

INNOVATION

[NEW FUNDING FOR GREEN TRANSPORT INNOVATORS IN THE WEST MIDLANDS \(see story here\)](#)

Connected Places Catapult, the UK's innovation accelerator for transport, the built environment, cities and local growth, has announced that applications are open for the third cohort of the Clean Futures Accelerator. Businesses supported over the last two years of the accelerator have so far gone on to raise over £125m in co-investment and create more than 50 jobs. For this latest open call, the Clean Futures Accelerator is looking for innovative West Midlands-based small-to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with innovations in the following challenge areas:

- Net zero manufacturing
- Future fuels
- Clean energy conversion
- Circular economy

TECHNOLOGY

[ROADWORKS CONTRACTOR GIVES MOTORISTS THE HEADS UP \(see story here\)](#)

A company that paints road markings is now warning motorists's satnav systems of any traffic delays that it may cause. In a UK first, drivers using popular navigation apps, such as Waze, Apple Maps and others, will be alerted to roadworks en route to their destinations thanks to a new system installed in vehicles operated by road marking specialist **WJ Group**. Safety Cloud digital alerting by HAAS Alert connects to the works lights installed on WJ's vehicles. When these are turned on, the system automatically activates and communicates with the various compatible navigation apps and vehicle screens to send out a digital alert that they are approaching roadworks, road maintenance or other hazardous operations on their route.

[UK'S FIRST SIGNALS-FREE COMMUTER RAILWAY \(see story here\)](#)

The Great Northern 'Northern City Line' to the City of London has become the UK network's first commuter railway to operate without signals at the side of the track, heralding a major milestone in the national deployment of cutting-edge digital technology. The traditional signals were removed from the system this month as part of the Government-funded £1.4bn East Coast Digital Programme (ECDP). Drivers are now told how far and how fast they can travel on an in-cab train computer screen that is fed information from a digital signalling system known as ETCS (European Train Control System), which will give passengers greater reliability and better punctuality. The system is also safer and more environmentally sustainable as there is much less physical equipment to produce and maintain.

EQUIPMENT

[DRIVERLESS DIGGER TO BE USED ON TAYLOR WOODROW SITE \(see story here\)](#)

Taylor Woodrow is set to use an autonomous digger at its Manchester Airport site. The move follows successful trials of the **Yanmar** machine at the **Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre** (AMRC) in Sheffield. A dedicated demonstration site was set up so the contractor and its partners **Gravis Robotics** could put the intelligent machine through its paces. The driverless digger successfully passed a series of exercises including autonomous excavation to various depths in differing ground conditions, real-time LiDAR capture of the excavation, emergency safe stop as well as autonomous manoeuvring. The project was overseen and verified by experienced site managers, engineers and machine operators treating it as a real project and all the excavation tasks were taken from a real, upcoming scheme.

[HYDROGEN DIGGERS CAN NOW DRIVE ON THE ROADS \(see story here\)](#)

Construction machinery and tractors powered by hydrogen fuel can now drive legally on UK roads for the first time. Legalisation of hydrogen-powered machinery on the roads was celebrated by **JCB** by parading one of its H-diggers through the streets of London. Transport minister Lilian Greenwood signed the statutory instrument in early April to pave the way for an amendment to the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 to enable the road use of hydrogen-fuelled non-road mobile machinery.

[BRITLIFT OFFERS MODULAR ROOF TRUSS LIFTER \(see story here\)](#)

Lifting beam manufacturer **Britlift** has developed a modular lifting beam specifically for lifting roof trusses. The roof lifting beam (RLB) is a lightweight steel beam that enables each component of a roof truss to be handled and assembled by the site team. Its modular design, which is patent pending, makes it easy to adjust, store, transport, maintain and inspect, Britlift claims.

MATERIALS/USES/METHODS

[FINNISH PRECAST FIRM PLANS UK HEADQUARTERS \(see story here\)](#)

Finland's **Hyperion Robotics**, which uses 3D printing to make reinforced concrete structures, is planning to open a UK factory. The company is exploring sites in the Midlands and the north of England to set up its first UK facility, which will also serve as the company's headquarters for northern European operations. The Helsinki-based startup produces Eurocode-compliant reinforced concrete structures using 3D printing technology.

[RECYCLED BRICK SECURES BBA APPROVAL \(see story here\)](#)

Scottish building materials company **Kenoteq** has secured **British Board of Agrément** (BBA) certification for K-Briq, which is made from construction and demolition waste, meaning it can now be specified into construction projects ranging from facades and feature walls to brick plinths. Kenoteq is now beginning full commercial production of the brick and is aiming to make two million K-Briqs a year at its first production facility in East Lothian, scaling up to four million as required. The company then plans to set up regional production both in the UK and internationally to provide low carbon building products from local waste.

SOIL TREATMENT INNOVATION COULD SLASH BROWNFIELD REMEDIATION COSTS ([see story here](#))

ReBind is a new remediation technology that its developer, **SMR UK**, hopes will change how the UK handles brownfield redevelopment by offering a cost-effective, on-site solution for contaminated soil. The patented binder is said to enable developers to stabilise and reuse up to 100% of contaminated ground, avoiding landfill costs and reducing environmental impact.

TURKISH CEMENT FIRM TO BUILD LIVERPOOL TERMINAL ([see story here](#))

Turkish cement producer **Medcem** is to build a £35m deep-water cement terminal at the former P&O site at Gladstone Dock in the Port of Liverpool. The initial phase will feature four silos with a combined storage capacity of 45,000 tonnes, designed to handle both cement and supplementary cementitious materials (SCMs) such as fly ash and granulated blast furnace slag, key components in producing low-carbon concrete, reducing reliance on traditional Portland cement and lowering greenhouse gas emissions.

LTC FOOTBRIDGE COMPETITION WINNER REVEALED ([see story here](#))

A design by **Arup** and Sean **Harrington Architects** has won a competition to design a new low-carbon footbridge for the Lower Thames Crossing. The winning design beat 32 entries who were judged on their proposed use of low-carbon materials and construction methods, and evidence of good design principles to allow ease of access and a pleasant crossing experience. The timber glulam beam design eliminates all concrete from the bridge and approach ramps and integrates planting into the design to promote habitat connectivity.

SAINT-GOBAIN ANNOUNCES NEW LEICESTERSHIRE INSULATION FACTORY ([see story here](#))

French materials giant **Saint-Gobain** has unveiled plans to building a new mineral-wool insulation factory in Leicestershire, with production scheduled to begin in 2027. Saint-Gobain said the new facility has the potential to deliver 250 new jobs for local people when operating at full capacity. The new production line will initially manufacture 50,000 tonnes of stone wool insulation annually under the Isover brand. The factory will have the potential for doubling its output capacity to 100,000 tonnes a year.

HEMP INSULATION SECURES OFGEM APPROVAL ([see story here](#))

Indinature, a pioneer of the use of industrial hemp as an insulation material for construction, is the first UK natural fibre company to be fully approved for two of Ofgem's home insulation schemes. The company promotes its IndiBreathe product as a cleaner, safer alternative to conventional loft insulation materials as it is free of formaldehyde and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). It is soft to the touch, rather than fibrous and scratchy, and sod does not irritate the skin. It also offers superior heat retention compared to traditional glass fibre products. It is also sustainable as hemp is a fast-growing and plentiful crop and the material can be recycled or re-purposed at the end of life.

ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY**ACE JOINS OPPOSITION TO NATURE LEVY PLANS** ([see story here](#))

The **Association for Consultancy & Engineering** (ACE) and the **Green Construction Board** (GCB) have written to housing and planning minister Matthew Pennycook calling for a rethink on planning reforms. The particular source of concern is Part 3 of the Planning & Infrastructure Bill, which proposes a nature levy acting as a 'pay to pollute' buy-out mechanism. Developers would pay money to Natural England in exchange for destroying protected sites and species.

PROJECT MANAGERS INCREASINGLY CONFIDENT ABOUT NET ZERO ([see story here](#))

A survey of 1,000 members of the **Association for Project Management** (APM) has found that 52% of project professionals are 'very confident' that the UK will meet its net zero targets by 2050. This is compared to just 31% who were asked the same question by APM back in 2023 – following the UK government's adjustments to net zero goals including pushing back the deadline for the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and the phasing out of gas boilers. Only 4% said that they were not confident and 44% said they were 'somewhat' confident.

MPS FEAR NATURE LEVY WILL HIT BNG ([see story here](#))

A House of Commons committee is concerned that biodiversity net gain rules for developers are threatened by the Planning & Infrastructure Bill. A report from the cross-party House of Commons environmental audit committee (EAC) warns that without substantial private investment and clear commitments from ministers, the UK may not meet its pledge to protect 30% of land by 2030 and offer communities greater access to nature.

MCKINSTRY INVESTS IN CONSTRUCTION WASTE RECYCLING ([see story here](#))

County Antrim waste management company **McKinstry Group** is building what is set to be a flagship plant for construction, demolition and industrial waste recycling. McKinstry has awarded Dungannon-based **Kiverco** a contract to design, manufacture and install a £16m recycling plant at its main facility in Co Antrim. It is being described as the largest and most advanced facility of its kind in the UK and Ireland and McKinstry says it will transform the waste management sector in the region.

House-builders exposed for cheating on nature commitments ([see story here](#))

Research has discovered that house-builders rarely put in all those wildlife-friendly features that they have promised to. A study of housing developments has found that developers are routinely dropping the ecological features that they had promised in order to secure planning permission. And they get away with it because planning authorities never follow up and check.

RIA SUPPORTS NETWORK RAIL'S GREENER RAILWAY STRATEGY ([see story here](#))

The **Railway Industry Association** (RIA) welcomes the new Greener Railway Strategy ([see here](#)) published by **Network Rail**, which sets out a shared vision for environmental and social sustainability across the UK rail industry, building upon the **Rail Safety and Standards Board's** (RSSB) 'Sustainable Rail Blueprint'. To support both the strategy and the infrastructure supply

chain, RIA is today announcing a collaboration between leading members, Network Rail and the **Supply Chain Sustainability School**. The move will help progress the delivery of the 'Learning Pathways' initiative, which aims to ensure the whole Network Rail supply chain adopts a consistent approach to sustainability.

TRAINING, RECRUITMENT & EMPLOYMENT

QTS GROUP WINS FAIR WORK EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR (see story here)

Rail contractor, **QTS Group** was named Fair Work Employer of the Year at the British Business Awards 2025. QTS was selected from over 140 shortlisted companies and stood out among major UK businesses and household names to take home the top honour in its category. The Fair Work Employer of the Year award recognises organisations that excel in promoting fair work practices, fostering inclusivity, and creating positive workplace cultures. The judging panel praised QTS for its exceptional employee engagement, commitment to wellbeing, and sustained investment in its workforce.

EMPLOYMENT ABUSE: STILL WORK TO BE DONE (see story here)

A recent report by **Achilles**, a supply chain management software company, has highlighted both progress and ongoing challenges in preventing modern slavery and unethical employment practices on UK and Irish construction sites. Based on data collected through its 'Ethical Business Programme', the report draws from interviews with 9,834 construction workers representing 102 nationalities, across hundreds of sites in the UK and Ireland. Key issues identified include:

- Recruitment fees charged to workers
- Unexplained deductions from wages
- Restricted access to mobile phones
- Lack of free personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Informal or unclear employment arrangements.

CONSTRUCTION APPRENTICESHIPS OVERSUBSCRIBED BY 135 TO 1 (see story here)

A Midlands building contractor has revealed that 2,694 people have applied for just 20 apprenticeship roles that it has available. While the UK construction industry continues to insist that young people in this country just don't want to work in construction and we need more immigrant labour, the experience of **Seddon** tells a different story: there is no shortage of potential recruits, just not enough training going on. Seddon had 2,694 applicants for its 20 apprentice placements in its latest hiring round. The 2024 Apprenticeship Report from the **Construction Industry Training Boards (CITB)** stated that the UK needs 50,000 new construction apprentices per year to meet workforce demand, yet only 33,000 started in the year 2023/24. If this trend continues, the UK will struggle to meet housing and infrastructure targets.

NETWORK RAIL LAUNCHES PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME (see story here)

Network Rail has launched a new learning academy in partnership with **Capital City College** in Enfield. The Network Rail Academy offers a pre-apprenticeship programme for 16 to 19-year-olds who are looking for work or training opportunities, helping young people gain skills and take their first steps towards a career in rail, providing young people with the foundation skills needed to enter the workforce, creating a gateway into rail careers and feeding into key apprenticeship schemes such as:

- Level 3 – Rail engineering technician
- Level 3 – Rail infrastructure operator

RECORD NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED SECURE JOBS ON HS2 (see story here)

HS2 has delivered another boost to regional economies along the West Midlands – London growth corridor, as it confirms that over 5,000 unemployed people have progressed into jobs on Britain's biggest construction project based on data to March 2025. In 2018, before construction began, HS2 published its Skills, Employment and Education Strategy. It set out its plan to address the UK's skills shortages, invest in future talent, and help those living near to the line of route to start new careers. Seven years later, 33,000 people are working on HS2. The drive to help tackle localised unemployment along the construction corridor has proved to be a success. HS2 Ltd and its tier one contractors have worked with education providers and the supply chain to create dedicated training academies and bootcamps that equip new entrants with the knowledge and skills to begin a career in construction. HS2 has worked closely with the Department for Work and Pensions, local authorities, and employment support services to identify those most in need. Fast-track routes into training and employment have been introduced to help people secure jobs in as little as two weeks.

PROFESSIONS SLAM REMOVAL OF APPRENTICE ROUTE (see story here)

The government is removing funding from apprenticeship schemes for construction professionals to focus on trades. Funding for Level 7 (masters-level) apprenticeships will cease from January 2026 for all but those aged between 16 and 21, or who are on existing apprenticeship schemes. The levy funding for Level 7 will instead be diverted to lower-level apprenticeships. Predictably, this has not gone down with the professional bodies that are set to lose out. **The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI)** said that the decision put the future pipeline of planners at risk; the **Royal Institute of British Architects** said that it would reduce access to the architecture profession.

RAIL SKILLS SUCCESS FOR SECOND SOUTH LANARKSHIRE COHORT (see story here)

The second programme of the **QTS Rail Skills Academy** in East Kilbride has successfully completed, with 11 young people now equipped with the skills required to join the rail industry. The Academy, delivered by **QTS Training** on behalf of **Network Rail**, is funded through **South Lanarkshire Council**. The programme, launched in March 2025, was delivered over a 10-week period via both classroom and on track work experience. Throughout the period of the course, the graduates have been equipped with the competencies, skills and experience required to thrive in the railway maintenance sector, focusing on employability and core skills, health and safety, track safety and track induction, as well as the SQA Level 4 Practical Skills for Employment qualification. The successful graduates had the opportunity to be interviewed for a potential job with

companies including QTS, **Story Contracting**, **AmcoGiffen**, **SPL Powerlines**, **Taziker** and **Network Rail**.

CITB ROLLS OUT NEW PLANT TRAINING STANDARDS ([see story here](#))

The next phase of plant training standards is set to be rolled out next month by the **Construction Industry Training Board** (CITB). New plant training standards have been developed by CITB in collaboration with industry working groups, comprising employers, training providers and trade associations, to change the way plant training and testing is delivered. The changes are designed to ensure employers get a return on their investment by producing competent, work-ready plant operators who have received training from experts, including learning about new technologies and the eco operation of plant.

HEALTH, SAFETY & WELLBEING

MATERIALS MANAGEMENT ERRORS PROVE FATAL ([see story here](#))

A construction company has been fined after a kitchen fitter was crushed to death after being pinned against the side of a lorry loader as two stacks of concrete blocks fell onto him. An investigation by the **Health & Safety Executive** (HSE) found the worker had walked around a lorry loader to talk to a driver about how long he would be on site, as he needed access to one of the properties being built. A stack of concrete blocks that had been placed on top of another stack of blocks, which was also supported by a wooden pallet, toppled over onto him, pinning him against the side of the lorry. He sustained severe internal and head injuries and died on site. The principal contractor on the site, had failed to ensure that a suitable, level storage area was provided for the safe offloading of materials. The company had also failed to ensure that wooden pallets in a suitable condition were used for the storage of construction materials and that persons were excluded from delivery areas.

INVESTIGATORS REPORT ON RUNAWAY RAIL TROLLEY ([see story here](#))

The report has been published of the investigation into a near miss on the railways last year, when a group of railway workers had to jump clear to dodge a runaway trolley that then crashed into other equipment. The RAIB report reveals that the runaway was caused by the trolley becoming unbraked while it was on a downhill gradient after the operator had intentionally defeated the 'failsafe' function of the trolley's braking system. The design of the trolley made it possible to do this and the operator was aware that it was possible to do so. The ergonomics of the trolley brake system made it tiring to use, potentially encouraging the operator to defeat the brakes. The operator was also unaware that there was a risk of the trolley running away. RAIB identified the following underlying factors to the accident.

- The product acceptance process employed by **Network Rail** did not manage the risks incurred by this design of trolley.
- A lack of clarity in site leadership roles led to risks not being effectively managed.
- Defeating of the braking system on this type of trolley is a known issue, but no effective action had been taken to eliminate the practice.

As a result, RAIB has made two recommendations, both addressed to Network Rail.

- Network Rail, in conjunction with the **Rail Safety and Standards Board** and the **M&EE Networking Group**, reduces the likelihood of the failsafe brakes on trolleys of the type involved in this accident being modified by operators and rendered ineffective.
- Improve the implementation of safety learning resulting from accident and incident investigations.

LYNCH TAKES OVER HOTEL FOR SIZEWELL PLANT OPERATORS ([see story here](#))

Plant hirer **Lynch** has taken over a hotel to provide accommodation for workers on Sizewell and sites across Suffolk. The firm has secured the Best Western Hotel making 80 rooms available from Monday to Thursday every week. Lynch said it is a challenge finding accommodation in the area and will offer operators and partners a fixed-rate option available year-round.

CLADDING FIRM FINED £225,000 AFTER FATAL FALL ([see story here](#))

A cladding company and its director have been fined following the death of a worker who fell through a fragile roof whilst replacing cladding panels that had been damaged in a storm. An HSE investigation found that the work had only been planned from photographs and that no site visit had taken place before starting the job. The dimensions of the building were not known to the contractor, meaning the cherry picker hired to allow safe access to height did not reach all parts of the structure that were to be repaired. To complete the job workers had to leave the safety of the cherry picker basket and use boards found on site to work on the fragile roof. It was whilst doing this that the victim slipped and fell through the fragile roof, landing on the concrete floor below.

IMPROVEMENTS REQUIRED AT DOUNREAY AFTER TOPPLED LOAD ([see story here](#))

The **Office for Nuclear Regulation** (ONR) has issued an improvement notice to **Nuclear Restoration Services** following an incident at its Dounreay site in Caithness, Scotland. In February 2025, during an operation to move a radiological contamination monitor, weighing approximately two tonnes, it toppled over and caused a minor injury to a worker. While nobody sustained any serious injuries, ONR considers the incident carried significant potential risk to worker safety.

OPERATOR SPOTS CRACKED MAST ON HINKLEY TOWER CRANE ([see story here](#))

Serious structural defects in a tower crane at Hinkley Point C have prompted nuclear safety regulators to issue a formal improvement notice to the project's main contractor. The faults were uncovered in February when a crane operator spotted a failed connecting pin and visible cracks in a mast section during routine pre-use checks on the Somerset site. The incident, reported under RIDDOR, did not lead to any injuries or collapse, but the discovery raised red flags over equipment safety management on the nuclear job. An investigation by the **Office for Nuclear Regulation** found **NNB Generation Company** (HPC), the site licensee and principal contractor, had failed to properly plan, manage and monitor the condition of tower cranes, breaching safety rule requirements.

RAIL ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION BRANCH PUBLISHES ANNUAL REPORT ([see story here](#))

The **Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB)** has published its annual report for 2024, summarising operational and investigative activity undertaken by the Branch during the year. It also highlights six themes which have run through the Branch's work during 2024: track worker safety, platform safety, asset integrity, safety of the line after engineering work, safe operation of plant in possessions and the management of trees.

- 431 notifications were received by the RAIB, from which 56 events were identified as requiring a preliminary examination to determine the most appropriate response. From these preliminary examinations 11 full investigations, 12 safety digests and eight industry investigation reviews were started.
- RAIB published 13 full investigation reports, 10 safety digests, three letters to coroners and issued one notice of urgent safety advice. RAIB made 41 safety recommendations to 41 different organisations across the rail industry including infrastructure owners, train operators, manufacturers, and other authorities.

MCLAREN TO BUILD 2,400-BED WORKER CAMPUS AT SIZEWELL C (see story here)

McLaren Construction will deliver the huge accommodation campus for workers building the Sizewell C nuclear power station. Under a construction management agreement, McLaren will deliver the 2,400-bed campus for site workers, hailed as setting new standards in site accommodation. The scheme will see 16 residential blocks of three and four storeys built to house the incoming workforce. The project forms part of the main campus strategy for Sizewell C and aims to provide high-quality welfare facilities during the peak construction phase of the nuclear plant.

SAFETY CHARITY LAUNCHES KNOWLEDGE HUB (see story here)

International safety charity **Lloyds Register Foundation** has set up an information 'hub' to provide information and advice to businesses seeking to improve workplace safety. The new Global Safety Evidence Centre aims to support professionals across different "high-hazard" industries, including the construction sector, with high-quality and actionable resources.

Company boss avoids jail after worker death (see story here)

The director of a construction company has been given a suspended prison sentence after a worker died from injuries sustained in a fall on one of the company's sites, falling while walking along a beam accessed via a ladder but with no edge protection in place to prevent falls. An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the director had failed to manage the roof work, including ensuring that roofing subcontractors were not exposed to health and safety risks.

STEELWORK CONTRACTOR FINED AFTER ROOF FALL (see story here)

A construction company and its director have been fined after a worker fell through the roof of a sheep barn being extended. Roof sheets needed to be installed, bridging the gap between the old roof and new. The worker stepped onto a fragile roof light that immediately broke under his weight, falling from a height of around six metres and suffering significant life changing injuries. An investigation by the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) found the company had failed to implement basic working at height control measures, such as safety netting, to prevent falls from height in this area. There was netting in place on site but it did not cover the full work area and was installed by people without the sufficient skills to rig it. HSE also found a failure to plan, manage and monitor the construction phase, to ensure it was carried out in a safe manner.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

TELENT CELEBRATING ONE YEAR OF EDUCATING CHILDREN ON RAIL SAFETY (see story here)

Mission-critical infrastructure specialist **Telent**, reaches a one-year milestone with the Rail Safe Friendly programme (RSF), spreading awareness to children about the importance of safety on the country's railways. Since its launch, Telent's involvement with the project has so far engaged with 149 schools to promote the importance of rail safety awareness. The course delivers Network Rail's video safety content directly to schools to ensure every child is equipped with the essential knowledge to navigate the railway environment safely. To date, the content has reached a total of 80,859 views. The Rail Safe Friendly programme, launched by **Learn Live**, teaches young people about the dangers of trespassing on Britain's railways to raise awareness, save lives and prevent accidents.

FORCES COUPLE HELP EX-SERVICE PERSONNEL FIND RAIL INDUSTRY JOBS (see story here)

An armed forces couple who work for **Network Rail** are encouraging former service personnel to consider a career in the rail industry. Charlotte Greenwood is a reservist, while her husband Garry spent 11 years in the Army. Both now work at Network Rail, where 10 per cent of the workforce has a military connection. The York couple are the joint leads for Network Rail's Armed Forces Employee Network in the North & East route, and are keen to highlight how transferrable skills like leadership and discipline make the rail industry ideal for post-services careers.

NETWORK RAIL ENCOURAGES LINESIDE RESIDENTS TO SIGN UP FOR DIGITAL WORK NOTIFICATIONS (see story here)

Network Rail is encouraging its lineside neighbours to sign up for timely updates about upcoming work in their area. The infrastructure manager said its digital notification system was a faster way to inform residents about planned work, with information available at the touch of a button. It added that the service would be especially beneficial during the summer months when the sound of essential railway maintenance may be more noticeable due to open windows. Updates include key details such as work dates, expected noise levels, potential road or footpath closures, and any disruptions to train services.

CORPORATE AND COMMERCIAL

FORMER KELTBRAV MANAGERS JAILED AFTER CORRUPTION TRIAL (see story here)

Three former **Keltbray** managers and a demolition boss have been jailed for corruption. Arben Hysa of **Tony Demolition Workers** was convicted for bribing three Keltbray managers over labour contracts worth £15m, whilst the Keltbray managers were convicted of receiving the bribes, which represented a 'breach of trust' in respect of their obligations to their employer. The CPS prosecution was launched following a Home Office investigation into demolition industry labour contracts between Keltbray and Tony Demolition Workers Ltd, based in London.

ARRESTS MADE IN BLU-3/MACE BRIBERY PROBE ([see story here](#))

Three people have been arrested in connection with bribery allegations for contracts working on the construction of a Microsoft data centre. The Serious Fraud Office (SFO) says that individuals at **Blu-3** are suspected of paying more than £3m of bribes to former associates of **Mace Group** in relation to work on the construction of a data centre in the Netherlands for the technology giant **Microsoft**.

HS2 FRAUD AND BRIBERY ALLEGATIONS SURFACE ([see story here](#))

An anonymous whistleblower is alleging large-scale fraud on the HS2 project. It is being claimed that two subcontractor suppliers on HS2 are being investigated after evidence was found indicating that a senior works manager had accepted bribes from a supplier in return for extra work on the project. It is also alleged that another subcontractor has been supplying self-employed CIS workers while charging an inflated PAYE rate and using fraudulent offshore payroll companies to process these bogus payments. HS2 has subsequently confirmed an ongoing investigation [into the labour rate allegation](#).

CONSULTANTS AND SUPPLIERS ON THE HOOK FOR BUILDING REMEDIATION COSTS ([see story here](#))

A landmark legal judgment has confirmed that developers can sue their consultants and engineers for contributions to building safety remediation costs. The Supreme Court has found in favour of **Barratt Redrow** in its dispute with consulting engineer **URS**, paving the way for the developer to sue the engineer for its role in the design of buildings that Barratt had put up that, since subsequent changes in building safety law, needed remediation works.

LEGISLATION & STANDARDS**BSI PUBLISHES MMC SPEC FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS** ([see story here](#))

The PAS 8700:2025 specification, *Modern methods of construction for new build residential properties*, has been produced in an attempt to provide consistency on how projects can partially or wholly adopt offsite construction methods. It is the first PAS to set out comprehensive requirements and processes for the deployment of so-called modern methods of construction in residential building projects. It is intended to support all stakeholders — from designers and manufacturers to developers, lenders, insurers and regulators — in adopting consistent, best-practice approaches across the residential construction lifecycle.

ROOF GARDEN STATUS CLARIFIED: THEY ARE NOT A STOREY ([see story here](#))

The legal status of roof gardens became significant when the Building Safety Act 2022 stipulated that 'higher-risk buildings' had to be approved by the new Building Safety Regulator (BSR) — and getting approval is proving tricky for many. Higher-risk buildings are defined as buildings with at least two residential units, care homes, and hospitals that are at least 18 metres in height or have at least seven storeys. The Ministry of Housing is consulting the Building Safety Regulator and other relevant stakeholders on a proposal to amend the Higher-Risk Buildings (Descriptions and Supplementary Provisions) Regulations 2023 to make it clear that roof gardens should not be considered a storey.

MARKET NEWS/TRENDS**RAIL****EUROSTAR CALLS FOR PLAN AND INVESTMENT TO UNLEASH RAIL GROWTH** ([see story here](#))

Eurostar has submitted its response to the **Office of Rail and Road's** consultation on capacity at the Temple Mills International depot. This urges the regulator to help bring the industry and Government together to work on a long-term plan for international rail which considers the growth ambitions of all operators and encourages private investment in new depot facilities beyond Temple Mills.

ATKINSRÉALIS BACKS RAIL REFORM AND ADVOCATES FOR STABLE FUNDING ([see story here](#))

AtkinsRéalis has voiced its support for plans to establish Great British Railways (GBR) as a "directing mind" for Britain's railways, while highlighting the need for funding certainty and transparency. In its response to the **Department for Transport's** (DfT) consultation on rail sector transformation, the company endorsed proposals to create a more unified and integrated railway under GBR leadership, with streamlined governance, an access framework, duties to devolved leaders and the Secretary of State's role in setting long-term strategy. However, the company emphasised the importance of a consistent, long-term strategy with appropriate funding mechanisms to ensure supply chain stability.

Lord Blunkett presents phased plan to "fix Yorkshire's broken rail network" ([see story here](#))

Lord Blunkett has published a phased plan to "fix Yorkshire's broken railways", which West Yorkshire Combined Authority says could deliver a "multi-billion pound boost to the Government's growth mission." Lord Blunkett's review of rail connectivity has found that Victorian-era infrastructure is "holding the region back", with train services regularly failing to meet the needs of passengers and businesses due to poor performance and reliability. West Yorkshire Combined Authority said that 'Yorkshire's Plan for Rail' set out a "credible and affordable" package of investment in new and accessible stations. It includes modern rolling stock, improved services in the short term, upgrades to unlock capacity at key stations, development of strategic schemes to transform connectivity between the North's major centres in the long term, as well as investment for housing, jobs and growth. The report calls for increased powers as part of the devolution agenda to drive change.

RAIL DIRECTOR

This month's issue of Rail Director is available to read [here](#), including a number of articles covering investment in and integration of transport systems.

SEVEN PRIORITIES FOR RAIL REFORM ([see story here](#))

Campaign for Better Transport's policy paper *Track changes: making a success of rail reform* ([available here](#)) outlines seven key priorities for making the Government's programme of rail reform a success, including a recommendation that the Government should create a Whole Industry Strategic Plan so that the rail sector can plan effectively and reduce costs across

infrastructure and rolling stock, prioritising capacity upgrades, fix bottlenecks and accelerate electrification across the network.

OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE

LIDL STORE AND LOGISTICS EXPANSION ([see story here](#))

The supermarket giant is accelerating its growth with a £500m investment to open more than 40 new stores this financial year. Construction of a new 54,000m² regional hub in Leeds is also set to get underway later this year.

DANES CANCEL HORNSEA 4 WIND FARM ([see story here](#))

Ørsted has cancelled plans for the 2.4 GW Hornsea 4 project, off the coast of Norfolk, because the deal it agreed with the UK government just eight months ago no longer stacked up. Since the contract for difference (CfD) award in allocation round 6 (AR6) in September 2024, the project has seen “several adverse developments”, including a continued increase of supply chain costs, higher interest rates and an increase in the risk to construct and operate Hornsea 4 on the planned timeline. Ørsted has decided to stop further spend on the project and terminate supply chain contracts.

WATES CALLS FOR PFI REBOOT TO UNLOCK SCHOOLS AND HOSPITALS ([see story here](#))

Wates Group is urging ministers to revive private finance initiatives to help fund the next wave of public infrastructure, warning that without private cash the UK can't build the schools, hospitals and housing it desperately needs. The contractor has unveiled a new “Alliance Investment Model” which aims to improve on the old PFI system by offering co-ownership, greater transparency and shared risk through a special purpose investment vehicle. The white paper sets out five key demands for a rebooted public-private partnership approach:

- Projects must focus on assets worth over £100m
- Delivery partners must be financially robust and proven
- Standardised designs must be used to cut cost and time
- Risk and reward should be shared fairly between public and private sides through SPVs
- A new oversight body should sit under the National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority

ANGLIAN RESERVOIRS TO GO THROUGH CENTRAL PLANNING ([see story here](#))

As nationally significant projects, the reservoirs planned for Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire will go through the process of applying to the Planning Inspectorate for a development consent order, which will then need to be signed off by the relevant secretary of state. Thus they avoid the local authority planning regime.

COMPLETED BUILDINGS CAUGHT-UP IN GATEWAY 2 CHAOS ([see story here](#))

The backlog of Gateway 2 safety approvals stalling work across the country is also hitting some schemes where work is almost complete. One developer faces “losing millions” after the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) decided its scheme would need to go through pre-construction checks despite being almost structurally complete.

TRENDS

MIXED MESSAGES ON UK CONSTRUCTION PERFORMANCE

UK construction activity decreased for the fourth consecutive month in April as rising business uncertainty led to delayed decision-making on new projects, according to the latest monthly survey of construction purchasing managers, which also indicates further declines in total order books and cutbacks to staffing numbers ([see story here](#)). However, separate data showed construction output rose 0.5% in March, driven by gains in new work and repair activity but overall growth for the first quarter of 2025 remained flat ([see here](#)).

Finally, a 33% rise in project starts during the three months to the end of April this year belies a persistent lack of major project activity, according to the latest figures from **Glenigan**. The latest edition of their Construction Review shows that project starts rose by a third in the three months to April compared with the previous three months, with a 29% improvement over April's Review, mainly due to a tentative improvement in underlying starts in key sectors such as house-building. However, they note that the general economic consensus predicts any upturn is likely to be short-term as market volatility continues ([see here](#)).