

INNOVATION

[SATELLITES AND AI TO ACCELERATE RAIL ELECTRIFICATION \(see story here\)](#)

Furrer+Frey has been awarded grant funding from the **UK Space Agency's** Unlocking Space for Business programme, to integrate satellite imagery into its automated electrification design tool, helping planners and designers visualise design options more quickly. E+BOT will be able to produce RIBA stage 1 (concept) drawings quickly, to be refined and developed further by engineers. It aims to shrink a process from days of specialised engineering time to hours of computer processing to produce viable options. Outputs would be reviewed and validated by trained engineers, but the process of surveying and redrawing would be automated.

TECHNOLOGY

[NR AWARDS CONTRACT TO MONITOR RAIL NETWORK USING SATELLITE RADAR \(see story here\)](#)

SatSense, a leading InSAR (Interferometric Synthetic Aperture Radar) technology specialist based in Leeds, has secured a landmark multi-million-pound, multi-year contract with **Network Rail** to deliver network-wide ground deformation monitoring, flood mapping and change detection services using satellite radar technology. Under the agreement, SatSense will deliver processed InSAR data and derived services that integrate into NR's earthwork asset management systems, utilising data from satellites such as the Sentinel-1, NISAR and TerraSAR-X constellations. The approach aims to enable a transition to reduce reliance on repeat on-site examinations which can be costly, subjective and untimely.

EQUIPMENT

[WORLD'S FIRST HYDROGEN DIGGER STARTS PREP FOR THAMES CROSSING \(see story here\)](#)

The world's first hydrogen powered digger has been put to work commercially on the £9bn Lower Thames Crossing project. **National Highways** hailed the move as it sets out to become the UK's first carbon neutral construction project. It is the first time anywhere in the world that a hydrogen construction machine has moved beyond testing and into live deployment on a major infrastructure scheme. The JCB machine, supplied by **Flannery Plant Hire** and fuelled by Ryze hydrogen, is working for **Skanska** as ground investigation gets underway around the route of the road near Gravesend in Kent.

[COMPACT HIGH-REACH ON FRENCH DEMOLITION SITE \(see story here\)](#)

Case says that its CX135E XRD "redefines high-reach working in a compact footprint" for the demolition industry, claiming it to be the world's most compact, high-reach demolition excavator. Capable of operating with a 700kg crusher at a height of 13 metres, the machine has a retractable undercarriage and is able to operate in the tightest site conditions. The 14.5-tonne machine has a transport width of just 2.32 metres, expanding to 2.92 metres for maximum stability. It has a hydraulically tiltable cab and a panoramic top window. Two integrated cameras, on the boom and the arm, stream real-time visuals to a dedicated 10.4-inch display.

[NEW INDUSTRIAL HIGH-VOLTAGE BATTERY RANGE LAUNCHED \(see story here\)](#)

Think Energy Group has announced its new high-voltage Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) range, designed to meet the growing energy demands and sustainability goals of industrial and commercial projects. The SiteGrid range, spanning 100 kVA to 500 kVA, includes a range of models providing scalable solutions for higher energy demands. The systems enable businesses to hybridise power requirements up to 500kVA, overcome grid capacity constraints, easily incorporate renewables, and reduce both emissions and operating costs.

[GOVERNMENT REJECTS BLUEPRINT TO COMBAT CONSTRUCTION THEFT \(see story here\)](#)

The **Home Office** has finally begun next steps on the Equipment Theft (Prevention) Act 2023. Initially drafted as a private members' bill in 2022, it was designed to combat the theft of all terrain vehicles, specifically farmers' quad bikes, giving ministers the power to introduce secondary legislation to mandate improved security measures such as forensic marking, immobilisers, and mandatory record-keeping. Some hoped this would enable it to be expanded to cover other equipment, from diggers to power tools. But it is not to be. Proposals to include mandatory immobilisers and to extend the scope of the legislation to cover larger agricultural and construction equipment, as well as hand-held power tools, will not be taken forward at this time, the Home Office said.

[SANY'S FIRST MICRO EXCAVATOR \(see story here\)](#)

Chinese manufacturer **Sany** has introduced the SY10U to the UK market, a 1-tonne class micro excavator engineered for high performance in confined and urban environments – its first micro model. With an operating weight of 1,195 kg, zero tailswing, maximum digging depth of 1,868 mm and maximum reach at ground level of 3,539 mm, it is designed for tight-access applications. It also has a retractable undercarriage (from 745 mm to 1,100 mm) for passage through narrow gateways.

[DEVELON EXPANDS 3D MACHINE CONTROL AVAILABILITY \(see story here\)](#)

Korean machinery manufacturer **Develon** (formerly known as Doosan) and Swiss tech firm **Leica Geosystems** have announced that the Leica MC1 3D machine control system is now available as an aftermarket kit for all Develon 9 Series crawler excavators. Develon's existing 2D sensors and calibration systems can now be upgraded to 3D technology across the entire 9 Series lineup.

MATERIALS/USES/METHODS

[NOVEL CONCRETE MIXES AT LONDON MUSEUM \(see story here\)](#)

Sir Robert McAlpine, construction manager for the conversion of part of Smithfield Market into the new London Museum, has been embracing innovation. Its carbon manager, Simon Leek, reports. Supporting both the client's and their own sustainability ambitions, the project team have used two novel concrete mixes, a recycled concrete aggregate (RCA) mix and a combined

calced clay and RCA mix, reducing carbon, improving circularity and contributing to the wider industry's understanding and efforts to decarbonise.

STANDARDISED HOSPITAL ROOM UNVEILED ([see story here](#))

Modular building specialist **Reds10** has unveiled a prototype modular hospital in-patient bedroom, designed to help drive industrialisation of Hospital 2.0, the government's new hospital programme (NHP). The full-scale prototype, complete with bedroom, ensuite and adjoining corridor, was commissioned by the NHP to mitigate risks in new projects ahead of the first wave out of the NHP, delivered through 'modern' methods of construction. According to Reds10, the prototype allows the NHP to validate and verify the spatial requirements for the in-patient room and bathroom pod, along with the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing (MEP) interfaces and adjacent corridor space.

BRISTOL GETS UK'S LARGEST SPOIL RECYCLING WASH PLANT ([see story here](#))

Heidelberg Materials has invested £8m in a new wash plant at their **B&A Group** site in Bristol to enable the recycling of excavated waste at scale. The largest such plant in the UK, it is designed to provide a reliable supply of high-quality recycled aggregates for use in construction. The plant can separate, wash and process up to 400k tonnes of excavated waste (primarily soils) a year from construction, demolition and industrial sites, public works and utility projects. It can process inert soils into fine and coarse aggregates and is fitted with a drainage and water recovery system to capture and recirculate the water used, minimising its impact on the environment.

ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY

HYDROGEN LOBBY CHIRPS UP ([see story here](#))

The **Hydrogen Energy Association** (HEA), in partnership with the **Road Haulage Association** (RHA) and the **Construction Plant-hire Association** (CPA), has written to junior transport minister Keir Mather putting the case for hydrogen's role in decarbonising heavy transport. Ahead of a forthcoming refresh of the UK hydrogen strategy, the three organisations have highlighted hydrogen's potential as a diesel-replacement for hard-to-electrify land transport applications - including HGVs, long-distance coaches, utility vans, construction plant, emergency service fleets, and parts of the rail sector.

COSTAIN CREATES TOOL TO 'DESIGN OUT' CARBON AT EARLIEST POSSIBLE STAGE ([see story here](#))

The Carbon Design Tool is used at design stage to forecast potential carbon hotspots during an infrastructure project. Forecast emissions are benchmarked in line with the latest RICS guidance, enabling a comprehensive and robust comparison of design alternatives, enabling Costain's project teams to reduce carbon as early as possible in the project lifecycle, by adopting alternative construction methods, implementing design modifications or substituting or reusing specific materials or products. The tool is displayed via an online dashboard, with the data presented in a user-friendly, accessible manner to ensure widespread use across a project team, not just sustainability or carbon management specialists.

TRAINING, RECRUITMENT & EMPLOYMENT

HS2 INVESTS IN YOUNG PEOPLE'S FUTURE CAREERS ([see story here](#))

HS2 has welcomed a new cohort of 21 apprentices and graduates into the business, beginning a two-year programme of work on the project. Over the last eight years, HS2 has taken on 209 apprentices and 125 graduates. To date, a further 1,713 people have secured an apprenticeship with HS2's construction partners and supply chain, bringing the total across the project to 1,922, putting it on track to reach its target of creating 2,000 apprenticeships, underlining the breadth and diversity of the careers on offer with the project.

HUNDREDS UPSKILLED WITH FREE RAIL SUSTAINABILITY LEARNING ([see story here](#))

Over 250 people have accessed the free Learning Pathways from the **Supply Chain Sustainability School**, helping to embed sustainability across the UK rail supply chain. Developed in collaboration with **Network Rail**, **RSSB** and leading industry stakeholders, eight Individual Learning Pathways support delivery of NR's Greener Railway Strategy. This strategy is grouped into main themes: 1. A Railway That Is Fit for the Future; 2. A Railway That Cares for the Environment; and 3. A Railway That Helps Communities Thrive. Each pathway focuses on a separate issue – from net zero and circular economy, to local economies and community wellbeing. All pathways are free to access and are tailored to help suppliers understand and apply sustainable practices in their roles.

RICS SURVEY REVEALS CRITICAL SKILLS SHORTAGES ([see story here](#))

The **Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors** (RICS) has released a report that measures the state of skills in the global surveying profession. It found that around 90% of surveyors reckon their area of work is being affected by a shortage of appropriately skilled colleagues. Nearly one-third describe the shortfall as 'critical', warning that it is severely impacting project delivery and productivity, with a further two-thirds seeing the shortage as 'moderate' but caution that it could worsen without immediate intervention. The most acute shortages were reported in building surveying and quantity surveying. Two-thirds cited an ageing workforce and high retirement rates as key causes, noting that new entrants are not arriving fast enough to replace retirees. More than half said the shortage is reducing work capacity and output, while two-fifths reported rising costs and over a quarter highlighted a slower pace of innovation across the built environment.

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY ROUNDS ON PM OVER APPRENTICESHIPS REFORM ([see story here](#))

More than 20 representatives of construction industry organisations have signed an open letter to the prime minister Keir Starmer calling on him to rethink the government plans to reform apprenticeships. The letter warns that a recent announcement from Skills England that apprenticeship reforms are set to reduce the apprenticeship requirements it will result in "severely weakening the pathway to required training".

MODULAR BUILDER SUPPORTS T LEVEL PROGRAMME ([see story here](#))

Modular building company **Reds10** has partnered with **Driffield School and Sixth Form** and social mobility charity **The Talent Foundry** to support the introduction of a construction T level into the school's curriculum as an alternative to A levels for sixth formers. The two-year programme launched this month, with the official T Level course set to begin in October 2027. It is designed to create pathways into construction careers. The programme will mainly be conducted at the school, with industry visits and work experience hosted at Reds10 giving students exposure to construction factory environments.

WILKO STORE BECOMES A CONSTRUCTION TRAINING CENTRE (see story here)

Building work is under way to transform a former Wilko store in Sutton-in-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire, into a new construction training centre. **Ashfield District Council** purchased the premises at 1-5 Outram Street earlier this year using money from its £62.6m Towns Deal and has leased it to **West Nottinghamshire College**. It is currently being refurbished to create a campus for college students aged 16-18, adults and apprentices to gain trade skills and qualifications in plumbing and electrical installation. The building, which will be called the Portland Square campus, will also be a centre for 'green skills' courses including ground source and air source heat pump, photovoltaics and the wiring of electric vehicle charging points for homes.

EAST WEST RAIL INSPIRES NEXT GENERATION OF ENGINEERS (see story here)

East West Rail (EWR) is helping shape the future of ground engineering after offering Early Career Professionals (ECPs) a rare opportunity to gain hands-on experience at a live infrastructure site. Seventeen ECPs recently joined the EWR Ground Investigation (GI) team at Chapel Hill in Cambridgeshire, part of some wider survey work, for a full day of immersive learning and practical engagement. Hosted collaboratively by Client, Contractor and Technical Partner teams, the visit was designed to provide insight into the complexities of ground investigations and inspire the next generation of engineers.

HEALTH, SAFETY & WELLBEING

WORKER ERRORS BLAMED FOR FATAL CRANE COLLAPSE (see story here)

Staff errors were to blame for the collapse of a crane which killed three men, an inquest has found. The coroner concluded their deaths were an accident and the collapse was caused by a "series of errors" made by employees at **Falcon Tower Crane Services**. The three men were working as part of a team to erect a Potain MC85B tower crane when it tilted and fell. The coroner said there were mistakes made in drafting the method statement and associated documents, which contained an incorrect sequence of works by omitting the crucial requirement for partial ballasts. The error was not identified and the supervisor compounded this when he did not correctly follow the build plan and work sequence, culminating in the overbalancing of the crane without the partial ballasts.

EXPLODING JET HOSE KILLED DRAINAGE ENGINEER (see story here)

Utilities and infrastructure contractor has been fined £800,000 following the death of a drainage engineer, who was priming a jetting hose when there was a loud explosion and the end of the hose whipped up at high speed, striking him. On the morning of the incident it was very cold and the end of the hose was suspended in an inspection chamber when a large pressure release, thought to be due to a build-up of ice in the system, caused the end of it to strike the engineer in the face. An HSE investigation found that the company failed to ensure, so far as was reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of its employees. During the investigation, the **Water Jetting Association**, a trade association representing those carrying out high pressure water jetting, released a safety alert reminding operators of the importance of restraining or anchoring the end of the jetting hose.

RECOGNISING MAJOR IMPROVEMENTS FOR TRACK WORKER SAFETY (see story here)

RSSB has said its latest update to railway Standards, which come into force in early December, brings significant enhancements to track worker safety, reflecting the industry's ongoing commitment to protecting those who maintain and operate Britain's rail infrastructure. Developed in consultation with the rail industry, the latest Standards update introduces a series of changes to Rule Book modules and handbooks, with a focus on safe systems of work, lookout duties, and operational clarity. Key Standards changes for track workers cover:

- Reducing the use of lookouts as a safe system of work:
- Clearer Duties for Controllers of Site Safety (COSS)
- Improved Handsignalling Procedures
- Updated Work-Site Certificate Procedures
- Limited clearance warning signs
- Removal of Obsolete Competencies

The changes are designed to reduce risk, improve clarity, and ensure that track workers are protected by robust, up-to-date procedures.

BUILDER IMPALED ON MACHINERY AFTER ROOFLIGHT PLUNGE (see story here)

Two companies have been fined after a man fell through a fragile rooflight and impaled his leg on machinery below during over cladding work at a factory. He had been over-cladding an existing asbestos cement roof with two other operatives when he stepped onto a fragile rooflight. An HSE investigation found that principal contractor failed to ensure the works were properly planned, and that neither they nor their sub-contractor had effective preventative and protective measures in place to control the risks associated with roof work. They also failed to ensure that the correct equipment and tools were in place to undertake the work safely.

COLEMANS EXPLORES SMART DUST SUPPRESSION (see story here)

Birmingham-based **Colemans** has joined with mechanical engineers from **Aston University** in a knowledge transfer project (KTP) to pioneer a smarter way to manage harmful dust from building demolition. Researchers are looking at exploiting smart sensors, mechatronics and digital manufacturing to produce a prototype intelligent dust suppression and extraction system that is capable of responding to changing and unpredictable weather conditions.

PILERS' WORKING PLATFORM CERTIFICATE UPDATED (see story here)

The **Federation of Piling Specialists (FPS)** has published the fourth edition of its Working Platform Certificate, a safety initiative that has played an important role in preventing rigs from toppling for more than two decades. Developed originally by the FPS in partnership with the HSE, the Certificate requires the principal contractor to confirm that platforms for piling rigs are properly designed, constructed and maintained for the equipment operating on them. This simple intervention transformed industry practice. The latest version is said to bring additional clarity and detail to the requirements for design, verification and ongoing maintenance. It introduces more comprehensive design data, including information on plant configuration, platform material, drainage provision and geotextile reinforcement.

HIGHWAYS FIRM FINED £1M AFTER ROAD WORKER KILLED (see story here)

Marlborough Highways has been fined after one of its employees was killed by a reversing road-sweeper. The HSE investigation identified a number of failings. There was no segregation between people and moving vehicles on site and a banksman was not used when the road sweeper reversed and struck the worker. The traffic management systems in place at the site were inadequate and unsafe, placing employees and members of the public at risk of serious injury and death.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**SPENCER GROUP GIVES BACK TO LOCAL COMMUNITY (see story here)**

A recent community project has highlighted **Spencer Group's** commitment to investing in communities where it operates. The refurbishment of a community share shack based in Jaywick, Essex is close to the site of the Clacton Rail Depot, where Spencer Group is currently constructing a new Wheel Lathe Facility. Delivered in collaboration with **The Active Wellbeing Society (TAWS)**, a community benefit society that works to improve wellbeing in areas where inequalities are highest, the project saw a complete revamp of a local "Share and Repair Shop". The space, which TAWS had been renting for some time but lacked the funding to develop, has now been transformed into a community hub where local residents can hire out items ranging from gardening tools to household appliances, free of charge.

CORPORATE AND COMMERCIAL**CONSTRUCTION GIANTS FALLING DUE TO THE 'BAD DEBT DOMINO EFFECT' (see story here)**

Construction giants are falling due to the 'bad debt domino effect', according to analysis from Red Flag Alert, highlighting the long-term impact of the Carillion collapse, which Red Flag describe as more than a financial implosion. It exposed systemic vulnerabilities in the construction industry: overdependence on major contractors, precarious payment practices, and the danger of unchecked growth strategies. With a number of recent failures, the bad debt domino effect highlights how the collapse of one major contractor can ripple through the supply chain, devastating smaller firms that depend on timely payments to survive. Key lessons for the industry include:

- Diversify client bases: over-reliance on major contractors or single projects magnifies risk.
- Strengthen payment protections: push for fairer payment terms and stronger safeguards.
- Improve financial resilience: maintain buffers against material price spikes and labour cost inflation.
- Regulatory vigilance: The government and regulators must continue tightening oversight

STOP BLAMING FIRMS FOR CONSTRUCTION'S BROKEN SYSTEM (see story here)

The **Chartered Institute of Building** has fired a broadside at decades of government and industry reports saying we must look beyond blaming construction firms if we want to fix the sector's deep-rooted problems. In a major new study, *Capacity Constraints in Construction: Rethinking the Business Environment*, CIOB argues that firms are acting rationally in a dysfunctional system defined by extreme volatility, fragmented policymaking and a lack of reliable data. It calls for the creation of an independent expert oversight body, similar in stature to the Office for Budget Responsibility or the new National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority, to oversee both the built and natural environment. The proposed body would be staffed by construction and infrastructure specialists with a deep understanding of how the sector operates, focused on smoothing out destructive boom-and-bust cycles, coordinating government investment, and providing clear, data-driven long-term guidance on what gets built, where, and when.

INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATORS LIST AVAILABLE AGAIN (see story here)

After an absence of more than 25 years, there is now a credible directory of international construction arbitrators. The **International Construction Arbitrators Association (ICAA)** has been launched to help those in a cross-border dispute know where to turn. The ICAA runs a list of arbitrators who are specialists from the international construction industry; a mix of construction judges, construction lawyers and engineers.

LEGISLATION & STANDARDS**NEW QUALITY CERTIFICATE FOR LAING O'ROURKE (see story here)**

Laing O'Rourke has been certified by the **British Standards Institution (BSI)** to the quality management systems standard BS 99001 across all of its UK entities. Other companies have already secured certification for parts of their operations, BSI said, but no others have the whole company covered. The scheme is tailored specifically for the built environment, providing a structured framework to help organisations embed quality at the heart of project execution, and meet the evolving demands and complex challenges facing the sector today.

HSE SEEKS VIEWS ON LOLER AND PSSR (see story here)

The HSE has launched a call for evidence to review the Lifting Operations & Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) and the Pressure Systems Safety Regulations (PSSR). HSE is inviting input from industry stakeholders, professional bodies and any

organisation with relevant experience or expertise. The aim is to establish an evidence base to inform viable opportunities for simplifying and streamlining regulatory processes.

PLANNING BILL BEEFED UP WITH NEW POWERS TO TACKLE 'BLOCKERS' ([see story here](#))

The government has announced late-stage amendments to its flagship Planning and Infrastructure Bill, to hand itself sweeping new powers to break through planning gridlock and fast-track housing, energy and water schemes across the country. The move comes as part of a pro-growth package tied to the Bill which ministers say will "unshackle Britain" from red tape and delays. If passed, the reforms would let the Housing Secretary step in to stop councils rejecting major schemes, cut the time projects spend tangled in the courts, and accelerate delivery of reservoirs, windfarms and large housing developments.

TIDE SECURES UK'S FIRST VOLUMETRIC GATEWAY 2 APPROVAL ([see story here](#))

Volumetric developer **Tide** has become the first firm in the UK to clear Gateway 2 approval for a modular high rise project under the new Building Safety regime. The approval provides a replicable blueprint for how volumetric construction can meet the **Building Safety Regulator's** exacting standards, offering a model for future high-rise schemes. Tide will deliver the project alongside its sister company and offsite manufacturer, **Vision Volumetric**. Both firms' in-house design and technical teams, supported by consultant partners, steered the project through Gateway 2 by demonstrating full compliance through Tide and Vision's integrated volumetric model. Looking ahead to Gateway 3, Vision's advanced factory controls and rigorous quality assurance processes will enable the teams to fully document every stage in line with the BSR's requirements. Each volumetric unit undergoes six independent quality assurance sign-offs before leaving the factory, while every build stage is digitally tracked with scannable QR codes, providing instant access to all relevant documentation.

WELL-MANAGED HIGHWAYS GUIDE TO BE UPDATED ([see story here](#))

The **Department for Transport** (DfT) has appointed **AtkinsRéalis** to lead a review of *Well-managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice*. Last published in 2016, WMHI is considered to be a cornerstone document that guides highway authorities across the UK in the effective, risk-based management of their networks. However, with new technologies, evolving policy landscapes and shifts in stakeholder needs, a comprehensive update is now considered necessary to keep the code relevant. AtkinsRéalis will work with the **UK Roads Leadership Group** (UKRLG) boards, DfT and other highway engineers to not only refresh the code's content, but produce a strengthened governance framework, executive summaries to aid communication of key principles, technical updates to the risk-based approach, and a searchable digital platform designed to improve usability and maintenance. They will also produce training and implementation materials to support its adoption.

SITE INVESTIGATION WORK NOW EXEMPT FROM GREEN RULES ([see story here](#))

Early stage construction works like site investigation, storage of waste materials and drainage operations will now be exempt from the environmental permitting system. The government hopes the move will speed up construction of new housing and key infrastructure by cutting red tape and removing early holdups for builders. The **Environment Agency** will now be empowered to consider which activities should be exempt from requiring an environmental permit, making the regime quicker and more flexible and proportionate for low-risk activities.

RIGHT-TO-WORK REFORM TARGETS CONSTRUCTION SUBBIES ([see story here](#))

The government has launched a consultation on sweeping reforms to force construction firms to carry out 'right to work' checks for the self-employed as part of a fresh crackdown on illegal migrant working and rogue employers. Contractors hiring workers will be legally required to carry out checks confirming that anyone working in their name is eligible to work in the UK, bringing them in line with present checks needed for employees.

MARKET NEWS/TRENDS

RAIL

UNLOCKING HOUSING AND GROWTH: A NEW MODEL FOR INVESTMENT AROUND RAILWAY STATIONS ([see story here](#))

The Railway Industry Association (RIA) has published a report calling for a new model for investment in railway stations to boost transport, housing and growth. It identifies the 2,500 stations in mainland Great Britain as an untapped resource which could and should be harnessed for the place-based regeneration of local communities as well as increasing the supply of housing.

RAILDIRECTOR

The October issues is available [here](#), with a special edition focused on rail sector innovation [here](#).

RAIL INVESTMENT BETWEEN YORKSHIRE'S TWO LARGEST CITIES CHAMPIONED ([see story here](#))

Political and business leaders from Leeds and Sheffield were in Westminster to make the case for 'transformational rail investment' between the two city regions, speaking at an event in the House of Commons calling for much-improved services between the two cities and key investment in their main rail stations. Joined by representatives from across the public and private sectors, they will call for the government to deliver rail improvements between Leeds and Sheffield as part of Northern Powerhouse Rail.

HIGHWAYS

HEATHROW MAPS OUT M25 BUILD PLAN UNDER THIRD RUNWAY ([see story here](#))

Heathrow has mapped out how it will tackle one of the UK's most complex motorway upgrades while keeping traffic flowing on the country's busiest stretch of road. The airport's third runway scheme will need a brand-new section of the M25 to be built, complete with a tunnel and new bridges, at Junction 14 near Heathrow. Rather than rebuilding in place, Heathrow will construct the new motorway 130 metres to the west of the existing road to avoid traffic chaos, meaning most of the heavy works will take place away from daily traffic.

CALL TO REVIVE STALLED MOTORWAY STEEL BARRIER REPLACEMENT ([see story here](#))

National Highways is being urged to restart its stalled programme to replace ageing motorway steel barriers with stronger concrete systems amid growing safety fears over heavier electric vehicles. Most existing steel barriers were only designed to contain vehicles up to 1.5 tonnes, below the weight of modern battery-powered SUVs and EVs, which can exceed 2.2 tonnes. In new report, *Containing the risk of heavier electric cars: a concrete solution*, concrete paving trade body **Britpave** warns that outdated barriers may fail to contain electric cars during collisions, increasing the risk of vehicles crossing central reservations into oncoming traffic.

OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE**Data centres could help heat the capital** ([see story here](#))

The negative environmental impact of data centres is becoming increasingly well documented but the potential benefits are also now being explored. A new report from construction consultancy **Aecom** for the **Greater London Authority** (GLA) stresses the potential energy, currently lost to the atmosphere, that could be exploited from data centres. Conducted in partnership with asset management and commercial consultant **HermeticaBlack**, Aecom's study reveals that up to 1.6 terawatt-hours of heat could be recovered each year from the capital's data centre estate, equivalent to meeting the heating and hot water needs for all homes in Ealing.

REGULATORS COORDINATE TO SMOOTH FALMOUTH DOCKS REDEVELOPMENT ([see story here](#))

Natural England and the **Environment Agency** have agreed to let the **Marine Management Organisation** take the helm as lead environmental regulator for Falmouth docks' expansion. The major overhaul involves repairing critical dock structures to accommodate larger vessels, including cruise ships. Closer collaboration between the three government agencies is expected to reduce delays and thus costs for the developer, **APCL A&P Falmouth**, while still upholding environmental standards.

TRENDS**INCREASED OPTIMISM REFLECTED IN BCIS ALL-IN TENDER PRICE INDEX** ([see story here](#))

Tender prices increased by an estimated average of 0.7% between the second and third quarter of 2025, according to the latest data from the **Building Cost Information Service** (BCIS), resulting in 2.5% annual growth in the BCIS All-in Tender Price Index (TPI). With a more positive outlook than in the previous quarter, 54% of panellists said that their pipeline of projects going to tender over the next year had increased slightly in the third quarter, with a further 8% reporting a significant increase. Only 23% said that their pipeline was unchanged, while 15% reported a slight reduction.

GLENIGAN REPORTS BLEAK OUTLOOK ([see story here](#))

The October 2025 edition of **Glenigan's** Construction Index, reviewing the three months to the end of September 2025, paints a bleak picture of continuing decline. Just looking at projects valued at under £100m, the total value of work starting on-site in the three months to September declined by 16%, remaining 15% lower than the same period in 2024. Performance fell in both the residential and non-residential sectors. The value of residential starts in the quarter was down 26% on the preceding three months and by 24% on the year.

PMI: CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY DECLINES FOR NINTH CONSECUTIVE MONTH ([see story here](#))

While latest estimates from the government's Office for National Statistics show Britain's construction output growing, the people at **S&P Global Market Intelligence** who conduct these monthly surveys disagree. The Purchasing Managers Index (PMI) reading for September 2025 was 46.2 – still solidly below the 50.0 no-change mark, but at least marginally up from August's 45.5 score. All three broad sectors of the industry are stuck in reverse, with residential building work scoring 46.8), commercial construction 46.4 and civil engineering 42.9.

AUGUST OUTPUT DIP ENDS SLUGGISH SUMMER FOR CONSTRUCTION ([see story here](#))

Construction output fell 0.3% in August 2025, bringing to an end a summer of sluggish growth. Latest figures from the ONS showed the sector lagging behind the wider economy, which grew by 0.1% in August, as many builders struggled to move from preconstruction to live site starts amid ongoing investor caution. Across the three months to August, output was still 0.3% higher, driven by private housing repair and maintenance — up 5.6%. But some economists have privately questioned the reliability of these figures, which have fluctuated sharply over the last few years.

MATERIALS CHIEFS SOUND ALARM OVER 'STAGNANT' MARKET ([see story here](#))

The **Construction Leadership Council's** Material Supply Chain Group painted a bleak picture in its latest update. The group said sales in the third quarter were flat or declining compared to 2024 and the market "remains one of the most challenging trading environments in over ten years." The lack of demand has seen many materials firms stop hiring new staff or upskilling existing workers, with a genuine risk of a loss in both capacity and workforce that will lead to a more pronounced shortage in the medium-term, just when a recovering market can least afford it.

BUDGET JITTERS SEE CONSTRUCTION FORECASTS PLUMMET ([see story here](#))

Continuing uncertainty around the upcoming Budget has seen the **Construction Products Association's** Autumn Forecasts revised substantially downwards. Total construction output is now only forecast to grow by 1.1% in 2025 and 2.8% in 2026 – down from previous predictions of 1.9% in 2025 and 3.7% in 2026. Firms across the construction supply chain are reporting that activity has slowed since the Spring, particularly in private housing, infrastructure roads, and commercial new build offices.