

INNOVATION

BALFOUR BEATTY PUMPS £10M INTO VENTURE CAPITAL TECH FUND ([see story here](#))

Balfour Beatty is investing £10m into a venture capital fund focused on technologies transforming the built environment. The contractor hopes the deal will strengthen its access to emerging technologies that could improve productivity, delivery certainty, safety and performance across major infrastructure projects. The money will go into **Pi Labs'** Fund IV focused on early-stage companies developing solutions across areas including artificial intelligence, data and robotics.

SMALL VOICES, BIG IMPACT: 10 YEARS OF INNOVATION ([see story here](#))

The **Rail Innovation Group** has launched a major new report marking its tenth anniversary, revealing that while the rail industry has become significantly more open to innovation over the past decade, systemic barriers continue to prevent many promising technologies from reaching widespread deployment. The report identifies a number of persistent barriers that continue to slow innovation, including:

- Complex industry structures that are difficult for innovators to navigate.
- Limited access to decision-makers and executive sponsors.
- Procurement processes that are not designed to support innovative solutions.
- Long, uncertain and resource-intensive sales cycles.

CREATING A NEW MARKET FOR TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION ([see story here](#))

GBRX, a division of **Network Rail**, has announced plans to design a new dynamic market for technology and innovation which is hoped will help the railway connect problems with solutions in the market and buy them in a way that allows them to scale. The proposed approach would make railway problems more visible to organisations with relevant capability and create a clearer commercial route for technology adoption.

DERBYSHIRE RAIL INNOVATION AND TRAINING CENTRE LAUNCHES ([see story here](#))

Derbyshire's new rail innovation and training centre has now officially opened its doors after construction completed earlier this year. The **Derbyshire Rail Industry Innovation Vehicle (DRIIVe)** in Barrow Hill offers modern classrooms and training areas, specialist research and development facilities including a digital laboratory, and commercial workshop space.

TECHNOLOGY

MCLAREN EMPLOYS ROBOT ARMY FOR SITE QUALITY CHECKS ([see story here](#))

McLaren Construction has agreed a partnership with **FieldAI** to bring general-purpose robots to its UK construction sites. It will deploy autonomous quadruped robots initially to capture 360° site imagery, generate data and support safety compliance patrols and quality assurance. Regular automated scans by FieldAI robots will create a visual and spatial record of work as it is installed. AI-enabled analysis will compare site data against the design model, reducing the time between install and identification of on-site quality issues.

BIRMINGHAM RESEARCHERS AUTOMATE STRUCTURAL CHECKS ([see story here](#))

Researchers at **Birmingham City University**, working with steel construction firm **HadleyFRAME**, have developed tools to cut the time needed for structural engineering checks. The tools speed up the process of checking thousands of structural connections in digital building models before components are manufactured. This has allowed for a 96% time saving by helping engineers identify potential problems earlier, reducing the risk of costly errors later on.

EQUIPMENT

TRACTO UPGRADES HDD ([see story here](#))

Tracto has launched an upgraded version of its 18ACS horizontal directional drill, the Grundodrill 20 ACS, the first unit of which has already been sold to a Tier 1 contractor. The upgraded HDD features 200 kN thrust and pullback force, 9,000 Nm of torque on the outer rods, a 123 kW diesel engine and a high-capacity Bentonite pump, enabling efficient installation on demanding projects. It offers fully automated drilling, rod changing and rod lubrication functions.

PORTABLE MONITORING DELIVERS FLEXIBLE DEPLOYMENT FOR RAIL SIGNALLING POWER SYSTEMS ([see story here](#))

Bender UK has developed a new rail solution, the Portable RS4 Tier 1, which offers flexible monitoring designed to help rail engineers and contractors quickly achieve visibility into insulation performance across signalling power systems, whenever and wherever needed. The RS4 Tier 1 provides comprehensive insulation monitoring and resistance measurement across signal power networks. Expanding on the proven fixed-installation RS4 trusted across the UK rail network, the portable system enables teams to deploy Tier 1 insulation monitoring at a specific rail location without the need for permanent installation, making it particularly valuable for temporary fault investigations and monitoring, as well as for scheduled planned engineering works.

HITACHI LAUNCHES SMALL LONG EXCAVATOR ([see story here](#))

Hitachi has launched the smallest model in its super long front excavator range, the ZX95US-7 SLF, targeting jobs like sewer installation, drainage works and urban utility projects. It offers a 10m reach and a longer boom and arm than the standard ZX95US-7. Its extended reach gives operators a clear advantage for slope finishing, canal lining and dredging, while working from a safe distance. Life-cycle costs are reduced with the Stage V-compliant engine, which does not require an SCR system and its associated maintenance.

GIANT TBM ORDER PUTS LOWER THAMES CROSSING TUNNEL ON TRACK ([see story here](#))

National Highways has ordered Europe's largest ever tunnel boring machine for the £10bn Lower Thames Crossing, with tunnelling work on track to begin in 2028. German manufacturer **Herrenknecht** will build the 16.4m diameter machine, which

will be the third largest tunnel boring machine ever built worldwide. The machine will be bought and operated by the **Bouygues Travaux Publics Murphy** joint venture, which is delivering the twin-bore tunnel beneath the Thames. At 120m long and weighing more than 5,000 tonnes, the machine will be shipped to the Port of Tilbury in sections before being assembled on site.

JCB UPDATES TELEMATICS ([see story here](#))

JCB has updated LiveLink, its telematics platform, with expanded safety and security functions, and new remote management features for its Hi-Viz Loadall telehandlers. It is accessible through a web browser and mobile app and covers JCB and mixed fleets. The system provides information on machine location, utilisation, fuel consumption, maintenance requirements and security, helping customers maximise uptime, improve fuel efficiency and make more informed operational decisions.

KILMAC GOES FULL TRIMBLE FOR SURVEYS ([see story here](#))

Kilmac has bought a full suite of Trimble off-machine equipment for use on civils and groundworks surveys in Scotland - six units each of Trimble SPS720 total stations, R780 GNSS rovers, and TSC710 data collectors running Trimble Siteworks will support the company's continued technology expansion. The investment sits alongside Kilmac's existing Trimble on-machine systems, meaning the business now runs a complete, connected Trimble Civil Construction Technology ecosystem across office, field and machine, enabling the company to enhance productivity, accuracy and efficiency across multiple sites simultaneously.

NATIONAL PILE CROPPERS TARGETS PRE-CAST ([see story here](#))

National Pile Croppers latest product, the PC 400, has been designed to crop pre-cast piles from 300–400mm, with four or more rebar pieces. The new PC 400 weighs 550kg and can be mounted on a 6t excavator. It is designed to remove sections of concrete at approximately 250mm per crop. Equipped with four powerful rams and blades, it has been purpose designed to penetrate past the rebar and into the centre of the pile to leave a minimum of trimming. NPC worked closely with some of the biggest civil engineering companies in the world to add features that makes the PC 400 a safer, more efficient and more productive solution.

ATLASCOPCO UPDATES ENERGY MANAGEMENT ([see story here](#))

AtlasCopco's updated ECO Controller energy management system aims to increase the efficiency of job site battery electric storage systems, and is compatible with third party generators from DSE, **CAT**, **Cummins**, and **Comap**. The ECO Controller is built into all of Atlas Copco's battery-based energy storage systems, including the ZBP and ZBC models, acting as the 'brain' of the unit and allowing operators to efficiently manage energy output and distribute the load onsite. The ECO human-machine interface provides users with full control over their temporary power applications by optimising energy generation, distribution, and consumption through advanced data management.

MATERIALS/USES/METHODS

BLUET PARTNERS WITH RIVER CYCLEWAY EUROPE ([see story here](#))

Finnish floating construction specialist **Bluet** will partner with **River Cycleway Europe** to develop floating systems for active travel in constrained urban environments. The partnership combines Bluet's expertise in floating construction solutions and waterfront development with River Cycleway Europe's floating active mobility system, creating new opportunities for cities to utilise underused water areas for sustainable transport, community spaces and climate-resilient urban development. The River Cycleway system is modular, fully removable and tide-adaptive, requiring no piling or dredging, making it well-suited to sensitive waterfront and lakeshore environments. Integrated clean energy generation is built into the waterfront structure from the outset, supporting the decarbonisation of urban transport networks alongside the mobility infrastructure.

OAKLEAF OPENS LANCASTER FACTORY ([see story here](#))

Oakleaf Contracts has launched a modular manufacturing division, operating from a new facility in Lancaster. The company, headquartered in Magherafelt, Northern Ireland, with offices in Dublin and Sheffield, will manufacture fully fitted bathroom pods for the residential, student accommodation, hotel and healthcare sectors. This will build on its track record in dry wall and ceilings. The pods are built in a controlled factory environment before being transported to a construction project ready for installation, complete with fixtures, fittings, plumbing, electrical components and finishes.

Beaver launches fast installation culvert bridge ([see story here](#))

Beaver Bridges has worked with the **Readypower Group** and **Readyscrew** to develop a culvert bridge, designed to allow equipment like excavators to cross the traditional streams without damaging the environment. The bridge system is suitable for SV80 vehicles, the model in the STGO (Special Types - General Order) regulations for a vehicle of up to 80t, with an axle load of up to 12.5t. It features a screw pile foundation from Readyscrew that can be installed to depths of up to 20m without disturbing the stream bed. It is fully galvanised, providing a 50-year-design life, even when it is subject to temporary flood submergence.

MARLEY LAUNCHES LOW-CARBON ROOF TILES ([see story here](#))

Marley has launched a new concrete roof tile, making use of **Heidelberg's** evoZero concrete, which offers a near zero carbon impact through a carbon capture and banking system. Marley has taken advantage of the concept for its Edgemere 2.0 concrete interlocking tiles, which have a low Global Warming Potential1, a Green Guide A+ rating and BES 6001 Excellent certification.

MUKAWAY SIGNS BLUE PHOENIX DEAL ([see story here](#))

Blue Phoenix, an international producer of sustainable secondary aggregates, has signed a three year deal with reuse platform **MukAway**, marking, the group says, a move from waste logistics into digital materials trading. Blue Phoenix is one of the world's largest producers of incinerator bottom ash and secondary aggregates, with 13 depots across the UK. Blue

Phoenix operates globally, with a headquarters in the Netherlands, converting incinerator bottom ash into secondary aggregates used across roads, earthworks and civil engineering projects—materials that help displace the need for virgin, quarried aggregate and support the industry's shift toward circular construction.

HEIDELBERG TAKES THE HEAT OFF POWER SECTOR ([see story here](#))

Heidelberg has launched a range of products designed to support the energy sector, with high thermal conductivity and low resistivity, to allow heat to dissipate from high and ultra high voltage underground cables. The Power range targets projects like data centres, battery storage, substations, and wind and solar farms.

The range includes PowerCrete, which the materials producer calls a unique, first to market, high-performing concrete with a thermal conductivity of 2.5W/km, claimed as the highest of any concrete available in the UK. It also includes PowerSand CBS and CBS Extra, cement bound sands compliant with ENA TS 97-1, the **Energy Networks Association's** standard for cable installation backfill materials. The range is completed by cable backfill, gel bedding materials and heat-conducting grout.

HYPERION RAISES FUNDS FOR ROBOTIC MICROFACTORIES ([see story here](#))

Hyperion Robotics, a Finnish company developing AI-powered robotic microfactories, located close to project sites, which will produce infrastructure components faster and with less CO₂ emissions, has secured funding for a new facility in Flixborough. Compared to traditional methods, Hyperion's robotic microfactories produce infrastructure components up to three times faster, cut costs by up to 50% and reduce CO₂ emissions by up to 70%. The company is replacing labour-intensive construction with a factory-based model, deployed close to project sites to reduce logistics, speed up delivery and enable consistent, localised and more cost-efficient production for European infrastructure. Hyperion's approach is built on physical AI. At its core is Forge, a software platform that connects design, structural engineering, code-compliance, robotics and factory operations into a single system.

HEIDELBERG GETS SOMERSET OK FOR QUARRY REOPENING ([see story here](#))

Seeking to secure limestone supplies, **Heidelberg Materials UK** has agreed planning conditions with **Somerset Council** to reopen the 160m tonne Westdown quarry, near Frome. Site preparations are now set to get underway this autumn ahead of Westdown quarry's scheduled reopening in the second half of 2027. Once fully operational the quarry will focus on supplying local demand, with nearby rail-connected Whatley quarry focusing on supplying national markets by rail.

ATKINSRÉALIS'S EDAROTH DELIVERS EPSOM OFFSITE HOMES ([see story here](#))

AtkinsRéalis's offsite residential construction business **EDAROTH** (Everyone Deserves A Roof Over Their Head) has delivered 12 new homes for the **Raven Housing Trust** in Epsom. The homes offer a blueprint for tackling the UK's housing challenge by combining industrialised construction, digital delivery and long-term asset performance with a scalable model capable of supporting significantly higher levels of housing output. The 12 homes were manufactured across four sites in Epsom using EDAROTH's precision-engineered offsite approach, with up to 65% of materials produced in a controlled factory environment (exceeding government requirement of 55%) before being assembled onsite.

START UP TARGETS UNDERGROUND SURVEYS ([see story here](#))

A new start up, **SurveyX (UK)**, aims to offer surveys of underground tunnels, pipes and drainage systems to the construction sector. The Yorkshire-based company will offer topographical surveys, ground penetrating radar, utility surveys and CCTV surveys, designed to help to locate, map and inspect drainage systems and underground tunnels for defects and affect repair work. It will also offer map and inspect drainage and underground services for repair or future use, alongside 3D scanning methods used to capture the exact spatial dimensions of a building and specialist building surveys to capture highly accurate spatial data, dimensions, and structural details of an existing building.

FISCHER LAUNCHES NEW CONCRETE SCREWS ([see story here](#))

Fischer has launched two new lines of concrete screws, FBS 4 and FBS 5, targeting electrical and HVAC installations. The new FBS 4 and FBS 5 concrete screws cover a wide range of electrical installations as well as DIY and plumbing, heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) applications. They are suitable for use in concrete and dense masonry, such as solid sand-lime bricks. A fire resistance assessment up to R120 confirms the performance of the concrete screws under fire exposure, providing additional safety for demanding applications.

SUSTAINABILITY

LIVERPOOL'S LIVING WALL HIGHLIGHTS THE IMPORTANCE OF DESIGN ([see story here](#))

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111 A new living wall has been installed at the site of the former Royal Liverpool Hospital as collaborators continue to build the city's new nature-first garden. Installed by **BAM UK & Ireland** in collaboration with the **Eden Project**, the 33-metre living wall has been constructed with several key design choices and surrounds the garden's current construction site, creating a preliminary habitat for local wildlife. The newly erected vertical meadow is just one of the carefully considered design choices made to ensure the garden serves local wildlife just as much as residents. By transforming a temporary construction boundary into a thriving vertical meadow, it shows how every stage of development can create opportunities for wildlife and people.

Contractor fined after desperate bats attack tenant ([see story here](#))

A contractor has been fined after a large number of bats were killed as a result of building work at a sheltered housing site where the survivors attacked a tenant. The victim was admitted to hospital with bite wounds after more than 150 bats flew into his living quarters and bedroom from the house's roof structure where they had been trapped. When ecology

experts examined the property they identified the animals as Soprano Pipistrelle bats which are protected under European law. The incident came after work to install solar panels and external cladding blocked off the entrance to the bat roost within the roof of the building.

DICE ENVIRONMENTAL EXPANDS FOR BNG ([see story here](#))

Dice Environmental has expanded its services to support client's Biodiversity Net Gain planning requirements, with an expanded ecology offering under new associate ecologist Rob Halcrow. The expanded ecology offering includes Preliminary Ecological Appraisals (PEAs), Biodiversity Net Gain assessments and statutory metric calculations, UKHab habitat surveys, Preliminary Roost Assessments and bat surveys, Ecological Impact Assessments, protected species surveys, Ecological Clerk of Works (ECOW) services and ongoing ecological planning support.

TRAINING, RECRUITMENT & EMPLOYMENT

RIGHT-TO-WORK CHECKS FOR SELF-EMPLOYED START IN OCTOBER ([see story here](#))

The government has confirmed an October 1 start date for Right to Work checks on the self-employed with construction singled out by a minister as a "high-risk sector" targeted by Home Office activity. Employers or engagers which fail to carry out Right to Work checks face penalties of up to £60,000 per operative. In serious cases, sanctions escalate to criminal conviction, a prison sentence of up to five years and an unlimited fine.

NETWORK RAIL RANKED FOURTH IN UK'S TOP APPRENTICESHIP EMPLOYERS LIST ([see story here](#))

The **Department for Education** has ranked **Network Rail** fourth in its Top 100 Apprenticeship Employers list for 2026. The annual list recognises employers across England that demonstrate excellence in apprenticeship programmes. Network Rail said its 2026 ranking highlighted its continued commitment to developing skilled talent across the rail industry. The infrastructure manager added that it took on hundreds of apprentices each year across a wide range of disciplines, from engineering and track maintenance to project management and signalling. Apprentices work on live infrastructure projects from day one, gaining hands-on experience while working towards nationally recognised qualifications.

CITB SPOTLIGHTS NET ZERO TRAINING ([see story here](#))

The **CITB** highlighted employer-led training programmes from **Balfour Beatty**, **Berkeley Group**, and **Donaldson Timber Systems**, funded by its Industry Impact Fund (IIF), during Net Zero Week. The IIF is designed to fund innovative, employer-led projects. Net zero, along with other significant industry workforce and skills challenges, is one of the six core categories that qualifies for funding.

HS2 WELCOMES NEW WELDING APPRENTICES ([see story here](#))

More than 5,700 formerly unemployed people have found work on **HS2**, latest figures show, as the project welcomes its latest intake. HS2 recently announced that a cohort of 10 welding operative apprentices have joined the high-speed rail programme to work alongside engineers delivering the Curzon approaches – the series of viaducts that form the final mile of the journey towards HS2's Curzon Street Station. Qualified welders are in short supply, so to help plug the skills gap, **Balfour Beatty VINCI (BBV)**, HS2's construction partner for the West Midlands, joined forces with its subcontractors **Martifer** and **AA Euro** to create the roles.

RAIL CONTRACTORS SOUGHT FOR SCOTLAND'S FIRST PRISON-BASED TRAINING PROGRAMME ([see story here](#))

QTS Training and **Network Rail** are inviting rail firms operating in Ayrshire and the west of Scotland to get involved in a new programme that will train carefully selected people in custody at HMP Kilmarnock ahead of release. **Scotland's Railway Rail Skills Academy**, a partnership between Network Rail and QTS, will deliver its first course inside a Scottish prison from September. Participants will complete four weeks of training inside HMP Kilmarnock, with the full programme, including work experience, finished within ten weeks of release. Graduates will leave with hands-on track experience and a recognised qualification.

RAIL INDUSTRY LAUNCHES RAIL YOUTH PROMISE ([see story here](#))

Leaders from across Britain's railway came together in Parliament to launch the Rail Youth Promise – a new industry-wide commitment to help more 16 to 24 year-olds access rewarding careers in the rail sector. **Network Rail**, **DFTO**, train operators, supply chain businesses and youth organisations committed to address the under representation of young people in the rail workforce – with only around 6 per cent of the industry workforce being young people compared to 12 per cent of the UK population as a whole. The cross-industry charter builds on new initiatives to attract and retain young people in the industry, and provides a unified vision as the industry works closer together ahead of the formation of Great British Railways (GBR) in 2027.

PLANBEE RAIL APPRENTICES CELEBRATE GRADUATION ([see story here](#))

The first-ever graduation ceremony for the **PlanBEE Rail** apprenticeship programme took place recently at the National Railway Museum in York, marking a milestone moment for the scheme and celebrating the achievements of its inaugural cohort, with seven of the graduates moving into permanent roles across the **Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU)** and its wider partners. TRU is a founding member of the scheme, which is designed to recruit and nurture the next generation of multi-disciplinary project managers through a two-year programme where the apprentices rotate around four different employers, gaining experience across different environments.

SKILLS CARDS STATS SHOW YOUNGSTERS TURNING TO CONSTRUCTION ([see story here](#))

New figures published by the **CSCS Alliance** show that cards issued to workers under the age of 25 rose by 8.8% between 2023 and 2025 – jumping from 86,798 to 94,444. The highest increases were seen in the electrotechnical, utilities and plant sectors. Under-25s now account for 19% of all CSCS-logged cards issued. Growth in skilled roles (9.6%) outstripped labouring occupations (8.3%) suggesting younger entrants are increasingly entering a broader range of occupations either

in training or at a skilled level. Plant Operatives saw the largest rise in under-25 card issuance of any major occupation group – up 24.7% over the period – while Electrotechnical Occupations grew by 15.6% and Temporary Traffic Management by 13.2%.

TFL TO HELP CARE LEAVERS BUILD CAREERS ([see story here](#))

TfL property arm **Places for London**, with **Heathrow**, **Lower Thames Crossing**, and **Gallagher Group**, have partnered with Fatima Whitbread's charity, Fatima's UK Campaign, to help care leavers join the construction industry. At the launch, Whitbread was joined by two young people who have recently completed courses with The Skills Centre and started apprenticeships with **Marlborough Highways**. Young adults with experience of the care system are three times as likely as their peers not to be in education, employment or training. The Care in Construction campaign seeks to fill a gap in the construction workforce as more than a third of current workers are expected to retire within ten years. The partners are working to ensure care leavers and those who support them can access training, work placements and career opportunities in the construction industry.

BURNHAM VOWS TO VALUE "HARD HAT AS MUCH AS GRADUATION CAP" ([see story here](#))

Prime Minister Andy Burnham has launched a fundamental change to the education system in a bid to put technical education on an equal footing with the traditional academic path. In a message to students, he will say "whether you choose construction, coding or classics, you'll get the skills you need and be given the respect you deserve." From age 14 (Year 10), students will have the chance to combine core academic subjects – including English, maths and science – with a high-quality technical education linked to the jobs available in their area. They will also be able to spend time with employers and gain real-world experience. Regional mayors, local leaders, schools, colleges and employers will work together to shape the new technical education pathways while the Government will prioritise funding towards high-quality technical education and practical routes into work. The plans are due to be rolled-out from September 2028.

NOCN TO LAUNCH NEW COMPETENCE PLATFORM ([see story here](#))

CPCS administrator the **NOCN Group** plans to launch a new digital platform, tied to its NOCN Skills Passport, that will allow employers to track workforce competence. The digital platform will help employers evidence workforce competence, strengthen compliance and support workforce development across regulated industries. Powered by the NOCN Skills Passport, the platform brings together workforce competence, learning and compliance into a single secure digital ecosystem, enabling organisations to build safer, more capable and future-ready workforces while giving individuals greater ownership of their skills, qualifications and professional achievements. The platform will be accessible via desktop and mobile, and will provide employers with a comprehensive view of workforce capability while offering individuals a secure digital professional identity that evolves throughout their career.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

TRU HIGHLIGHTS SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY FUND PROJECTS ([see story here](#))

The **Transpennine Route Upgrade** (TRU) has showcased some of the organisations that have benefited from its 2025 Community Fund round. Launched in 2024, the TRU Community Fund aims to help local community groups, schools and charities to create or enhance community-focused facilities across the 70-mile route. The second iteration in 2025 saw 35 successful applicants offered small, medium and large grants of £1000, £5000, £10,000 and £20,000 to fund their chosen projects. TRU said a number of successful applicants had now completed their projects, with the results already being felt in their local communities.

TYNE AND WEAR METRO TRACK RECYCLED FOR NEW WAR MEMORIAL ([see story here](#))

A donation of used **Tyne and Wear Metro** track will be used to create a new memorial to British soldiers who served in the Far East during World War Two. The track, ten metres in total, will commemorate a North East soldier and his fellow prisoners who built the so-called "Death Railway" between Thailand and Myanmar, formerly Burma, from 1942 to 1943.

HITACHI RAIL DONATES SPECIALIST TOOLS ([see story here](#))

Hitachi Rail has donated specialist installation equipment used in its work to modernise signalling on London's Underground to three local further education colleges, supporting the next generation of rail engineering talent. The donation will benefit **Stanmore College**, **College of North West London** and **City of Westminster College**. Stanmore College has recently launched a Railway Engineering Skills Bootcamp, in partnership with Rail Futures, helping to equip learners with the technical skills required to support major infrastructure programmes such as London Underground and Network Rail. College of North West London and City of Westminster College, both part of the United Colleges Group, also offer a range of engineering courses and maintain strong links with local infrastructure projects, supporting pathways into employment across the sector.

FUSION21 MARKS SOCIAL VALUE SUCCESS ([see story here](#))

Procurement organisation **Fusion21** has released data on its social value programmes, showing 707 people secured employment in 2025-2026 as a result of social value commitments delivered through into Fusion21 frameworks (up 44.9% on the previous year.) The number of jobs secured by residents living in the areas where the work was being carried out rose from 96 to 264 (175% increase). The number of people previously out of work able to land jobs also increased significantly to 161 from 41 (292% increase). 116 apprenticeships across construction, engineering, utilities, surveying and specialist trades were created (8.4% increase).

HEALTH, SAFETY & WELLBEING

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE HEALTH AND SAFETY IN HIGHWAYS REPORT 2026 ([see story here](#))

The **Re-flow** Health and Safety in Highways Report 2026 provides a clearer view of how those risks are being recorded, applied, and controlled across the sector. It spans everything from site-level failures and reporting practices to incursions,

worker abuse, and the systems used to manage them. The report draws on recent incident data, industry discussions, and supply chain input – and sets out the latest updates in a quick-to-read format. The Report focuses on five core areas: Site safety failures and their impacts, Gaps in reporting and visibility, Incursions into live roadworks, Worker abuse across the network and The role of technology in managing risk. The report can be found [here](#).

LABOURER DIES AFTER SCISSOR LIFT FALL ([see story here](#))

A specialist contractor has been fined after a worker died when a series of wall panels collapsed and knocked him from a scissor lift. He had been working at a height of around four metres on a scissor lift, removing wall panels from a cleanroom when the remaining panels fell and struck the platform. He was thrown from the lift onto the concrete floor of the warehouse. An HSE investigation found that the company had failed to adequately assess and manage the risks associated with dismantling a structure it had not originally installed. The wall panels, once the roof had been removed, had insufficient lateral support to maintain their structural stability. HSE found that the company's risk assessment and method statement did not adequately address the risk of unplanned collapse due to structural instability. Although the company's own method statement specified that 'A-frame' props or supports should be installed where necessary, no such props were present or in use on site at the time of the accident.

APPRENTICE JOINER CRUSHED TO DEATH BY FALLING BOARDS ([see story here](#))

A property management company has been fined and its director handed a suspended jail sentence after an 18-year-old apprentice was killed. A mixture of board materials had been stacked vertically and unsecured against a wall. It is believed she may have been attempting to retrieve a plywood board from the stack when some of the boards fell on her, crushing her neck and causing fatal injuries. No attempt had been made to secure the boards in their upright position and the risk of them falling had not been identified. An HSE investigation found that the company failed to provide safe systems of work and failed to provide adequate information, instruction, training and supervision, so far as was reasonably practicable. Investigators found there was inadequate site supervision, no suitable lone working policy or procedure, no suitable policy or procedure for the storage of board materials, and inadequate risk assessment prior to the incident.

WORKER CRUSHED AS DUMPER TRUCK OVERTURNS ([see story here](#))

A groundworks company has been fined after a worker was seriously injured when a dumper truck overturned. The driver had been reversing the one-tonne truck when it entered an unprotected excavation and overturned. An HSE investigation found the man had not been wearing a seatbelt – despite HSE guidance and the dumper truck's manufacturer's instructions to do so. Investigators discovered the company had instructed workers not to wear seat belts while operating one-tonne dumper trucks. Instead, operators routinely fastened the seat belt behind them before sitting on top of it. This disabled the vehicle's seat belt warning system and gave the false impression that the restraint was being worn correctly. The investigation also found that open excavations on the site were not adequately protected to prevent vehicles from entering them.

WORKER FALLS FROM TIPPING BUCKET ON FORK LIFT ([see story here](#))

A refurbishment contractor has been fined after a man contracted to carry out work dismantling pipework was left 'physically ruined' after falling from a tipping bucket on a fork lift truck. An HSE investigation found that a scissor lift had been ordered to undertake the work but was too tall to enter the area where it was taking place – so the fork lift truck was used instead. The investigation found that no suitable arrangements were in place to manage the company's contractors and ensure safety on the site. No actions had been taken by the company either to ensure a different safe system of working was undertaken. Although the company provided equipment to its labour-only subcontractor there was no training in place for relating to the fork lift truck or scissor lift. There was no instruction or procedure in place to ensure only trained operatives could get access to these and no adequate supervision on site.

BRIDGEBOUNCER BEGINS SHOWCASE AT GLOBAL CENTRE OF RAIL EXCELLENCE ([see story here](#))

The Rail and Station Innovation Company (Rasic) have installed their 'BridgeBouncer' system at the **Global Centre of Rail Excellence** (GCRE) as part of a new showcase at the South Wales site. The roadside safety system is designed to reduce the number of over-height vehicles striking low railway bridges and has been developed through the UK Government **Department for Transport's** 'First-Of-A-Kind' programme. The system delivers clear, timely alerts to drivers before they reach the point of risk, shifting bridge-strike prevention from static signs to a more active intervention that supports better decision making.

WORKER HIT BY 100KG BEAM WHILE TAKING DOWN STEEL FRAME ([see story here](#))

An event structure company and its director have been fined after an employee suffered severe injuries. During the dismantling of a steel beam temporary ice rink structure, a ratchet strap was being used to lower a steel beam weighing over 100kg. The ratchet strap was not designed for lifting or lowering loads and failed, causing the beam to fall onto the worker. The company director was on site at the time and made the decision to use the ratchet strap, instructing workers where to stand. He continued with the method even after the worker raised concerns about whether it was safe. An HSE investigation found that the company had failed to ensure that the dismantling of the internal steel frame was properly planned and carried out safely.

CORPORATE & COMMERCIAL

12 ROOFING FIRMS NAMED IN ONGOING BID-RIGGING PROBE ([see story here](#))

The Competition and Markets Authority has named the dozen businesses under investigation as part of its long-running probe into suspected bid-rigging in the supply of roofing and other construction services. The cartel watchdog first launched its probe in December 2024 over suspected anti-competitive arrangements linked to roofing work for schools applying to the Department for Education's Condition Improvement Fund. The CMA also confirmed the scope of the investigation was widened at the start of this year. As well as Condition Improvement Fund projects, the inquiry now covers suspected bid-

rigging relating to roofing and other construction services supplied to schools generally, alongside other public and private sector clients.

LEGISLATION AND REGULATION

PLANNING RULES OVERHAUL TO DELIVER FASTEST INFRASTRUCTURE IN A GENERATION ([see story here](#))

The government has confirmed plans to overhaul UK planning rules and speed up the process for major infrastructure projects. Speeding up planning rules will see wind and solar farms, nuclear plants, reservoirs and new transport links built at the fastest pace in a generation. Delivered through the landmark Planning and Infrastructure Act, changes confirmed today and set to come into effect later this month will scrap mandatory pre-application consultation requirements for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs). This will cut up to 12 months from the planning process and potentially save industry £1bn this Parliament.

SECTOR NEWS/TRENDS

RAIL

SPL POWERLINES LAUNCHES PRESENCE IN IRELAND ([see story here](#))

SPL Powerlines, a specialist rail electrification subsidiary of the Powerlines Group, has launched its presence in Ireland. SPL is one of the leading specialist rail electrification subsidiaries of the **Powerlines Group**, operating as part of **Equans**, a leading company in the energy and services sector. Equans' long-term commitment to Ireland, coupled with its own deep technical expertise in the design and delivery of rail electrification systems, brings a unique combination of international scale, specialist capability, and strategic investment to support Ireland's infrastructure ambitions.

NORTHERN POWERHOUSE RAIL: CONSIDERABLE UNCERTAINTY STILL CLOUDS PROJECT ([see story here](#))

In a new report, the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) warns that it is not confident that the **Department for Transport (DfT)** has learned all the lessons from its past failures in its management of other rail projects, with clear risks that the full programme and benefits cannot be delivered within its £45bn funding cap. The PAC's report illustrates the considerable uncertainty still clouding the project, with journey times, frequency, capacity, the exact route of the new line, who will build these new lines, and how investment in urban and industrial regeneration will be prioritised, all not yet determined. The report calls on the DfT to set out how it will keep Parliament updated throughout the programme.

INDUSTRY LEADERS CALL ON GOVERNMENT TO IMPROVE RAILWAYS BILL TO SUPPORT ECONOMIC GROWTH ([see story here](#))

Leading trade associations and transport organisations have jointly written to the Treasury, calling for the Government to improve the Bill by making amendments to safeguard future rail infrastructure investment and growth across the economy. The coalition is calling for safeguards to help maintain investment certainty, attract future private funding and support the Government's growth agenda. The letter makes the case for Great British Railways to be established to attract additional investment from third-party partners to support an effective and resilient transport system that underpins economic growth.

EAST COAST PARTNERSHIP OUTLINES KEY OBJECTIVES ([see story here](#))

Through the East Coast Partnership work, **Network Rail** and **LNER (London North Eastern Railway)** have outlined their key objectives for the next year when it comes to improving reliability and reducing delays on the East Coast Main Line. Passengers are expected to benefit from improved punctuality and even more reliable journeys – with new platforms, enhanced signalling, and technology designed to spot potential overhead line issues among more than 60 initiatives set out in a joint plan to boost performance. The 'whole system' approach brings together infrastructure, operations and train performance into one co-ordinated plan, reflecting closer alignment between track and train

RAIL DIRECTOR JULY/AUGUST EDITION ([is here](#))

OTHER

ISG SCHOOL TO BE DEMOLISHED OVER STRUCTURAL ISSUES ([see story here](#))

A new school building partially completed by **ISG** company **ESS Modular** has been condemned after an inspection by **Kier**. It was left unfinished when ISG went into administration in September 2024. Pupils have been taught since in a series of temporary building while Kier was called in earlier this year to assess the state of the new permanent building. Kier's report to the **Department for Education** found the building does not meet the required building standards and should be demolished.

BID FOR 14-REACTOR UK SMR FLEET ([see story here](#))

Warsaw-based developer **SGE** has submitted plans under the Government's Advanced Nuclear Framework for a 4.2GW programme based on GE Vernova Hitachi's BWRX-300 reactor technology. The privately-funded scheme would be Britain's largest privately-led nuclear investment and could generate enough electricity to meet around 11% of the country's demand, equivalent to almost eight million homes. The delivery team includes **GE Vernova Hitachi Nuclear Energy**, **Samsung C&T**, **Laing O'Rourke**, **Aecon**, **Google Cloud**, **Fermi Development** and **Etara**. While the consortium has not named its preferred sites, the programme would start with a six-reactor station before two further multi-unit sites.

LENDLEASE AND CROWN ESTATE FINALISE £24BN DEVELOPMENT JV ([see story here](#))

Lendlease and **The Crown Estate** have completed their long-awaited £24bn regeneration joint venture, paving the way for construction to begin on a pipeline of major housing and commercial developments in London and Birmingham. The new vehicle, branded the **Impact Partnership Joint Venture**, will initially take control of the Euston, Silvertown and Stratford Cross regeneration schemes, with a dedicated development management company established to oversee delivery.

Together these will provide around 9,000 homes and more than 7m sq ft of commercial, science and innovation space. The partners also confirmed Birmingham Smithfield and Thamesmead Waterfront are expected to join the venture later this summer, expanding the pipeline to around 27,500 homes and almost 10m sq ft of commercial floorspace.

GREEN LIGHT FOR LATEST WINSFORD GATEWAY WAREHOUSE ([see story here](#))

Rula Developments has secured full planning consent to deliver a new 225,000 sq ft logistics building at its 30-acre Winsford Gateway site in Cheshire. The WG225 scheme will occupy a 14-acre serviced development plot at Winsford Gateway where access works to the site have commenced alongside the construction of WG27 – a 27,728 sq ft unit forming the new headquarters for floor finishing and interior design business, **Saint Group**.

CAPITAL&CENTRIC LINES UP FIVE ROTHERHAM REGENERATION STARTS ([see story here](#))

Capital&Centric has been confirmed as development partner for a major regeneration programme that will reshape five key riverside and town centre sites in Rotherham. The appointment paves the way for the Manchester-based regeneration specialist to prepare detailed proposals for three new residential neighbourhoods and two mixed-use town centre schemes.

PLANS UNVEILED FOR £3BN-PLUS DATA CENTRE NEAR EBBSFLEET ([see story here](#))

A new data centre is set to be developed near Ebbsfleet, on the border of London and Kent, creating more than 700 jobs during construction and 400 permanent roles once operational. Built by **Clearstone**, the Ebbsfleet AI Data Centre Campus will span 90 acres on a 145-acre site close to the HS1 railway line and A2 motorway, with development costs expected to exceed £3bn. Buildings at the campus are expected to have a footprint of approximately 645,000 sq ft, with infrastructure split across up to four units.

ENERGY SECRETARY BACKS UK'S SECOND LARGEST SOLAR FARM ([see story here](#))

A landmark solar farm and associated battery storage system at the border of Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire with a generation capacity of 740MW has been backed by the **Department for Energy Security and Net Zero**. One Earth Solar Farm is being brought forward by **PS Renewables** and **Perigus Energy**, with the pair having lodged a development consent order application last year.

CLADDING RETROFIT DRIVE FACES RED ALERT OVER DELIVERY DELAYS ([see story here](#))

Delivery of the Government's flagship cladding remediation programme has been red-flagged by infrastructure watchdog the **National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority**. In its assessment of the Government's major projects portfolio, the huge cladding retrofit programme was downgraded to a Red delivery rating after officials warned that current plans "remain challenging" because of Building Safety Regulator delays, rising construction costs and growing workloads.

PANATTONI GETS GREEN LIGHT FOR SOUTHAMPTON LOGISTICS SITE ([see story here](#))

Developer **Panattoni** has secured planning consent for T Park Southampton – a new Grade A industrial and logistics development at Salisbury Road, Totton. The scheme will deliver five detached speculative units, providing around 223,000 sq ft of high-quality space. The site is immediately adjacent to Junction 2 of the M27, providing direct access to the wider South Coast, the M3, London, and the national motorway network, and around 5.5 miles from Southampton Port, the UK's second-largest container port and one of the country's most important deep-sea trade gateways.

PLAN FOR TRIPLE-TOWER STRATFORD SCHEME ON FORMER SPHERE SITE ([see story here](#))

Developer **Hallmark Property Group** has unveiled plans for a cluster of three towers rising to 47 storeys on the former London Sphere site at Stratford Junction, replacing the long-stalled entertainment proposal with a major mixed-use cultural quarter. The development would combine around 2,100 shared living homes with 1,600 hotel rooms, two performance venues, immersive entertainment spaces and new public squares across three buildings ranging from 31 to 47 storeys.

MOD MAPS OUT £26BN PROJECT ROYAL OAK NAVAL BASES REBUILD ([see story here](#))

The **Ministry of Defence** has unveiled details of a £26bn programme to rebuild the UK's three principal naval bases with a decade of marine civils, dockyard engineering and building work in the biggest naval infrastructure investment since the Cold War. The ten-year Project Royal Oak programme will deliver new docks, waterfront infrastructure, engineering facilities, accommodation and operational buildings at HMNB Clyde, HMNB Devonport and HMNB Portsmouth as part of the Government's £298bn Defence Investment Plan.

PERKINS&WILL TO TRANSFORM OXFORD SHOPS INTO LABS ([see story here](#))

Perkins&Will has secured planning permission from **Oxford City Council** to redevelop Ozone Leisure Park as a mixed-use campus for research, leisure, and community, while preserving a 12th Century farmhouse. Designed for **Pioneer Group** and **Firoka Group**, the project will replace underused retail space with 500,000 sq ft of laboratory and office space, helping meet growing demand for research facilities in one of the world's leading life sciences clusters.

DETAILS REVEALED OF LANDMARK BIRMINGHAM REGENERATION PROJECT ([see story here](#))

A landmark regeneration scheme featuring hundreds of homes, offices and retail space has taken a step forward. **Sphere Group** has submitted an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Report in support of a request to **Birmingham City Council** for an EIA Scoping Opinion for its emerging proposals for 43 Temple Row, 1 Temple Row and the former Rackhams building. The mixed-use regeneration plans form part of Birmingham City Council's Birmingham Central Heart vision, the broader opportunity to transform 17 hectares of underutilised commercial retail and office space within the city centre's retail core.

GREEN LIGHT FOR DERBY CITY CENTRE REGENERATION SCHEME ([see story here](#))

Plans to reshape Derby's city centre Market Place have taken a big step forward after outline planning was granted for the former Assembly Rooms site. The plans are being brought forward by council development partners **VINCI UK**

Developments and ION Developments. Approval allows the Council to now submit an application to discharge the planning conditions attached to the demolition of the former Assembly Rooms.

CROWN ESTATE PUSHES AHEAD WITH £2BN CAMBRIDGE SCIENCE HUB ([see story here](#))

The Crown Estate has lodged plans for a £2bn overhaul of Cambridge Business Park, paving the way for one of the UK's biggest science-led regeneration schemes. The project will create up to 1.8m sq ft of laboratories, offices and R&D space alongside 500 homes in the emerging North East Cambridge Innovation District. The application forms part of The Crown Estate's wider ambition to invest up to £1.5bn in UK science, innovation and technology.

ENERGY EFFICIENT' DATA CENTRE PLANNED FOR BLACKPOOL ([see story here](#))

Blackpool Council plans to award the contract to build a new data centre, dubbed Silicon Sands, to **Hochtief Data Centre Partner UK Ltd**. The procurement process is now being finalised, with the hope of securing up to £300m of investment into the Fylde coast. The provisional agreement would mean that the investment, construction and running costs would be entirely met by the private sector, following Blackpool Council and **Lancashire Combined County Authority's** previous work and funding to assemble the land.

BUILD COSTS CHOKES OFF NEW STUDENT HOUSING PIPELINE ([see story here](#))

Britain's biggest student accommodation developer has warned new purpose-built student housing will slow sharply over the next two to three years because soaring construction costs have made most schemes financially unviable. **Unite Group** said higher build costs, tighter regulation and weaker investment values meant new projects no longer stacked up in most regional markets, with developers now needing rents above £300 a week to justify construction outside London, compared with Unite's current average weekly rent of £190 in those markets.

TRENDS

BUYERS REPORT SHARPEST FALL IN CIVILS WORK FOR SIX YEARS ([see story here](#))

Construction buyers have reported the biggest fall in civil engineering work since April 2020. The news is another blow for contractors reeling from government plans to scrap road schemes to pay for defence spending. The latest **S&P Global UK** Construction Purchasing Managers' Index registered 38.4 in June, up from May's six-year low of 38.2 but well below the neutral 50.0 value. Construction output has decreased each month since January 2025 and the latest fall was the second-fastest since the start of the pandemic.

CONSTRUCTION OUTPUT FALLS FOR SECOND MONTH ([see story here](#))

Construction output slipped for the second month running in May as a sharp slowdown in housing repair work outweighed modest growth in new build activity. The **Office for National Statistics** estimated total construction output fell by 0.8% during the month, following a revised 0.1% decline in April (previously reported as a 0.1% increase). The latest fall was driven entirely by the volatile repair and maintenance sector, which dropped 2.1%, including private housing repair and maintenance tumbling 5%. New work remained weak but edged up by 0.2%, helped by a 2.3% rise in private housing output. That gain offset smaller declines across commercial, industrial and infrastructure construction.

BURNHAM URGED TO HELP CONSTRUCTION SUPPLY CHAIN COSTS ([see story here](#))

Leaders of the **Construction Products Association** are urging Andy Burnham to prioritise cost-cutting measures for industry supply chains following a gloomy set of forecasts. The CPA's forecast for construction output has been downgraded further in its Summer numbers due to the lagged impacts of the Middle East conflict that are starting to pass through to both the demand and cost sides of the UK economy.

CONSTRUCTION CONFIDENCE JUMPS TO HIGHEST LEVEL THIS YEAR ([see story here](#))

Construction firms turned sharply more upbeat in July as stronger customer demand and improving financial conditions lifted confidence to its highest level in more than a year. The latest **Lloyds Business Barometer** showed overall confidence in the sector jumped 10 points to 56%, well above the 12-month average of 47%. More than two thirds of industry firms now expect business activity to increase over the next year, with 65% planning to take on more staff, up from 55% in June. Confidence in firms' own trading prospects remained strong at 68%, while optimism about the wider economy climbed to 53%.

RAYNER WAVES THROUGH £500M LONDON TRUMAN BREWERY PLAN ([see story here](#))

Housing secretary Angela Rayner has approved the controversial £500m redevelopment of the Truman Brewery estate in east London. The decision clears the way for a major mixed-use scheme including offices, a data centre, cinema and new public spaces despite fierce opposition from Tower Hamlets Council and local campaigners. The project, promoted by **Truman Estates** and **Zeloof LLP**, will transform three sites around Brick Lane through separate planning applications.

THOSE WE HAVE LOST (AND SOMETIMES REGAINED)

STEELWORK SPECIALIST CEASES TRADING ([see story here](#))

Steelwork contractor **Barretts of Aspley** has ceased trading after four consecutive years of operating losses. The Milton Keynes-based business employed more than 50 staff and specialised in structural steelwork, architectural metalwork and balcony packages from its 100,000 sq ft fabrication facility on a 12-acre site. Latest accounts for the year to 31 March 2025 revealed turnover fell 28% from £13m to £9m as the company continued its strategy of reducing reliance on London's residential market.

Groundworks firm went under owing suppliers £5.5m [see story here](#)

Groundworks contractor **Mackoy** went into administration owing subcontractors and suppliers nearly £5.5m. The scale of the £23m-turnover firm's debts across its supply chain was revealed by administrator **Quantuma**. Mackoy went down last

month and was then sold out of administration in a pre-pack deal to **Geocore Civils** saving 20 jobs. Geocore was established by Benjamin Bousfield (MD of Mackoy) and Michael Mayock (founder and chairman of Mackoy).

ETHICAL POWER CONTRACTING ARMS GO INTO ADMINISTRATION ([see story here](#))

Renewable energy specialist **Ethical Power** has placed some of its contracting operations into administration. **Ethical Power Connections** and **Ethical Power Group** were placed into administration, with notice of intention to appoint administrators for **Ethical Power Renewables** also filed. The contracting entities were deemed unviable due to prolonged liquidity issues as a result of non-payments from multiple clients for works delivered.

Ethical Power continues to operate, and now consists of the following entities: **Ethical Power O&M**, **Ethical Power Utilities**, **Ethical Power Spain**, **Ethical Power International**, and Ethical Power's development entities.

TORSION CONSTRUCTION GOES INTO ADMINISTRATION ([see story here](#))

Torsion Construction has lost its fight for survival with the contractor placed into administration. Directors at the £165m turnover business had been exploring options to save the firm but were sunk by trading conditions across construction. Torsion has been working to secure direct payments to subcontractors to minimise the supply chain hit while most of the 115 staff have been made redundant. The construction arm was working on 12 live sites and is working closely with funders in a bid to complete some of them.

NATIONWIDE HIRE SOLUTIONS BOUGHT OUT OF ADMINISTRATION ([see story here](#))

Nationwide Hire Solutions has been acquired after going into administration. Suppliers subsequently received messages informing them that the business has been acquired by **Alliance Hire Solutions** which is part of the **Alliance Tool Hire Group**. The update said the business will now be owned by Alliance Hire Solutions Ltd but continue trading as Nationwide Hire Solutions. The Alliance Tool Hire Group is one of the one of the South of England's top five independent tool hire companies with ten depots.