion Robotics**, a Finnish company whose technology uses additive manufacturing techniques for the production of precast concrete. Hyperion claims that its method uses less material and is therefore more efficient. The collaboration aims to optimise grid development through the automated production of low-carbon foundations, first exploring the feasibility of this technology for non-critical structures, such as lighting column foundations. The initiative could serve as a stepping stone for the trial of low carbon 3D printed foundations for larger assets, such as post insulators and circuit breakers.

ROCKWOOL OPENS NEW FACTORY ([see story here](#))

Insulation manufacturer **Rockwool** has opened a new factory near Birmingham. Its 'global centre of excellence for fire-stopping' at Hams Hall will manufacture a new range of fire-stopping products, including coated batts, sealants, collars, wraps, pillows and socket boxes. The company is also planning to open a training centre at the Hams Hall site later this year to give customers product demonstrations.

LAING O'ROURKE DELIVERS PREFAB LIFT MODULE PROTOTYPE ([see story here](#))

Construction contractor **Laing O'Rourke** and elevator company **Kone** have produced a prefabricated passenger lift module for rail footbridges, installing the first offsite constructed lift at the Network Rail test track facility in Melton Mowbray. The modular lift is designed for use with multiple footbridges. Containing a Kone Monospace 700 lift, the tower stands at 10.678 metres above ground level. Construction, including all off-site activity took 86 days, a potential saving of up to 32 weeks compared traditional in-situ installation. On delivery, the lift went from the trailer bed of the delivery vehicle to being installed fully upright in just 26 minutes.

MODULAR BUILDER TARGETS EMERGENCY MARKET ([see story here](#))

Modular housing manufacturer **Stelling Properties** has invested £3m in a product line that offers local authorities and housing association a budget option for emergency accommodation to tackle homelessness, advertising prefabricated steel-framed residential modules available from stock at its factory in Winchester. It intends to maintain stock levels to ensure buyers always have short delivery times of just a few weeks.

SOUTH EASTERN RAILWAY EXPANDS PROGRAMME OF DAYTIME INSPECTIONS FOR IMPROVED MAINTENANCE ([see story here](#))

Delivered by **South Eastern Railway**, which brings the publicly owned train operator, **Southeastern** and infrastructure provider, **Network Rail Kent Route**, under a single leadership team, the daytime maintenance inspection programme strikes a balance between the times of lower passenger demand and essential maintenance. It follows two trials on the Medway Valley and Maidstone East lines which proved to be very successful in terms of inspection quality, efficiency and cost savings. Integrated planning between the train operator and infrastructure teams allows more inspections to be scheduled in off-peak periods when longer service gaps give workers more access to the railway in daylight hours.

WIDER DISTRIBUTION FOR SLOVAKIAN STRAW PANELS ([see story here](#))

EcoCocon, a manufacturer of prefabricated straw wall panels based in Slovakia, has entered into a partnership with **Ecological Building Systems**, a distributor of sustainable building materials in the UK and Ireland. EcoCocon's modular wall panels are made primarily from compressed straw and timber, offering Passive House-level thermal performance while significantly reducing embodied carbon.

EXPANSION JOINT INNOVATION ON RIVER NENE VIADUCT ([see story here](#))

National Highways has sanctioned the use of a new Swiss variant of expansion joint that has not been used in the UK before. A large expansion joint on the River Nene viaduct, between junctions 12 and 13 of the A14, needs to be replaced having reached the end of its working life. The new joint is designed to reduce noise, make future maintenance easier and enable motorists to continue using the road while the repairs are carried out. The work, to be undertaken by highways specialist **Route One Infrastructure**, is expected to take three months. To keep the road open as much as possible, innovative bridging plates are being installed spanning the excavated area, which can be raised to allow access for overnight working and lowered for traffic to flow in the daytime, without which the route would need to be closed to all traffic 24/7 for several weeks.

ACCESS INNOVATION DEBUTED ON MENAI BRIDGE ([see story here](#))

Spencer Bridge Engineering has begun work on the corbels, land saddles, parapets and underdeck of the Menai Suspension Bridge to help safeguard the future of the Grade I listed structure. During the underdeck painting stage of the project, Spencer will deploy its new modular moving access system for the first time. Named AeroTruss, this is an access system that has been developed and designed by Spencers in-house to address common issues associated with temporary access systems. It enables access to the underdeck while minimising load effects into the bridge structure.

LORNE STEWART PULLS PLUG ON MODULAR ARM [see story here](#)

M&E specialist **Lorne Stewart** has shut down its offsite modular arm **MDSL** after another year of losses pushed the group further into the red. MDSL, which supplied riser modules and prefabricated pipework, was placed into wind-down mode after continued losses.

FORTERRA TO SHUT DOWN TWO DIVISIONS ([see story here](#))

Forterra is closing down its **Formpave** block paving and the **Bison Bespoke** precast businesses to focus on core operations. Formpave manufactures and sells concrete block paving, with 2024 full year revenue of £5.9m. The business broke even last year and is expected to be loss making this year. The factory now requires a significant level of capital investment to remain operational which has forced the move. Bison Bespoke precast generated revenue of £9.7m in 2024 but has failed to make money for a number of years.

RECYCLED ASPHALT RUNNING COURSE PASSES TFL TESTS ([see story here](#))

Transport for London has validated the use of mixing 50% reclaimed asphalt pavement into the top layer of new road surfaces, becoming one of the first highway authorities in the UK to demonstrate the long-term performance and durability of a recycled running surface. TfL contractor **FM Conway** (now part of **Vinci**) used a trial mix of 50% reclaimed asphalt pavement (RAP) on a section of the A1 at Mill Hill in north London back in 2016. Nine years on, the results are in – it has passed all tests. The trial has confirmed that the material can endure frequent, heavy traffic and matches the performance of traditional asphalt, in terms of quality, texture, safety, and maintenance.

IRISH TRIAL ASSEMBLIES COMPLETE AS RAILWAY BRIDGE SETS SAIL ([see story here](#))

Huge concrete components which will form a new £20m railway bridge and roundabout in Stockport have travelled over the Irish Sea ready for the project's main construction phase. **Network Rail** and engineers from its contractor **Murphy** carried out a specially sequenced trial assembly as part of dress rehearsals to make sure installation in Stockport goes smoothly. Construction involves large cranes and careful choreography to tight timescales, so the learning from the tests in Ireland was vital, enabling a full test of the installation methodology.

COVENTRY TO HOST ASPHALT TRIALS ([see story here](#))

Trials of low-carbon road resurfacing materials are to begin on two roads in Coventry this summer, as the **Centre of Excellence for Decarbonising Roads** (CEDR) teams up with **Coventry City Council** for paving material trials. CEDR is one of seven projects in ADEPT Live Labs 2: Decarbonising Local Roads in the UK. ADEPT is the **Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport**, representing municipal engineers. Live Labs 2 is a three-year, £30m, UK-wide programme funded by the **Department for Transport** that runs until March 2026, followed by a five-year monitoring and evaluation period. Seven projects, grouped by four themes, are being led by local authorities working alongside commercial and academic partners. The trials in Coventry are designed to evaluate and compare a range of innovative low carbon materials under real world conditions. Data collected will be independently verified to assess performance, carbon footprint and cost implications.

ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY

NETWORK RAIL STATIONS AND OFFICES GO SOLAR ([see story here](#))

Network Rail and EDF **Renewables** have signed a Corporate Purchase Power Agreement, securing 64GWh of clean energy at a fixed cost every year for the next 14 years, providing around 15 per cent of the non-traction energy needed for its offices, depots and managed stations. As a result of the deal, EDF will build a solar facility at Bloy's Grove, near Swainsthorpe in Norfolk, in sight of the Great Eastern Main Line. One year of clean energy purchased through the deal is the equivalent of powering London Liverpool Street station for nine years.

KIER DITCHES DIESEL FOR HYDROGEN ([see story here](#))

Kier and the **Environment Agency** are hailing early success from a 12-month trial at the Bridgwater Tidal Barrier scheme in Somerset, assessing whether off-grid sites can run welfare and office facilities on a combination of solar panels, hydrogen fuel cells and battery storage. From January to April, the system clocked up 16,000 kWh of clean power. Compared to a

traditional diesel generator, the trial has already saved around 20,000 litres of diesel and avoided 53 tonnes of CO₂e. As well as slashing emissions, the setup has helped cut noise and eliminate diesel spill risks.

COLLINS TURNS TO BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE (see story here)

Collins Earthworks is the first customer for London-based **Allye Energy's** MegaMax battery energy storage system. Collins will be using a Max1000 unit with 240kW integrated DC fast charging capabilities, configured for the specific requirements of construction sites. Allye estimates the MegaMax range will save Collins up to £2.5k per week in diesel costs, with additional savings from reduced maintenance requirements and elimination of costly grid connection upgrades for EV charging infrastructure.

SOUTHEASTERN INVESTS IN WATER-SAVING TECHNOLOGY (see story here)

Southeastern has installed more than 150 automatic water meter readers across its estate, reducing waste at depots and stations. The new technology now covers 90 per cent of the stations and depots (more than 180 in total) across Kent, Sussex, and South East London run by Southeastern. By sending real-time data to a central hub, the data loggers allow leaks and unusual usage to be quickly detected and repairs arranged.

NETWORK RAIL ENLISTS HAWKS (see story here)

Network Rail has been celebrating "feathered enforcers" whose job is to ensure nesting birds don't cause costly delays to Network Rail's £14 million upgrade of Scarborough station. The birds put in two shifts a week keeping gulls and crows from settling on the soon-to-be-replaced roof. With old slates removed already, nesting birds could mean work having to stop during the critical summer months of the extensive 12-month project.

WELSH SCHOOL SCORES MORE THAN 93% ON BREEAM (see story here)

Ysgol Dyffryn Aeron, built by **Wynne Construction**, has secured a 93.69% rating under the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) 2018 education scheme. The new £16.3m facility in Ceredigion, which amalgamated Ciliau Parc School, Dihewyd School, and Felinfach School, is only the second educational project in Wales to secure a top grade for BREEAM and the first in the UK to score so highly.

GOVERNMENT BRINGS IN CONSULTANTS FOR GREENER ROADS (see story here)

National Highways has appointed a joint venture of **AtkinsRéalis** and **Jacobs** as its 'environmental and sustainability technical partner'. The JV will be working on a new environmental sustainability strategy for National Highways, which hopes to achieve net zero emissions across England's 4,500 miles of motorways and major A-roads by 2050, providing provide technical expertise across priority areas, including designing lower carbon roads, developing nature-based solutions, mitigating pollution, optimising resource and energy use, and better integrating roads into surrounding landscapes.

HG GOES GREEN ON CRANES (see story here)

HG Construction is phasing out diesel generators on its tower cranes after investing £1.2m in site battery systems to decarbonise its operations. The contractor is rolling out UK-made Revolution Battery units from **Dumarey Green Power** across its sites, following a successful trial that saw costs and emissions slashed by over 90%. During trials, a single battery system powered two Moritsch RTL 195 luffing cranes from a 32A 3-phase mains supply – replacing two 200kVA diesel generators running up to 60 hours per week.

SCOTRAIL TO USE DIGITAL TWIN TECHNOLOGY TO SLASH EMISSIONS (see story here)

ScotRail has significantly expanded its use of digital twin technology with energy intelligence company, **OptimiseAI**. Introduction of Predict (an AI predictive tool) has transformed ScotRail's energy process, instantly generating a digital twin for 25 stations, allowing easy comparison of performance against UK and net zero energy standards, highlighting current usage and future efficiency potential. By integrating additional sub-metering and IoT devices in larger stations, along with developing detailed models of zones and rooms within each station and depot, ScotRail can understand in real time how, when and why energy is consumed across their facilities.

BULK BAG THAT IS FULLY RECYCLED AND FULLY RECYCLABLE (see story here)

Builders' merchant **MKM Building Supplies** has teamed up with **Centurion Industrial Packaging** to roll out bulk bags made from 100% recycled, and recyclable, material. The MKM bulk bags are made entirely from recycled polypropylene, including the stitching and labelling, offering a market-first solution that minimises landfill, helps customers cut waste and smashes the current environmental regulation requirements, the company boasts.

QTS ANNOUNCES IN-HOUSE ECOLOGY TEAM (see story here)

QTS has launched its first-ever in-house ecology team with the appointment of three experienced ecologists. The new team will play a pivotal role in protecting wildlife habitats, improving biodiversity on projects, and streamlining compliance with environmental legislation. Previously, QTS outsourced all ecological assessments to external consultancies, but increasing delays due to a limited pool of railway-trained ecologists prompted the company to invest in a permanent, in-house team, providing better quality control and greater responsiveness.

TRAINING, RECRUITMENT & EMPLOYMENT

NETWORK RAIL RECRUITMENT DRIVE FOR MAINTENANCE ROLES (see story here)

Network Rail has announced the launch of a new national recruitment drive, which focuses on maintenance roles. It said there were a variety of positions open to entry level candidates, from operative and technician, through to team leader. The initiative is part of the wider industry celebrations for Railway 200 which aims to inspire people to think about a career in rail and become the pioneers of tomorrow.

HOME OFFICE STEPS-UP IMMIGRATION RAIDS ON CONSTRUCTION SITES (see story here)

Construction sites are increasingly coming under the spotlight as a major surge in immigration enforcement activity has led to

a 51% rise in the number of arrests in the last year. Since 5 July last year to 31 May, 9,000 visits have resulted in 6,410 arrests across all industries. In a recent raid officers made 36 arrests at a construction site in Belfast's historic Titanic Quarter. Offences ranged from breaching visa conditions to illegal entry in the UK with no permission to work.

AMEY BECOMES PATRON OF MULTICULTURAL APPRENTICESHIP & SKILLS ALLIANCE (see story here)

Amey has announced that it has become a patron of the **Multicultural Apprenticeship & Skills Alliance**, underscoring its commitment to advancing diversity, inclusion, and social mobility across the UK's infrastructure sector. Founded in 2017, the Alliance promotes equity and accessibility in apprenticeships and skills development. As a Patron, Amey will collaborate to drive initiatives that break down barriers to employment, particularly for individuals furthest from the labour market. The partnership will provide Amey with access to expert insight, research, and diverse networks, all vital to shaping a more inclusive, future-ready workforce.

CONSTRUCTION SKILLS BODY LAUNCHES (see story here)

The **Construction Skills Mission Board** held its first meeting last month with a target of attracting 100,000 new workers into the industry. The Board will develop specific initiatives and actions to deliver the mission, while supporting the Government to shape, develop and deliver skills policy. Actions will focus on five key areas to drive increased recruitment: confidence to employ and invest; clear new entrant pathways; access to provision & support to train; funding that works; and reliable and rewarding careers.

NEW PLANT OPERATOR SCHOOL OPENS IN LONDON (see story here)

London's only dedicated training facility for construction vehicles has opened. The new **Green Plant Academy** is a partnership between **Places for London** (TfL's property company), **The Skills Centre** and the **Earls Court Development Company** (ECDC) in collaboration with the **Construction Industry Training Board** (CITB), **Sunbelt Rentals**, **JCB**, **L Lynch**, the **National Open College Network** (NOCN) and **FM Conway**. The Academy will specialise in training on zero-emission equipment, providing career development while also helping the construction industry further transition to cleaner ways of working and address the climate emergency.

CRAFTS SKILLS CENTRE OPENS (see story here)

Conservation construction specialist **DBR** has opened a training centre to help keep heritage craft skills alive.

The company, which works on the repair and maintenance of London's grandest palaces, cathedrals and museums, has opened its Craft Skills Education Centre in the South Downs National Park, attached to DBR's southern headquarters on the Wiston Estate near Worthing. The centre will be a hub for traditional craft skills education, operating as a training facility and fully-working historic building conservation space, providing real-world experience for learners while delivering joinery and masonry conservation services to clients.

TRAINING PILOT TO SUPPORT FORMER STEELWORKERS INTO RAIL (see story here)

The **Global Centre of Rail Excellence** (GCRE) and **Neath Port Talbot Council** have announced plans for a new skills programme to help former **Tata** steelworkers find employment in the rail industry. The 'Access to Rail Engineering Programme' will be run out of the GCRE site and help 72 individuals get the re-training they need to find work in the rail industry. The project saw its first cohort begin training in early July, and will support successful candidates to undertake the three-week training programme, so they are ready to work on the railway. The project is working with leading rail suppliers in Wales to provide an opportunity for paid employment for all individuals who successfully complete the training.

AMEY LAUNCHES STRIVE PROGRAMME TO SUPPORT CARE LEAVERS (see story here)

Amey has announced the launch of its STRIVE care leaver programme in Manchester. The initiative aims to support young adults transitioning out of the care system by providing them with essential resources and opportunities. Care leavers in England face significant challenges as they transition into adulthood, and are 10x more likely than their peers to be out of employment, education, or training by the age of 21, with many also lacking the support networks other young adults might have. To help bridge this gap, Amey has partnered with the **Greater Manchester Youth Network** (GMYN) to deliver STRIVE, a programme offering personalised mentoring, pre-employability training, and real-world work experience.

SOUTHEASTERN PARTNERS WITH PRIMARY ENGINEER TO INSPIRE NEXT GENERATION OF ENGINEERS (see story here)

Southeastern has teamed up with educational not-for-profit company **Primary Engineer** to introduce primary school children to the world of engineering in the rail industry in an "interactive and fun way", working with children from 10 Kent primary schools. The Primary Engineer Rail Programme is inspiring pupils in Thanet to consider engineering as a future career. It provides schools and teachers with knowledge and skills to encourage their pupils to explore this exciting field from an early age.

HEALTH, SAFETY & WELLBEING

COMPANY FINED AFTER APPRENTICE FALLS DOWN STAIRWELL (see story here)

A company has been fined £800k after a teenage apprentice was injured when a temporary stairwell covering collapsed. An HSE investigation found he had been loading concrete blocks onto the temporary flooring on the first floor of a newly built home, near to a temporary stairwell covering, a large area covered with a timber sheet material laid over joists. The area collapsed, with the apprentice sustaining injuries to his fingers, hand, wrist and shoulder. The investigation found that the joists under the timber sheet material should have been back propped. This was mentioned a number of times in the company's own health and safety manual for the site but it had been missed on this particular plot.

SITE SUPERVISOR FINED FOR ASBESTOS BREACH (see story here)

A construction site supervisor has been fined after he exposed primary school pupils and staff to asbestos during school renovation work. He cut through asbestos insulating board using a circular saw, resulting in asbestos fibres spreading through the school hall, which was subsequently used for two days by pupils and staff. An HSE investigation found he had failed to

follow his asbestos awareness training, including clear instructions not to disturb the wall.

BUILDERS FINED AFTER FOUR INJURED IN HOUSE COLLAPSE ([see story here](#))

A London construction company has been fined after four men were injured when the first floor of a house collapsed during building works. Engineers who inspected the property identified errors with the connections of the structural steel beams, which prompted remedial works. The collapse came about when a welder was using an oxyacetylene torch to cut a steel beam supporting the first floor, whilst, at the same time, another worker had been removing Acrow props that were supporting the beam. An investigation by the HSE found the company failed to ensure the structure did not collapse while in a state of temporary weakness, failed to put measures in place to manage the temporary remedial work and failed to take all practicable steps to prevent danger to any person while the building was in a temporary state of weakness.

DEMOLITION FIRM FINED AFTER WORKER'S FALL ([see story here](#))

The company admitted breaching safety regulations when working as principal contractor on the demolition of a vacant warehouse. The worker was part of a team on the warehouse roof, removing aluminium over-sheeting, being carried to pre-cut holes in the roof from where they were dropped to the ground. The holes were guarded by steel crowd control barriers secured together with plastic tie wraps, but were not attached to the roof surface. The worker lost his footing, the unattached barriers shifted, exposing the edge of the opening and he fell through the gap. An investigation by the HSE found the company had failed to properly plan, supervise, and carry out the work at height safely. Workers were sent onto the roof without sufficient instruction, training or supervision. The company also failed to put adequate fall protection measures in place.

RSSB LAUNCHES FREE E-LEARNING COURSE ON TAKING SAFE DECISIONS ([see story here](#))

The **Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB)** has launched a new free e-learning course, Taking Safe Decisions. The course, developed with the support of the **Office of Rail and Road (ORR)**, offers practical guidance on topics including legal duties to ensure safety, how to carry out effective risk assessments and how to implement changes and improvements safely. The ORR recently identified inconsistencies within the rail industry in how decisions regarding safety-related costs and benefits are made. The evidence showed that although most dutyholders assess 'reasonable practicability' before implementing health and safety measures, there is a need for more consistent decision-making processes. The course has been designed to promote a consistent approach, embedding a deeper understanding of proactive safety practices throughout the rail industry, particularly at the senior leadership level.

DEVELOPER FINED FOR FIRE SAFETY FAILINGS ([see story here](#))

A developer has been fined for repeatedly failing to put suitable fire precautions measures in place in relation to the redevelopment of a former warehouse into 35 apartments spread across six floors. Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) visited, identified a number of fire safety issues and prohibited use of the building, meaning residents already living there had to leave their homes. An HSE inspector found the company was not complying with its duty to ensure suitable fire safety precautions were in place during ongoing construction work, including no fire detection system, no means of raising the alarm in case of a fire, inadequate escape plans and construction work not phased to maintain fire compartmentation throughout the project. HSE served a prohibition notice, stopping all further work until adequate fire precautions were in place, and an improvement notice requiring the company to design and implement a fire management plan. During further visits HSE found construction work had been ongoing while no action had been taken to comply with either of the notices.

ADJUSTABLE HARD HAT LAUNCHED FOR DIFFERENT HAIR TYPES ([see story here](#))

Consultant **AtkinsRéalis** has introduced hard hats that accommodate individual hair types and are more comfortable for bald builders. The modified hard hat design enables the wearer to make adjustments to accommodate their individual hair type and some religious headwear, ensuring a more secure fit and full protection compared to standard issue personal protective equipment (PPE). AtkinsRéalis worked with PPE manufacturer **MSA** to produce the modified hard hat leading to the production of the V-Gard® 930.

CROSS GOES OFFICIAL ([see story here](#))

The **HSE**, in its role as the Building Safety Regulator (BSR), has appointed **CROSS-UK** (Collaborative Reporting for Safer Structures) as the official voluntary reporting system for structural and fire safety until at least 2028. CROSS was set up in 2005 by the Institution of Structural Engineers and the Institution of Civil Engineers as a confidential reporting system for engineers to report on fire and structural safety issues. These are then published anonymously to share lessons learned to promote safety. The 2022 Building Safety Act introduced strengthened legislation covering building safety and construction products, including a requirement for an official voluntary occurrence reporting system (VORS), operated independently of both the HSE and the government. CROSS-UK has been operating the system on an interim basis since April 2023 but, following a competitive tender process, it has now been formally appointed to run the service until at least 2028.

MANAGERS MUST TAKE CONSTRUCTION SITE COOLING MEASURES ([see story here](#))

Aggreko's latest report, titled *Building in Resilience: Weather-proofing European Construction in a Changing Climate*, examines the effects of heat on construction projects and workers and has found that extreme heat is commonly cited as being a threat to ongoing works. Survey results in the report found that 39% of respondents in the UK had received penalties due to disruptions caused by hot weather and weather-related factors. Aggreko is therefore encouraging construction companies to secure the required equipment to boost construction site cooling (industrial chillers and air handling units). Whilst activity forecasts signal a strong period of growth for UK construction, extreme heat could put this progress at risk, through equipment failure, material damage and health risks for workers on site.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

TRU CELEBRATES VOLUNTEERS WEEK ([see story here](#))

To mark Volunteers' Week, the **Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU)** reflected on its progress towards its long-term goal of

carrying out 25,000 hours of volunteering by 2035, revealing it has already delivered 75 per cent of that total. Since 2019, employees have completed over 18,700 hours of volunteering as part of the programme's commitment to working with its communities, a key element of its Sustainable Development strategy, to develop job skills and shape public spaces alongside the people that use them. Volunteering opportunities are targeted at locations which experiencing higher levels of deprivation, ensuring efforts are focused on disadvantaged communities where support is most needed and can have the greatest impact.

CORPORATE AND COMMERCIAL

AUDIT REVEALS STATE OF SEO AMONG TOP CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES ([see story here](#))

An analysis of the UK's top 100 construction company's websites reveals widespread underperformance in search engine optimisation (SEO), with most falling short on basic technical and content criteria. The audit looked at how construction companies are leveraging their websites for visibility, user experience and lead generation. The findings suggest that many of them are still treating their online presence as a digital brochure rather than a search development tool, despite the growing importance of digital visibility for winning tenders, attracting talent, and generating leads.

DRYLINING GIANT TAKES BOLD STEP ON ACCEPTING DESIGN RISK ([see story here](#))

Drylining company **Siniat** has become the first UK manufacturer to formally accept design responsibility for its system information and standard details in a move hailed as a gamechanger for construction risk and compliance. The decision is expected to have major implications for passive fire protection (often up 5–15% of a building's internal systems) where liability has traditionally been muddled. The firm said it was taking the bold step to ease mounting liability pressure on contractors and designers as they grapple with the complex demands of the Building Safety Act and Principal Designer duties, saying it will now be legally accountable for the technical design information it issues, marking a shift in how risk is shared across the supply chain.

NEW WEAPON FOR LATE PAYMENT WARRIORS ([see story here](#))

Good For The Money, or GFTM, (www.gftm.ai) is a new online service that enables construction suppliers and subcontractors to expose bad payers. Designed for the construction supply chain, GFTM enables companies to collaborate securely on payment risk, without revealing commercially sensitive information. Unlike traditional credit agencies which rely on Companies House filings, GFTM delivers live, data-backed insight directly from suppliers who trade with shared customers.

MAJOR PROJECT BIDDERS TO FACE 'BRITISH JOBS' TEST ([see story here](#))

The Cabinet Office has launched a consultation that will see contractors bidding for road, rail, school and hospital jobs ranked not just on price and quality – but on how much they contribute to local communities. Under the proposals, companies will need to clearly show how they will offer apprenticeships, training, and employment opportunities for disadvantaged groups as part of their bids. Crucially, these pledges will be tracked to ensure promises are kept.

STEELWORK CONTRACTORS LOBBY FOR NEW DEAL ([see story here](#))

More than 30 bosses of UK constructional steelwork fabrication companies have written to the Business Secretary seeking a 'new deal for steel'. They want public infrastructure procurement to prioritise British companies over foreign suppliers, even if the foreign supplier is less expensive. The letter, coordinated by the British Constructional Steelwork Association (BCSA), sets out how fabrication companies want the same support that is being handed to British steel producers.

DECLINE IN CONSTRUCTION INSOLVENCIES ([see story here](#))

Insolvency Service data suggests that construction insolvencies have fallen 20% year-on-year. There were 324 construction insolvencies in April 2025, a 13.8% decrease from the previous month and a 19.8% decrease from a year before. There were 404 construction insolvencies in April 2024.

GOVERNMENT WIELDS PROCUREMENT STICK ON LATE PAYMENT ([see story here](#))

Major contractors could be barred from bidding for public sector contracts worth over £5m a year if they cannot prove they pay their supply chain within an average of 60 days. The Government is proposing changes to procurement law that would force all public contracting authorities to exclude firms that fail to meet the payment benchmark. The shake-up is aimed at stamping out late payment across the wider public sector and delivering better cashflow for small businesses. Under the new plan, the rules would apply to all invoices a business pays, not just those linked to public work. Contracting authorities would have to apply the new rule on a 'comply or explain' basis, giving them a get-out clause where excluding a bidder would reduce competition or value for money.

GRENFELL SUPPLIERS' PUBLIC CONTRACTS BAN PUT ON HOLD ([see story here](#))

Debarment investigations into seven organisations criticised by the Grenfell Tower Inquiry have been paused to prevent any impact on criminal investigations. The government originally announced that it was looking to blacklist seven companies involved in the Grenfell Tower refurbishment using debarment powers that had just become available to it under the Procurement Act 2023, stopping the companies getting any public contracts.

BUILD UK TO POST RETENTIONS DATA ([see story here](#))

Build UK is adding data on retentions to its existing payment performance database. Since the government introduced the Reporting on Payment Practices and Performance Regulations 2017, Build UK has published data on performance through the construction supply chain as a benchmarking service. The result of the exposure has been an improvement in payment practices and processes across the construction industry. This year has seen retentions data added to the mix. The Reporting on Payment Practices and Performance (Amendment) Regulations 2025 came into force earlier this year, with an additional requirement for qualifying organisations to disclose information about how they operate retention provisions in construction contracts with their suppliers.

LANDMARK EARLY CONTRACTOR INVOLVEMENT RESEARCH ([see story here](#))

The Centre for Construction Best Practice (CCBP) has launched a major industry-backed research project to investigate the impact of Early Contractor Involvement (ECI) on public sector construction outcomes. Supported by the Central Government, leading tier-one contractors, and five top UK universities, the study aims to strengthen procurement models by promoting earlier engagement with contractors, particularly during early RIBA stages and Two-Stage procurement processes. The research is in response to growing pressure on the construction sector to deliver greater value, sustainability, and efficiency across public sector projects, with ECI considered a key enabler of these goals

FEARS FOR QUARRIES FROM LANDFILL TAX HIKE ([see story here](#))

The government has been warned that its landfill tax reforms could backfire, with dozens of quarries at risk of being no longer viable and construction costs soaring. The Treasury has been consulting on plans to transition to a single (higher) rate of landfill tax by 2030, removing the qualifying fines regime from April 2027 and remove the exemption for filling quarries from 2027. The **Mineral Products Association (MPA)** which represents quarry companies, has responded to the consultation with a warning that the proposals would have a devastating impact on one of the UK's key foundation industries, with a knock-on impact for UK construction and nature conservation. The increased waste disposal costs would also add up to £28,000 to the cost of building a new house, MPA has calculated.

PROFIT WARNINGS HIT POST-PANDEMIC PEAK ([see story here](#))

UK-listed companies in the FTSE Construction and Materials sector issued eight profit warnings during the first six months of 2025, compared to just two in H1 2024, the highest total since the covid-19 pandemic in 2020, according to **EY-Parthenon's** latest *Profit Warnings* report. Previous gains are being eroded by the return of cost and demand challenges, exposing persistent structural weaknesses. Whilst longer-term supply and demand dynamics should support growth, there are a number of nearer-term challenges impacting contractors and the supply chain, such as:

- Regulatory complexity, particularly from the Building Safety Act
- Labour shortages and the increase in employer national insurance contributions
- Access to bonding and trade credit insurance

The report concludes that companies that can effectively manage risk, drive innovation and cultivate strong partnerships will be best positioned to succeed.

COMPETITION WATCHDOG TURNS ATTENTION TO CIVIL ENGINEERING ([see story here](#))

The **Competition and Markets Authority (CMA)** have launched a new "market study" into the design, planning and delivery of road and railway infrastructure across the country, examining opportunities to improve how the public sector and civil engineers work together. It is likely to result in recommendations to government but not give the CMA the power directly to intervene in the market. The review will focus on

- Ensuring public authorities access and examine the right information to make well-reasoned decisions when procuring roads and railways.
- Assessing if any procurement, planning or other regulatory processes create significant unnecessary barriers
- Examining any changes needed to the way this ecosystem operates

LEGISLATION & STANDARDS

THE BUILDING SAFETY REGULATOR – A CONTINUING SAGA

Recent weeks have seen considerable interest around the performance of the BSR:

- In June the House of Lords launched an inquiry into complaints about construction delays caused by the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) ([see story here](#))
- June also saw **The Association of Construction & Quality Professionals (ACQP)** call for the BSR to be removed from the HSE, citing structural and cultural incompatibilities that are undermining its ability to deliver the post-Grenfell reforms intended by the Building Safety Act, arguing that the current arrangement risks repeating the very regulatory failures it was designed to prevent ([see story here](#))
- By the end of the month the government announced that a new arm's length body is being established with the intention for this to take on the functions of the BSR from the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) in due course. Running it will be Andy Roe, commissioner of the London Fire Brigade, who has been made non-executive chair of the BSR and appointed to a shadow board pending its establishment as executive agency. He will be supported by a new chief executive for the BSR, Charlie Pugsley, who has been deputy commissioner of the London Fire Brigade for the past year. The government has also promised a new fast track process to enhance the review of newbuild applications, unblock delays and boost sector confidence, with the addition of more than 100 new staff to speed up operations ([see story here](#)).
- The size of the task was highlighted a couple of weeks later when the first set of published official figures of BSR performance showed the scale of delays plaguing the BSR. The data shows it takes an average of 36 weeks to secure gateway approval on new build projects (three times longer than the original 12-week target) and longer than the 19 weeks average at the end of 2024. From late 2023 to early 2025, there were 2,108 applications submitted, but just 338 have received approval ([see story here](#))
- At the end of July, the **Construction Leadership Council** published a new set of guidelines on submitting Gateway 2 applications, produced in collaboration with industry stakeholders and the BSR, including practical recommendations to improve submissions ([see story here](#))

BESA AUDIT BLITZ SUSPENDS 14 SPECIALIST CONTRACTORS ([see story here](#))

The **Building Engineering Services Association (BESA)** has suspended 14 member specialist contractors after they failed to meet its core competence audit standards. BESA said the firms had failed its independent Competence Assessment Standard – which checks firms on business practices, finances, insurance, health and safety, and technical skills. The Association's council

said it was taking “robust action” in the interest of the wider building services sector and clients.

COMMON ASSESSMENT STANDARD UPDATED ([see story here](#))

Build UK has published an updated version of the Common Assessment Standard, and the building safety section must now be completed by all companies that carry out design or building work under the Building Safety Act. The CAS is the industry-agreed standard for pre-qualification, which is improving quality standards and reducing duplication across construction. The Building Safety section was first introduced a year ago and is now mandatory in the updated Version 5. Under the Building Safety Act, anyone appointing individuals or organisations to undertake work has a duty to ensure they are competent. Organisations must demonstrate ‘organisational capability’, and the Common Assessment Standard is being used by a growing list of clients and contractors to demonstrate compliance. As a result, a number of Build UK members will be specifying that members of their supply chains must have completed the Building Safety section by 1st October 2025. Version 5 also includes updates to the Corporate and Professional Standing; Environmental; and Fairness, Inclusion & Respect (FIR) sections of the question set to reflect new legislation and guidance.

CIRIA UPDATES THRUST RESTRAINTS GUIDANCE ([see story here](#))

CIRIA (formerly the Construction Industry Research & Information Association) has published *Buried pressure pipelines: designing for thrust restraint (C816)* which replaces its 1994 *Guide to the design of thrust blocks for buried pressure pipelines (R128)*, reflecting 30 years of research, innovation and industry experience. The new guide provides methods for designing thrust restraints in buried pressure pipeline systems. It covers thrust blocks for unrestrained joints, restrained joint systems using a proportion of restrained fittings, anchor blocks for welded thermoplastic pipes, under pressure connections, line stop installations, transitions between restrained and unrestrained systems, and bracing against redundant pipelines left in place.

TIER ONES SIGN UP TO BEST PRACTICE DRIVE ([see story here](#))

Leading contractors are putting their weight behind a new construction industry think tank. The **Centre for Construction Best Practice** (CCBP) has been set up by the man behind purchasing agency **Procure Partnerships** to promote collaboration, innovation and improved delivery standards in the industry. **Wates, Stepnell, Morgan Sindall, Kier** and **Bam** signed up as the organisations first gold corporate partners. As founding partners, they intend to contribute their knowledge and expertise to help shape the centre’s direction. The CCBP hopes to bridge the gap between academia and practice by facilitating collaboration through its academic advisory boards and corporate partner network.

MARKET NEWS/TRENDS

TRANSPORT

YORKSHIRE BUSINESSES CALL ON GOVERNMENT TO BACK BLUNKETT RAIL REVIEW ([see story here](#))

Yorkshire businesses have written an open letter to the Chancellor calling on them to back the recently published Yorkshire’s Plan for Rail, led by Lord David Blunkett. They want to see major new investment in rail to improve connectivity within Yorkshire and to other parts of the North and South to help businesses grow and offer more opportunities for jobs and training.

RIA SCOTLAND: ROADMAP FOR UNLOCKING THE FULL POTENTIAL OF INNOVATION ([see story here](#))

Railway Industry Association (RIA) Scotland has called for a concerted effort from all stakeholders to drive forward an innovation agenda that paves the way for a sustainable and prosperous future for the country’s rail network.

CHANCELLOR’S SPENDING REVIEW: IMPACT ON THE RAILWAYS ([see story here](#))

In the Spending Review (seems like a long time ago now!) the Chancellor announced £15.6 billion funding in total by 2031-32 for local transport projects in England’s city regions and £2.3 billion from 2026-27 to 2029-30 for local transport improvements outside of these nine regions. A further £2.5 billion to connect Oxford and Cambridge through the continued delivery of East-West Rail was announced with plans to take forward work on Northern Powerhouse Rail due in the coming weeks. Funding announced also included upgrades to Cardiff Central station, reduced journey times between Manchester and Leeds through continued investment in the TransPennine Route Upgrade, and progress the delivery of Midlands Rail Hub, enhancing connections from Birmingham across the West Midlands and to other regions.

MAYOR ANNOUNCES NEW METRO LINE ([see story here](#))

The North East Mayor has announced the first new Metro line for 30 years will be built as part of a £1.85bn funding deal agreed with the Government. The line through Washington stands at the heart of the largest single package of investment ever made in the North East’s transport networks, funding a huge investment in road maintenance, better and safer walking and cycling routes and new bus priority measures.

£1 BILLION BOOST FOR TEESIDE TRAVEL PROJECTS ([see story here](#))

Government officials have confirmed the **Tees Valley Combined Authority** will receive the full package of £978 million earmarked to come as part of the second round of the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS2). This means work can accelerate on important schemes agreed by the Tees Valley Mayor and Cabinet in 2024 – including a new station at Teesside Park, a new third platform at Middlesbrough Station and an autonomous tram network to make getting around our towns easier.

RADICAL RESET PLAN TO RESCUE HS2 ([see story here](#))

HS2 Chief Executive mark Wild has said a “comprehensive reset” is now essential to deliver the railway on a credible timescale and within a realistic budget. His letter to the Transport Secretary reveals that just one-third of the civils work is complete, compared with the 75% planned by now. His big reset hinges on simplifying the railway opening plan. He also pledged to overhaul HS2 Ltd’s structure, and renegotiate supply chain contracts, and closer alignment with Government on scope and funding.

DECADE LONG INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY TO DELIVER STABILITY, INVESTMENT AND NATIONAL RENEWAL ([see story here](#))

Back in June the Government also published its **10 Year Infrastructure Strategy** ([available here](#)) which sets out a long-term plan for how it will invest in infrastructure and ensure that funding is spent effectively and efficiently. It says it marks a new approach to how projects are planned and delivered and includes £1 billion to carry out maintenance on key transport infrastructure, including crumbling bridges, flyovers and crossing.

Rail Director

Latest issues for June ([here](#)) and July ([here](#)) are now available, the latter focusing on health and safety.

ROAD/RAIL UPGRADES GET FUNDING GREEN LIGHT, OTHER CANCELLED/PAUSED ([see story here](#))

More than 10 big road and rail upgrade schemes across England were given the green light by the Government last month, including:

- A66 Northern Trans-Pennine dualling
- Midlands Rail Hub
- M54 to M6 link road in Staffordshire
- M60/M62/M66 Simister Island junction upgrade in Greater Manchester
- A38 Derby Junctions
- A46 Newark Bypass in Nottinghamshire
- Middlewich Eastern Bypass
- A382 Drumbridges to Newton Abbot

However, other road schemes in the South East have been scrapped, including A12 widening near Chelmsford and a A47 dualling in Cambridgeshire ([see story here](#)), and a number of rail projects have also been paused ([see story here](#)) including the next phase of electrification of the Midland Main Line

VISION FOR MANCHESTER UNDERGROUND TRANSPORT SERVICES AND STATION ([see story here](#))

Greater Manchester has unveiled its vision for the next decade, setting its sights on a new era of economic growth. The wide-ranging plans include new underground transport services and a flagship underground station at Manchester Piccadilly, with a high-speed rail link to Liverpool and regeneration of the surrounding area.

In addition, Greater Manchester is set to deliver the UK's first fully integrated, zero-emission public transport system by 2030 thanks to a £2.5 billion government funding boost ([see story here](#))

OFFICE OF RAIL AND ROAD ANNUAL REPORT ([see story here](#))

The **Office of Rail and Road** (ORR) has delivered its assessment of Great Britain's railway in its annual report. In terms of providing value, the report highlights efficiency gains in the year to March 2025, achieving £325 million in savings, £62 million above its target. However, in England and Wales the company has a significant funding gap of £488 million, which ORR has asked it to take action to resolve. It says Network Rail must also carefully manage its delivery of core renewals, while mitigating as best it can inflationary pressures and cost overruns. If current cost pressures persist, the company may be forced to reduce its delivery of renewals of railway infrastructure. This can have impacts on train cancellations and lateness, for example by making speed restrictions necessary. Network Rail's five-year plan to 2029 relies more heavily on maintenance than its previous five-year plan, due to funding constraining full renewal of railway assets.

UTILITIES**BOOST FOR HYDROGEN INFRASTRUCTURE ([see story here](#))**

More than £500m funding was confirmed by the Government in the Spending Review to support the development of hydrogen infrastructure, to create the UK's first regional hydrogen transport and storage network, connecting hydrogen producers with end users, including power stations and industry for the first time. The infrastructure is the foundation for scaling up both hydrogen produced with carbon capture and hydrogen produced with electrolysis, and for repurposing much of the UK's existing natural gas infrastructure. The network is set to support the creation of thousands of skilled jobs in industrial regions such as Merseyside, Teesside and the Humber, as well as in the supply chain.

80 ENERGY PROJECTS UNLOCKED AS OFGEM BACKS GRID EXPANSION ([see story here](#))

Ofgem has approved an initial £24bn five-year funding package to keep the UK's gas infrastructure running safely and to begin a major upgrade of Britain's electricity supergrid, including funding for 80 electricity transmission projects aimed at connecting up to 126GW of clean energy capacity by 2030. More than £15bn will go towards maintaining and operating the national gas grid and four regional distribution networks, while £8.9bn is being committed upfront to the high-voltage electricity transmission system – with another £1.3bn in reserve for ready-to-go projects. The full grid investment programme is expected to top £80bn by 2031 – the largest power network expansion since the 1960s. Upgrades will include 4400km of existing overhead lines and 3500km of new circuits, including offshore projects.

GRID DELAYS NOW RIVAL PLANNING AS CHIEF THREAT TO PROJECT DELIVERY ([see story here](#))

Turner & Townsend's latest tender price forecast warns that access to power has become a key battleground for construction, with demand surging and infrastructure projects facing long delays in securing connections. National Grid estimates that the UK's total electricity demand will rise by 50% in just 10 years – and double by 2050. One of the biggest contributors is the explosion in new data centres, whose power-hungry servers drive everything from cloud storage to artificial intelligence. But the grid capacity crunch is already starting to bite in parts of the south. T&T says long delays for grid connections are pushing up tender prices and derailing development plans. In capacity hot spots like West London, Swindon, Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Cambridge, councils report property schemes being stalled by lack of local capacity. The report warns that the delays are already being priced into bids as suppliers hedge against uncertainty.

NUCLEAR

MPS BACK SELLAFIELD DELIVERY SHAKE-UP ([see story here](#))

A Public Accounts Committee report highlights that the new long-term contracting strategy at Sellafield is starting to deliver better results, but warns that clean-up of the UK's most hazardous nuclear site remains dangerously behind schedule, with the total bill now heading for a staggering £136bn. The PAC said the new Programme and Project Partners (PPP) model introduced by Sellafield is showing early signs of success, with four out of five major projects approved since 2018 now on track to meet original time and budget expectations. But the committee said the wider programme remains deeply troubled, highlighting:

- The now-paused Replacement Analytical Project wasted £127m and ran five years late
- Four major schemes have run over budget by a combined £1.15bn since 2018
- Radioactive water continues to leak from the Magnox Swarf Storage Silo, the UK's most dangerous building
- Delays to the planned large-scale radioactive waste Geological Disposal Facility mean that new surface temporary waste buildings costing up to £760m each may be needed at the site.

Government commits to Sizewell C and SMRs ([see story here](#))

The Government has allocated another £14.2bn investment to the development of the proposed Sizewell C nuclear power station in Suffolk over the next four years, but there is still no final investment decision and no start date, although site preparation has been going on for years. With projected cost estimates as high as £40bn, substantial private investment is still needed to be secured before much more can happen. The Government also announced that **Rolls-Royce SMR** has been selected as preferred bidder to build the UK's first small modular reactors, subject to final government approvals and contract signature.

HOLTEC BRITAIN ANNOUNCES PREFERRED SITE FOR NEW UK FACTORY ([see story here](#))

International energy firm **Holtec Britain** has selected Gateway-East, next to Doncaster-Sheffield Airport, as the preferred location for its planned new UK factory. The company, a specialist in Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) and a finalist in the Great British Nuclear SMR competition, has now entered detailed negotiations with the developer **Peel Land**. Analysis by **Bradshaw Advisory** estimates the factory will generate £1.8bn GVA (£1.5bn from the proposed factory and £300m from professional engineering and technical services relating to SMR deployment), create 3,600 construction, 16,000-plus supply chain, and 3,000 unionised engineering jobs over 20 years.

OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE

DEFRA SECURES FLOOD DEFENCE BUDGET ([see story here](#))

The government has allocated £7.9bn for new and upgraded flood defences in England over the next decade, committed over ten years to protect buildings and infrastructure from the threat of flooding. This is for capital works only, not day-to-day operational and maintenance (resource) spending.

Amazon unveils £40bn UK investment plan ([see story here](#))

Amazon has confirmed plans to invest £40bn in the UK over the next three years including building four new fulfilment centres (Hull, Northampton and two in the East Midlands) and new delivery stations nationwide. Other schemes will include opening two new buildings at Amazon's corporate HQ in East London and the redevelopment of the historic Bray Film Studios in Berkshire. The investment also includes part of the £8bn previously announced in September 2024 for building, operating, and maintaining data centres in the UK.

HULL PLANS INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT ([see story here](#))

Hull City Council has developed a five-year plan to improve and enhance many of the city's bridges, statues, monuments and fountains. The new plan is described as a major shift in the council's approach to preserving the city's infrastructure by bringing together capital spending, inspections and maintenance into a single, coordinated plan.

UNIVERSAL BID TO FAST-TRACK PLANNING FOR THEME PARK ([see story here](#))

Entertainment giant **Universal** has formally lodged its bid to fast-track plans for a major theme park and resort in Bedford using a Special Development Order, to secure planning permission for the new resort without going through the normal local planning process. If the secretary of state grants planning, work could start next year creating 20,000 construction jobs with 5,000 on site at the peak.

GOVERNMENT CALLS UP FIRMS TO EXPLORE PPP HEALTHCARE PROJECTS PLAN ([see story here](#))

The government is calling on contractors, financiers, and FM firms to help shape a potential £1bn of health infrastructure project work using a new public-private partnership model. The **Department of Health and Social Care**, working with the newly-formed **National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority**, has launched a preliminary market engagement process covering plans to deliver primary and community healthcare buildings under long-term PPP contracts. All proposals remain at the early scoping stage, with no final decisions yet on delivery models or procurement timelines. The 30-year programme is expected to cover design, build, finance, operation, and maintenance of new health facilities, but not delivery of clinical services.

INFRASTRUCTURE PIPELINE GOES LIVE ([see story here](#))

The **National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority** has published a list of 780 infrastructure projects that are planned for England over the next 10 years. While previous national infrastructure plans have been regularly revised documents, the new Infrastructure Pipeline is in the form of a dynamic online tool – dynamic in the sense of continual revision, so when a project is scrapped, it can be deleted from the official list immediately. There are 780 projects currently listed, with a total estimated given as £530bn. However, many of the listed projects, particularly in the privatised energy sector for example, are scant on details, with no timings or costs currently attached. The document can be found [here](#).

Regional delivery key to meeting UK construction and infrastructure targets ([see story here](#))

Public sector procurement authority **SCAPE** has released a new report calling for greater regional control and investment to meet the UK's national construction and infrastructure targets. Titled *A Year of Change: Public Good, Public Building – What the Nation Needs Now*, the report outlines how local delivery models, devolved funding, and targeted construction skills investment can accelerate housing, infrastructure, and green energy projects across the country.

MAJOR DELAYS HIT LEVELLING UP PROGRAMME ([see story here](#))

The government's flagship Levelling Up Fund is facing serious delivery delays, with nearly all projects running behind schedule and costs spiralling due to inflation and underdeveloped bids. A major evaluation of the £4.8bn programme has lifted the lid on the challenges facing local authorities trying to deliver regeneration, transport and cultural schemes backed by the fund. According to the **Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government's** own process review, a staggering 95% of projects funded in Rounds 1 and 2 have been delayed — with nearly 40% now more than a year behind schedule. A race to submit for funding by council meant that only 3% were "shovel ready" at the point of award.

RIVAL HEATHROW EXPANSION PLAN ([see story here](#))

Dubbed Heathrow West, the new terminal and runway plan has been submitted to Government after a decade of development and aims to deliver a new Terminal 6 and 2,800m runway at the UK's biggest airport. Working with US engineering giant **Bechtel**, the **Arora Group**, which is one of Heathrow's largest landowners, said the proposal avoided costly and complex works over the M25 — a key sticking point in the airport's own expansion plans. The new runway could be fully operational by 2035, with Terminal 6 delivered in two phases (T6A by 2036 and T6B by 2040).

TRENDS

A summary of key trend data from the last couple of months:

PMI STILL NEGATIVE BUT GETTING LESS BAD ([see story here](#))

The headline **S&P Global UK Construction Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI)** — a seasonally adjusted index tracking changes in total industry activity — posted 47.9 in May, up from 46.6 in April. Any score below 50 indicates negative growth, but May's reading was the nearest to has been to 50 since January's 48.1 reading. It hasn't been above 50 since last December. It rose to 48.8 in June, although commercial work and civil engineering continue to suffer ([see here](#)).

GLENIGAN SEES BLUE(ISH) SKIES ([see story here](#))

Latest report from construction data monitoring specialist **Glenigan** suggests that parts of the industry are bouncing back. Their analysis of sub-£100m contracts starting in the March to May 2025 period show a 10% year-on-year upturn and 25% growth on the previous three (winter) months. Performance was buoyed by the residential construction market, where the total value of sub-£100m contract starts was 45% higher than the same period last year and 49% up on the preceding three months. However, the non-residential sector fell by 18% compared to 2024 numbers. Civil engineering starts were down 33% compared to last year but by only 2% on the previous three months.

Construction growth gathers momentum ([see story here](#))

Latest bulletin from the **Office for National Statistics** shows that monthly construction output in Great Britain is estimated to have grown by 0.9% in April 2025, the third consecutive month of growth following increases of 0.5% in March and 0.2% in February. The increase in April 2025 came from increases in both new work and repair and maintenance, which grew by 1.4% and 0.3%, respectively. Infrastructure new work and private housing repair & maintenance were the fastest growing sectors, rising by 2.0% and 1.5%, respectively. However, May data subsequently showed a fall of 0.6% ([see story here](#)).

TIMBER IMPORTS RISE FOR FIRST TIME IN FOUR YEARS ([see story here](#))

Timber and panel import volumes rose by 0.6% higher in the first quarter of 2025 compared to Q1 2024, the first increase seen since 2021. Volumes fell 1% in January 2025 and 9% in February, but a 13% increase in volumes in March 2025 resulted in cumulative growth for the quarter as a whole.

ARCADIS SEES CONSTRUCTION OUTPACING ECONOMIC RECOVERY ([see story here](#))

Latest quarterly economic brief from construction consultant **Arcadis** focuses on signs of recovery. Despite adverse economic conditions, global unrest and political instability, Arcadis says it is 'cautiously optimistic' for the UK construction industry, with several sectors beginning to scale up. Its projections suggest that the construction industry is growing faster than the wider economy. However, its tender price inflation (TPA) forecasts remain unchanged from three months ago, as recovery signs are still not overwhelmingly convincing.

REPORT REVEALS INDUSTRY CAUTION ([see story here](#))

The latest quarterly report from construction consultancy **Gleeds** has revealed that almost three quarters of construction professionals in the UK feel the current economic and political climate is negatively impacting contracts. Contract conditions and heightened risk profile were common factors among the almost 60% who claimed that they or someone in their supply chain had declined a tender over the quarter.

SECOND-QUARTER GROWTH FOR PRODUCT MANUFACTURERS ([see story here](#))

Construction products manufacturing returned to growth in the second quarter of 2025, according to the **Construction Products Association's** latest state of trade survey. Heavy side manufacturers reported an increase in sales during the quarter, returning to growth after a weak first quarter, while for light side manufacturers, a run of growth extended to six consecutive quarters. The CPA stands by the spring forecasts it published in April, with construction output still forecast to rise by 1.9% in 2025 and 3.7% in 2026, but with planning delays continuing and tax rises coming into prospect, these predictions are less firm than usual ([see story here](#)).

CONTRACTORS BRACE FOR MORE PAIN AS MATERIAL PRICES CLIMB ([see story here](#))

Contractors are being urged to step up planning to avoid getting caught out by fresh global supply chain shocks. A new report from insurer **QBE**, in partnership with global risk consultancy **Control Risks**, warns that recent international tariffs on key

materials like steel, aluminium and timber are already pushing up costs and impacting jobs, with UK firms particularly exposed due to their heavy reliance on imported products. The report also highlights copper prices surging 29% in early 2025, fuelled by trade barriers and global demand from renewable energy and electric vehicle projects. Pressure is building from all sides. Labour shortages, net-zero targets and material inflation are all converging to squeeze contractors further, with project risks rising sharply in the second half of the year.