September 2026

INNOVATION

NEXT PHASE OF UNLOCKING INNOVATION PROGRAMME (see story here)

The Railway Industry Association (RIA) and Network Rail have launched the next phase of Unlocking Innovation (UI), together with strategic partners UK Rail Research Innovation Network (UKRRIN) and Telent Technology Services. The UI programme, which has been running for some 15 years, brings together railway innovators and clients to tackle some of the biggest challenges facing the UK railway industry. This next iteration of the programme, starting in the Autumn, will focus on barriers that need to be addressed in readiness for the establishment of Great British Railways (GBR), and will seek to connect "challenges" with innovative solutions and funding pathways as well as support adoption.

UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD SPIN-OUT SECURES FUNDING FOR INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING platform (see story here)

A University of Sheffield spin-out that has developed an AI-powered software-as-a-service (SaaS) platform has secured £140k of early stage funding. RunPilot is the brainchild of PhD researchers who recognised that early infrastructure planning is still manual, fragmented and slow, so developed the platform to accelerate modelling and optimisation of multiple infrastructure routes – complete with environmental, technical and societal considerations, including consent risks. The money will fuel further product development, technical recruitment and commercial growth.

ASTON UNIVERSITY AND JESMONITE RESEARCH CEMENT ALTERNATIVES (see story here)

Aston University will work with Jesmonite to develop the company's resin-based materials for use in construction, under an Innovate UK-backed knowledge transfer partnership. The Shropshire company's low carbon acrylic materials are currently used by artists and designers, as well as for building structures on film sets. Under the new knowledge transfer partnership, the university and company will explore whether, with the addition of biochar, they could be used more widely in construction as an alternative to cement, with a focus on facades and surfaces. The project will involve biochar and sustainable materials researchers from across the Energy and Bioproducts Research Institute (EBRI) and the Department of Civil Engineering, working to redevelop Jesmonite materials to reduce their carbon footprint.

TECHNOLOGY

GBR ANGLIA TAKES OVERHEAD LINE MONITORING TECHNOLOGY ON TOUR (see story here)

A Greater Anglia train has been travelling on the c2c route with state-of-the-art PANDAS-V technology, which is used to monitor overhead lines. Network Rail revealed that while the technology was not currently installed on c2c and Mildmay line trains, GBR Anglia was able to deploy it on these routes by using a Greater Anglia train with PANDAS-V (developed and owned by Transmission Dynamics) on board. GBR Anglia brings c2c, Greater Anglia and Network Rail Anglia together under one unified leadership team as part of the wider journey towards GBR. Through a camera and a sensor on the roof of the train, the PANDAS-V system assesses overhead lines continuously and reports any potential faults to NR, with an exact location and a high-resolution video clip, providing engineers the information they need for proactive repair or inspection.

PRODUCT INFORMATION HUB TESTED (see story here)

Proof-of-concept tests have been completed on a new information hub, designed to allow structured sharing of construction product data across Europe. The Manufacturer's Information Hub (MIH), supported by UKRI, is a not-for-profit initiative that aims to support environmental and safety compliance and pave the way for digital product passports. The first phase was designed to demonstrate how the MIH would address industry needs and facilitate information sharing between manufacturers and information users, such as specifiers, contractors and asset owners.

HITACHI RAIL LAUNCHES MOBILITY REIMAGINED REPORT (see story here)

The report brings together insights from some of the most influential global leaders across the technology, transport and academic sectors on how mobility will evolve towards 2050, and concludes that mobility is undergoing a fundamental transformation. Rather than being viewed as a collection of different transport modes, mobility is set to be seen as a connected system. Future transport networks will increasingly be designed around seamless end-to-end journeys, enabled by artificial intelligence, digital twins, automation and connected infrastructure.

EQUIPMENT

EUROVIA TRIALS ELECTRIC PAVER (see story here)

Vinci's Eurovia Surfacing has deployed a Dynapac SD25 80Ce to resurface a section of the A128 near Brentwood for Essex Highways, in a trial with the manufacturer. It installed 240.32 tonnes of asphalt across the binder and surface courses without requiring additional charging. Having heated its electrically powered screed and installed both asphalt layers, the machine completed the operation with 57% battery capacity remaining. Powered by a 294 kWh battery, the SD25 80Ce delivers up to 235 kW through five electric motors, and can operate for up to 10 hours on a single charge, laying more than 1,000 tonnes of asphalt during a shift.

TRACKUNIT IMPROVES UNPOWERED UNIT TRACKING (see story here)

Trackunit's new battery-powered Spot S300 allows fleet owners to monitor frequently moved unpowered equipment such as trailers and containers, with upgraded capabilities. It targets equipment including trailers, containers, portable heaters, welders, and message boards. It hasn't previously been practical to wire equipment like this for data, so unpowered equipment often stays outside the connected fleet, creating a visibility gap for fleet managers. Spot S300 solve that, by enabling installation with no wiring, so installers can mount it in minutes. Activation requires only peeling off a sticker, and reporting starts almost immediately.

UNIPART RAIL HANDLERS RECEIVE NETWORK RAIL PRODUCT ACCEPTANCE (see story here)

Unipart's rail handlers have received Network Rail product acceptance. This major milestone marks a significant step forward in its ambition to being the driving force behind efficient, resilient, and sustainable supply chains for global rail infrastructure. Designed to meet the rigorous demands of modern track renewals and maintenance, Unipart's rail handlers offer an alternative approach to rail moving and handling. By achieving product acceptance, the rail handler can now be deployed across Network Rail infrastructure, delivering significant productivity improvements for its users.

NIFTYLIFT OFFERS LOW AND NARROW OPTIONS (see story here)

NiftyLift has launched a new 10m electric access platform, the HR10, in narrow and low weight versions, their first machine in the 10m class since the original HR10 was discontinued in 2015, and a new design rather than a revival. Its chassis and boom are derived from the modern HR12 family, and it shares nothing structurally with the machine whose name it inherits.

H E SERVICES TRIALS EVISION GOLF CARTS (see story here)

Excavator hirer H E Services (Plant Hire) Ltd has trialled golf carts from EVision, which aim to support travel around busy construction projects. The carts, in two and four seater versions, aim to reduce walking times while providing a cleaner and quieter alternative to traditional site transport. They are fitted with integrated roof-mounted solar panels, which continuously top up the battery throughout daylight hours, helping to maximise vehicle availability and reduce reliance on mains charging.

LIEBHERR LAUNCHES NEW RAIL EXCAVATOR (see story here)

Liebherr has launched a new 22t rail excavator, the RE 22 M Litronic, featuring a newly developed hydrostatic rail-wheel undercarriage and improved cab. It draws on its predecessor, the A 922 Rail, with components from the earlier machine including its 120kW engine. The new machine features a standard rear swing radius of 2,000mm, increasing to 2,110mm with an optional heavier counterweight package. A completely redesigned dual cab and the latest INTUSI operating concept aim to further enhance operator comfort, ergonomics and ease of use, helping to maximise efficiency on site.

MCHALE TO OFFER NEW METSO CRUSHERS (see story here)

Metso UK and Ireland distributor McHale Plant Sales has two new Lokotrack crushers available for order, with deliveries starting early next year. The two new crushers, the 70t LT400RS diesel-electric mobile impact crusher, and LT200HPX mobile cone crusher with integrated screening for aggregate production target demanding demolition and aggregate recycling applications.

MATERIALS/USES/METHODS

BOUYGUES COMPLETES TIMBER, OFFSITE SCHOOL (see story here)

The school, built for Cambrian Learning Trust and the Department for Education, will provide 600 student places, next door to a primary school, offering pupils a continuous educational journey from nursery on. The building's cross-laminated timber structure reduces embodied carbon while bringing the warmth and texture of natural timber into the school environment, and off-site manufacturing and a consistent construction approach helped minimise waste and defects on site.

MACE REUSES STEEL FOR WEST END PROJECT (see story here)

Mace Construct has completed work on 30 Duke Street St James's for GPE, using 78% recycled structural steel for the 68,000 sq ft office and retail project, sourced from reclaimed material, including from elsewhere in GPE's portfolio, saving 744t of embodied carbon. The building will itself be fully electric, futher decarbonising its operations. Other circular construction innovations used included Hydro CIRCAL 100R aluminium, marking the first UK commercial development to utilise the material, alongside ORAÉ glass manufactured from 100% recycled content. Portland stone, marble and raised access flooring were all retained and reused as part of the completed development.

HEIDELBERG SUPPLIES LOW CARBON CONCRETE IN PICCADILLY (see story here)

Heidelberg has supplied low carbon concrete, using cement decarbonised through carbon capture, and containing GGBS, for use on the Crown Estate's 33-35 Piccadilly in London. The concrete offered a 35% carbon reduction compared to standard CEM I, and marks the first time Heidelberg's evoBuild low carbon concrete, with cement decarbonised through CCS, and using low carbon GGBS have been used together in the UK.

ADDERSTONE TO REUSE MATERIALS FOR STRATA (see story here)

Adderstone Civils will reuse excavated materials on a project for Strata in Spennymoor, County Durham, covering adoptable roads, foul and surface water drainage, utilities and external works. The infrastructure works include a materials strategy focused on eliminating unnecessary material movements. Rather than importing quarried aggregate and removing excavated material from site, Adderstone is reprocessing the site's own stone into a graded Type 1 sub-base specification. Around 22,000 cubic metres of stone, some 48,000t, is being reused as well as intelligent balance on the cut and fill requirements for site fill. As a result, no virgin aggregate has been imported, avoiding an estimated 2,000 HGV movements, and embodied carbon has been reduced by 480 tonnes of CO_2e, with no arisings having gone to landfill.

NUAR MARKS FIRST YEAR WITH OS (see story here)

The National Underground Assets Register is marking a year since its operations were placed under the Ordnance Survey, with 400 asset owners now part of the register, and 3.2m km of buried assets, 80% of those known, now mapped. The NUAR platform aims to increase industry co-ordination underground and assist avoiding dangerous and costly strikes to cables and pipes. It provides instant access to a secure and standardised map of underground pipes and cables in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and has been designed to improve the efficiency of how buried infrastructure is installed,

maintained, operated and repaired. It brings together details of underground infrastructure with standardised formatting and styling, to augment existing safe digging practices. All of the electrical grid distribution network operators, and water companies, have signed up to the platform, as have 70% of local authorities and 90% of highway authorities.

FULL VENTILATION AND FIRE COMPARTMENTATION, IN A SINGLE CERTIFIED OPENING (see story here)

Sunray Engineering has certified a fully louvred fire-rated doorset, developed in response to requests from architects, delivering 35 to 45 per cent airflow while holding fire integrity for up to 90 minutes and LPS 1175 Security Rating 2 intruder resistance. It's a development that began with a request architects have been making for years: an opening that ventilates across its full face without giving up either the fire compartment or the security line. The doorset is certified for fire integrity up to 90 minutes, tested to BS EN 1634-1 and classified in accordance with EN 13501-2, and to Loss Prevention Standard LPS 1175 Issue 8 at Security Rating 2.

SIZEWELL C TO USE BRISTOL TUNNEL SEGMENT FACTORY (see story here)

Sizewell C nuclear power plant has secured planning permission for a tunnel segment factory in Avonmouth, Bristol. The plant will support 400 jobs making the 38,000 pre-cast concrete segments, as well as tunnel heads, for Sizewell C's three marine tunnels. It is bringing what was previously the former Hinkley Point C tunnel production site back into use, retaining existing infrastructure and drawing on the experience of teams that worked on the Somerset nuclear project.

NEW STANDARDS TO IMPROVE STATION DESIGN (see story here)

New Standards for station signage, navigation and tactile guidance will help passengers move around stations more easily and independently, improving accessibility and making journeys easier for everyone. The improvements form part of the latest Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) Standards updates, including changes to Standards covering stations, freight operations, signalling and workforce safety.

SUSTAINABILITY

NATURESCOT CONSULTS ON BIODIVERSITY METRIC (see story here)

NatureScot has opened a public consultation on the development of the Scottish Planning Biodiversity Metric, which will be used to demonstrate projects meet biodiversity net gain requirements. It is a requirement under Scotland's National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) that large-scale developments significantly improve biodiversity. Following an initial survey of habitats the tool will be used to calculate the value of biodiversity before development takes place. It will then let developers calculate how much habitat needs to be created or restored to replace and enhance any biodiversity lost through development.

WESTBOURNE SIGNS UP WITH MUKAWAY (see story here)

Westbourne Civil Engineering has signed up to MA EnviroTech's materials management platform MukAway, giving the contractor a single digital platform for managing surplus material, sourcing fill, booking haulage and generating compliance and carbon data on every movement. The signing follows MukAway's three-year, group-wide deal with Graham Group, and continues a period of rapid growth that has seen MukAway pass 1,000 sites and 100 companies across the UK and Ireland.

£1BN HEATWAVE HIT SPARKS RESILIENCE SPENDING CALL (see story here)

The Institution of Civil Engineers is calling on Government to commission an independent economic review to kick-start investment in making UK infrastructure more resilient to climate change. ICE said a major review of the costs and benefits of climate adaptation could have the same impact on resilience policy as the Stern Review had on cutting carbon emissions. The call is the central recommendation in its new report, *Making resilience count: The economic value of climate readiness*. ICE warns that transport, water and energy networks remain vulnerable to increasingly frequent extreme weather, as the cost of failing to adapt steadily rises.

NEW CARBON MANAGEMENT TOOL HELPS RAIL MAKE BETTER CARBON DECISIONS (see story here)

The Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) has launched the Carbon Management Tool (CMT), a rail-specific platform designed to help organisations understand, manage and reduce whole life carbon emissions from infrastructure and railway assets. Around half of the railway's greenhouse gas emissions come from the materials used to build, renew and maintain infrastructure. But carbon is often considered too late in the development of projects, when opportunities for reduction have already been missed. The CMT helps project teams assess the carbon impact of decisions earlier, compare options and identify lower-carbon approaches before they become locked into designs and delivery plans.

ECOVADIS PLATINUM FOR ALGECO UK (see story here)

Modulaire Group's Algeco UK has achieved an EcoVadis Platinum rating, placing it in the top 1% of companies assessed globally for the sustainability mark. Key initiatives by the modular solutions company that have contributed to the rating include implementing a Supply Chain Sustainability Handbook, carbon emission reduction targets validated by the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) that provide transparency on the business's pathway to net zero, and delivering a training programme in partnership with the United Nations Global Compact to provide education and set clear expectations within its supply chain.

M GROUP ANNOUNCES LAUNCH OF FIRST SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY (see story here)

Leading UK infrastructure services partner M Group has launched its first Sustainability Strategy. Published alongside its FY2026 ESG Report, the five-year strategy follows the Group's first Double Materiality Assessment, carried out with independent sustainability advisers ERM. It focuses on seven material outcomes across three pillars: Environmental Stewardship, Social Responsibility, and Trusted Operations.

TRAINING, RECRUITMENT & EMPLOYMENT

HS2 LAUNCHES NEW APPRENTICESHIP PATHWAY FOR THE UNEMPLOYED (see story here)

HS2 is launching a new fast-track training programme to help unemployed West Midlands residents secure a construction apprenticeship on Britain's new railway. The programme is being led by HS2's West Midlands construction partners, Balfour Beatty VINCI (BBV) – who are delivering the 90km section of the railway between Warwickshire, Birmingham and Staffordshire, and Mace Dragados – who are building Curzon Street Station. The two JV'S are teaming up to deliver a new six-week general operatives training programme, which will equip participants with the skills and health and safety accreditation they need to start working in construction.

COSTAIN WELCOMES NEXT GENERATION OF TALENT (see story here)

Costain is welcoming a record number of apprentices in 2026 to support its delivery of critical national infrastructure across the UK. 50 apprentices is double last year's intake in response to growth in its volume of long-term infrastructure projects and commitment to building a growing pipeline of talent, offering them rewarding and fulfilling long-term careers. The hiring activity is taking place across all of Costain's infrastructure sectors and in a variety of disciplines. Similarly, Amey welcomed 180 graduates, apprentices, degree apprentices and placement students (here).

ECITB SUPPORTS ROBOTICS TRAINING IN CUMBRIA (see story here)

The Engineering Construction Industry Training Board has awarded £250k in funding to the Cumbria Robotics Operations Skills Centre (CROSS), opening later this year, to build skills in robotics for the nuclear and clean energy sector. Plans for the centre of excellence were first announced in April, with the collaborative venture involving the UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA), National College for Nuclear and Clean Energy (NCfN&CE), the Robotics and Artificial Intelligence Collaboration (RAICo), Sellafield and its supply chain, and Lakes College.

HEATHROW THIRD RUNWAY TARGETS NEET CRISIS WITH 5,000 YOUTH PLACES (see story here)

Heathrow has pledged to create 5,000 apprenticeships and training opportunities for young people as part of plans to build a third runway. The airport has also launched a new Infrastructure Skills Council to examine how major UK projects can help tackle the growing number of young people not in education, employment or training. The council will bring together contractors, employers, trade unions, colleges and training providers to identify clearer routes into construction, engineering and other infrastructure careers.

MILLER KNIGHT EXPANDS APPRENTICE TRAINING (see story here)

Miller Knight has expanded its apprentice training academy, aiming to increase intake to 12 apprentices at a time, with 27 expected to complete the programme each year. Based at the fire protection specialist contractor's Mansfield office, the academy provides dedicated facilities for training and developing its people, giving trainees the technical skills and practical experience needed to progress their careers.

NEW WEST MIDLANDS SKILLS CENTRE OPENS (see story here)

A new Skills Centre, established at The Hill Group's City Centre South regeneration project in Coventry, has opened, offering training, apprenticeships and upskilling, and welcomed its first learners. CCS will see large parts of Coventry rebuilt, to deliver new homes and a new commercial quarter, in partnership with Homes England, West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and Coventry City Council. WMCA developed the new facility in partnership with training provider The Skills Centre, working with the CITB, to offer local people a free pathway into construction careers through industry-leading training programmes, apprenticeship opportunities, as well as providing upskilling opportunities for those already in the sector.

BALFOUR BEATTY TO CREATE 2,000 JOBS OVER TWO YEARS (see story here)

The construction giant has unveiled plans to increase its UK workforce by 2,000 over the next two years, as it scales up to deliver the country's next generation of critical infrastructure. Early-career talent will be a major part of the recruitment drive, with half of the new intake expected to come through areas including including apprenticeships, graduate programmes, internships and trainee positions.

BUILDERS FLEE SITE DURING IMMIGRATION RAID (see story here)

Construction workers have been filmed fleeing a major site in South London last week after the Home Office staged an immigration enforcement raid. Footage shows a stream of workers running into nearby woodland to escape the authorities. Others can also be seen hiding in concrete formwork in a bid to evade officers. The site is in Crayford where Carey London is main contractor, who said: "We are aware of the recent Home Office immigration enforcement operation at the Crayford construction site. We can confirm that none of the individuals encountered by the Home Office were employed by Carey London Ltd, the individuals concerned were engaged through the subcontracting chain. We take responsible employment and ethical labour practices seriously. We conduct right to work checks on all our employees and contractually require all subcontractors to carry out the same".

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

TRU TO LAUNCH £270K COMMUNITY FUND FOR 2026 (see story here)

The Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU) has launched its Community Fund for the third year running, revealing that communities would benefit from a £270k funding boost. Community groups, schools and charities located within five km of the Transpennine route have the opportunity to secure funding for projects that make a lasting difference in their areas, as

part of TRU's commitment to supporting the communities it operates in, helping deliver projects that improve local spaces, create opportunities to develop skills and access employment, and support areas facing socio-economic challenges.

RAIL SAFETY EDUCATION ADDED TO THE CURRICULUM IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS (see story here)

With all secondary schoolchildren in England receiving life-saving rail safety education as the subject becomes a mandatory part of the national curriculum, Network Rail and Southeastern, working together as the integrated South Eastern Railway, have introduced virtual reality headsets as part of innovating rail safety lessons for children. They show different railway scenarios involving trespassing, level crossing misuse from a first person perspective, giving a stark reminder of the consequences and that that it is never worth the risk.

PRISONERS HELP BUILD NEW MODULAR JAIL CELLS (see story here)

Inmates are helping to build new "rapid deployment cells" at Kirklevington Grange Prison in North Yorkshire., with more than 152 new prison places currently under construction at the site led by modular construction specialist Reds10. Two prisoners are working on the foundations for the project while inmates on temporary release are also working with Reds10 to help manufacture the cells offsite. The accommodation will be created from 181 modules, with more than 85% completed off-site.

SPRINGFIELD SEALS DEAL TO HOUSE SCOTTISH GRID CONTRACTORS (see story here)

Springfield Properties has signed its first main works agreement under a deal to build homes for workers delivering SSEN Transmission's electricity grid upgrades across northern Scotland, covering 39 furnished and serviced homes. Under the arrangement, SSEN will fund work in progress on the homes, covering £70m of working capital across the programme. Springfield will receive a significant payment on handover, followed by monthly rental income over the lease, for which they will furnish, clean and service the properties, as well as cover electricity costs throughout the rental period. At the end of the lease, around half of the homes are expected to be sold to local councils at half their market value, with the discount recovered through higher rental payments during the lease. Springfield will retain options over the remaining homes.

NETWORK RAIL SHEEP-GRAZING PROJECT BEARS FRUIT FOR PERTH FOOD BANK (see story here)

An orchard uncovered in Network Rail's recent sheep-grazing biodiversity project is helping feed local families, with volunteers gathering hundreds of pieces of fruit for Perth and Kinross Foodbank. In May, NR brought 25 sheep to a lineside site which had become overgrown with dense vegetation including giant hogweed, as a natural approach to control invasive plant species and improve the environment. The sheep have transformed the space and revealed a long-hidden orchard that has produced a bumper harvest

donated to the Foodbank and site neighbours Willowgate Activity Centre, turning the biodiversity project's success into a direct benefit for the local community.

QTS AND NETWORK RAIL TRANSFORM MUCH-LOVED COMMUNITY HUB (see story here)

QTS has teamed up with Network Rail to deliver a programme of improvement works at Leithland Neighbourhood Centre in Pollok, Glasgow, completed at no cost to the centre, making it safer and more welcoming for local people of all ages. They carried out a range of repairs, replacing damaged internal fire doors, repairing and repainting external windows, and replacing downpipes and facades, as well as tidying up the outdoor spaces. QTS also created a dedicated green space where the centre can grow their own fruit and vegetables, planting a selection of fruit trees and building planters for future crops.

HEALTH, SAFETY & WELLBEING

LIGHTHOUSE SOUNDS ALARM OVER WORKERS IN CRISIS (see story here)

Construction charity Lighthouse has launched an appeal for £200,000 in funding to help meet record demand for its service from construction workers in crisis, seeing a surge in families reaching out for financial, emotional and physical wellbeing support, with enquiries up 51%. Food deliveries are up 65% and the charity has funded over 7000 counselling sessions, providing immediate support to those who are struggling.

WORKER DIED UNDER TWO TONNES OF SOIL IN TRENCH COLLAPSE (see story here)

Two construction companies and a contracts manager have been sentenced following the death of a labourer after a 10ft deep trench collapsed on him, covering him in two tonnes of soil. A health and safety inspection found there were no supports to the trench and excavated soil had been deposited unsafely close to it.

LABOURER FALLS THROUGH UNPROTECTED STAIRWELL OPENING (see story here)

A house builder has been fined after a labourer sustained serious spinal injuries after he stepped backwards and fell through an opening intended for a staircase that had not yet been installed. An HSE inspection found it was a wholly avoidable incident caused by basic failures in planning and supervision. The stairwell opening was not adequately protected, and simple measures such as securing the scaffold boards or installing edge protection would have prevented him from falling.

FIRMS FINED AFTER FALLING WINDOW KILLS PASSER-BY (see story here)

Two companies have been fined after a 130kg window unit fell 300ft from the 26th floor of a luxury development in London killing a coach driver on his break as he walked below. At an early stage of the design process, the windows had been changed from opening inwards to opening outwards, meaning if they detached, they would fall onto a pedestrian area, with safety reliant on the performance of a single restrictor, held by a single screw, with none of the fittings confirmed by their manufacturers as suitable for the bespoke curved penthouse windows. In an earlier incident, a window left open in windy conditions fell from the same penthouses during construction, nearly hitting two workers, but key noted areas of concern were not followed up effectively. It was only after the fatal incident that windows were redesigned to open inward.

CORPORATE & COMMERCIAL

TOP 100 CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES 2026 (see story here)

For anyone interested in all matters financial, a list of the top 100 Construction Companies for 2026 has been published, slicing and dicing all the data that matters.

HMRC issues warning over construction payslip fraud (see story here)

Site workers are being warned about growing levels of payslip fraud as HM Revenue and Customs cranks-up the number of criminals arrested and taxes recovered. Manchester and Liverpool are being targeted by HMRC in a bid to prevent the fraud which sees criminal groups run payroll or umbrella companies that sit in the supply chain between the worker and the construction site they work on, deducting tax, NIC and Construction Industry Scheme (CIS) contributions from workers' pay but fail to pass them on to HMRC. Workers often do not realise this is happening, as their payslip or Pay Deduction Statement can still show the deductions as if they had been paid.

AVISON YOUNG LOSES BATTLE OVER BUCKINGHAM OVERPAYMENTS (see story here)

Consultant Avison Young has lost a High Court battle to overturn an £8.7m compensation award after over-certifying payments to collapsed contractor Buckingham Group on a major Coventry earthworks job, where Buckingham was engaged to excavate, treat and reposition around 5 million cu m of material to form an environmental bund. Avison Young was appointed as NEC project manager and supervisor but was found to have repeatedly overstated Buckingham's progress when assessing monthly payment applications.

ROOFING DIRECTOR FINED FOR HIDING MOBILE DURING BID RIG PROBE (see story here)

The Competition and Markets Authority has fined a contractor and two staff members for hiding a mobile phone and documents during an inspection, part of a CMA investigation into 12 construction companies suspected of bid rigging on roofing work for school improvement jobs. During the inspection a work mobile phone and paperwork were removed from the company's premises to prevent the evidence from being found by CMA investigators. The items were handed over later on the same day but concealing evidence, even temporarily, risked loss of relevant information, wasting valuable investigative time and resource.

CONSTRUCTION LABOUR RATES HIT RECORD HIGH (see story here)

Average earnings for self-employed tradespeople rose to an all-time high of £1,110 per week during August. Latest research from the industry's largest payroll firm Hudson Contract said this represents a 3.1% increase on July rates and 4.5% on the same month last year. Plumbing led the increases, with rates up 10.4% month-on-month to £1,348. Joinery rose 8.9% to £1,247, while steel and timber frame contracting climbed 7.6% to £1,102.

LEGISLATION AND REGULATION

BUILDING SAFETY GATEWAY 2 APPLICATIONS SOAR AS LEVY LOOMS (see story here)

The Building Safety Regulator is facing a fresh surge in workload after Gateway 2 project applications jumped sharply during August. Latest BSR figures show 1,654 Gateway 2 applications are now live, an increase of more than 100 in a single month. The regulator said it would closely monitor whether the rise continues. The spike comes ahead of the new Building Safety Levy taking effect on 1 October, which BSR believes may be encouraging developers to get applications into the system early.

DEVELOPERS TO GET POWER TO BUILD OWN GRID CONNECTIONS (see story here)

Developers will be given greater powers to build their own electricity grid connections under a major shake-up aimed at breaking one of the biggest blockages holding up construction projects. The Government has launched Great British Grid as a new publicly-owned infrastructure investor within Great British Energy alongside plans to widen self-build rights for grid connections. The reforms could open a significant new market for contractors as developers of data centres, industrial plants and other power-hungry schemes are allowed to procure and deliver more of their own connection infrastructure rather than wait for network companies.

SECTOR NEWS

RAIL

NEXUS UNVEILS METRO TO WASHINGTON PROPOSALS (see story here)

Nexus has unveiled the latest proposals for the planned 13km extension of the Tyne and Wear Metro to Washington, with three new stations – located at Follingsby, Washington North and Washington South – as well as seeing the line cross the River Wear via the Victoria viaduct, travel towards and under the A19, and connect with the current network at South Hylton.

NEW RAILWAY STATION IN THE LEIGHTON AREA 'A REALISTIC OPTION' (see story here)

Cheshire East Council is to carry out further work to explore how transport connectivity in and around the Leighton area of Crewe could be improved. The council recently completed a small study to assess whether a new railway station in the Leighton area is a realistic option, which found it should be considered as one of a range of transport options for the area.

THOUSANDS HAVE THEIR SAY ON MIDLANDS RAIL HUB PROPOSALS (see story here)

The eight-week consultation invited members of the public, businesses, passengers and other stakeholders to comment on early proposals for upgrades to the railway between Bordesley and Birmingham Moor Street. More than 3,500 responses were received during the consultation, with people also engaging with the Midlands Rail Hub Alliance through a series of public events, an online webinar and meetings with local organisations and stakeholders.

RIA SETS OUT RAIL SUPPLY SECTORS 'ASKS' OF GOVERNMENT AHEAD OF BUDGET (see story here)

The Railway Industry Association (RIA) has published its priorities for the October Budget, calling on the Government to take action to treat rail as an engine of jobs and economic growth, to plan now for clearly rising passenger and freight demand, to do more to provide a stable long-term investment pipeline, and to accelerate unlocking new sources of public and private investment into the railways. It said these measures would strengthen network resilience, and give the supply chain the certainty it crucially needed to invest.

SEPTEMBER ISSUE OF RAIL DIRECTOR

Is here, majoring on stations this issue.

TFL LAUNCHES WEST LONDON ORBITAL CONSULTATION (see story here)

Transport for London (TfL) is inviting Londoners to have their say on plans for a proposed new London Overground service, which would link Hendon and Hounslow. The local government body is running an eight-week consultation from Wednesday 23 September until Wednesday 18 November 2026. It will invite feedback on proposals to create an 18.5km passenger route on rail lines that are currently only used for freight across west and northwest London.

WESTERN GATEWAY STB PUBLISHES REFRESHED STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PLAN (see story here)

The Western Gateway Sub-National Transport Body (STB) has published a refreshed Strategic Investment Plan (SIP), which it says has been updated to reflect changes in the political landscape since the original SIP's publication under a conservative Government. The refreshed plan identifies 53 regionally significant transport projects recommended for funding prioritisation over the next decade. Western Gateway STB said the projects would be delivered by the organisations responsible for each scheme, with its team playing a key role in bringing together stakeholders and supporting scheme implementation.

UK RAIL – DRIVING GROWTH AND JOBS ACROSS THE COUNTRY (see story here)

The Railway Industry Association (RIA) has called on the Government to unlock rail's potential to support economic growth, create skilled jobs, and drive investment across the country, saying that rail connects people with jobs and opportunities, supports businesses across the UK, and can help unlock investment and regeneration around stations. It added that the rail industry already makes a significant contribution to the UK economy, supporting more than 640k jobs, including more than 275k in the rail supply chain. It generates around £41bn in economic value and £14bn in tax revenues each year, while jobs in the rail supply chain are almost 30 per cent more productive than the UK average.

TFL PUBLISHES UPDATED INTERCHANGE GUIDELINES (see story here)

Transport for London (TfL) has published updated *Interchange Best Practice Guidelines*, providing the latest guidance to help boroughs and other partners deliver high-quality transport interchanges across the capital. The revised guidance – designed to help planners, developers and transport operators – reflects changes in policy and best practice since the previous edition was published in 2021 with a renewed focus on inclusivity, safety, accessibility, and the quality of the area around stations and transport hubs.

HIGHWAYS

ROAD BUILDERS URGE RETHINK OVER £428M RIS3 ROAD CUTS (see story here)

Civil engineering contractors have hit back at plans to strip £428m from the RIS3 roads programme and axe two major schemes. The Civil Engineering Contractors Association is urging Government to mothball the A38 Derby Junctions and A46 Newark Bypass jobs rather than kill them off completely. Ministers want to cut RIS3 capital spending over the first four years of the 2026-31 investment period, with the two enhancement schemes in the firing line and a further 2% squeeze proposed across other capital budgets. CECA accepts that departments are under pressure to help fund the Government's Defence Investment Plan and said targeting road enhancement spending was understandable, but warned cancelling Derby and Newark outright would throw away future traffic and economic benefits.

DATA CENTRES

DATA CENTRE PLAN UNVEILED FOR FORMER IBM SITE (see story here)

Plans have been submitted to transform part of Greenock's former IBM site into a major data centre development. Slate Island Developments has applied to Inverclyde Council for the development at Spango Valley, off Inverkip Road. It is now seeking to regenerate part of the former technology and industrial site for modern digital infrastructure. Indicative proposals include four data centre buildings providing around 80,000 sq m of floorspace, alongside landscaping, parking and sustainable drainage.

OTHER

PLANS LODGED FOR DEVELOPMENT AT BIGGLESWADE INDUSTRIAL SCHEME (see story here)

Tritax Big Box Developments has submitted plans for a fourth phase of development at its industrial and logistics scheme in Biggleswade, Bedfordshire. The application at Symmetry Park Biggleswade features four new B8 logistics units with a combined gross internal area of approximately 1.79 million sq ft. It has the backing of an occupier-led agreement for the largest of the units – a circa 1.41 million sq ft building designed to meet their specific requirements.

PLAN LODGED TO TURN BT TOWER INTO 400-ROOM HOTEL (see story here)

Plans have been lodged for a conversion of London's landmark BT Tower into a 400-room hotel and visitor attraction. US hotel giant MCR is proposing to overhaul the Grade II-listed Fitzrovia tower, its podium and adjoining Howland Building, retaining 78% of the existing structures by volume. The scheme would create hotel rooms across the complex, including bedrooms within the tower itself.

STOFORD/SEVERN TRENT DEVELOPMENT ARM UNVEIL PLANS FOR SCHEME (see story here)

Stoford has partnered with Midlands Land Portfolio, the property development arm of Severn Trent, to bring forward plans for a 660,000 sq ft manufacturing-led development in Wolverhampton, with the proposed creation of up to four build-to-suit units on a 39-acre allocated employment site off Junction 2 of the M54, which will be known as Stoford Park i54. Units will range in size from 50,000 to 500,000-plus sq ft, aimed at occupiers seeking modern manufacturing facilities on a pre-let or pre-sale basis.

TRENDS

HOUSING SLUMP SEES OUTPUT FALL AT FASTER PACE (see story here)

The continuing slump in the residential sector saw the bellwether S&P Global UK Construction Purchasing Managers' Index drop to 44.3 in August from 44.7 in July. Buyers reported below the neutral 50.0 value for the twentieth successive month amid subdued demand conditions and a reduction in new projects – particularly house building starts. All three sub-sectors recorded a reduction in construction activity during August, but housing was the only category to register a faster pace of contraction than in July.

HOUSING ACTIVITY DIVES 5% IN JULY AS CONSTRUCTION STAGNATES (see story here)

Private house building slumped nearly 5% in July as weakening new work left construction output bumping along the bottom.The sharp fall in housing activity in July, dragged total new work down 0.4% with only infrastructure showing signs of growth. A 0.8% rise in repair and maintenance, historically an erratic figure in the Government official data, was enough to offset most of the decline, leaving overall construction output just 0.1% higher in July.

THOSE WE HAVE LOST (AND SOMETIMES REGAINED)

BRICKWORK SPECIALIST HARLEQUIN FALLS INTO ADMINISTRATION (see story here)

Ascot-based brickwork specialist Harlequin Brickwork has fallen into administration after more than 15 years in business. Harlequin was a sizeable brickwork, masonry and scaffolding specialist operating on major residential schemes across London and the South East. Recent accounts showed turnover dropping from £18.5m in 2022 to £10.5m in 2023. Harlequin built up a track record on several high-profile schemes including Berkeley Homes' One Tower Bridge, Kew Bridge and Brentford Football Stadium.

TORSION CONSTRUCTION OWED SUPPLIERS £15M (see story here)

Torsion Construction owed hundreds of suppliers at least £15.6m when it went into administration in July, despite the efforts to minimise the impact on suppliers by organising direct payments to subbies by clients as the company's money troubles grew. Torsion was sunk by a combination of rising costs and a slow down in construction activity. It had racked-up losses of £847k from a turnover of £78m in 2026 compared to a pre-tax profit of £497k from a turnover of £165m in 2025.

HELIX CONSTRUCT FILES ADMINISTRATION NOTICE (see story here)

Building contractor Helix Construct has filed a notice of intention to appoint administrators. The Newbury-based firm employs more than 40 staff and specialises in affordable housing, education, care and commercial projects across London and the south of England. Accounts reveal the business has been under growing cash and profitability pressure, while auditors raised concerns over valuation and profit recognition on several contracts. For the 18 months to June 2025, turnover reached £40m compared with £21m in the previous 12-month financial year, but Helix fell to a £182k pre-tax loss from a £542k profit previously.

TORSION PROJECTS FILES ADMINISTRATION NOTICE (see story here)

Another part of the Torsion Group is set to follow the main construction arm into administration, with Torsion Projects filing a notice of intention to appoint an administrator. Latest filed accounts for Torsion Projects for the year to December 31 2024 show an annual turnover of £47m generating a pre-tax profit of £505k. The company specialises in the construction of care homes, retirement living and residential projects with a large amount of work for sister company Torsion Care.

GROUNDWORKS FIRM WENT UNDER OWING SUPPLIERS £4M (see story here)

House building groundworks specialist Avtar Construction went into administration owing more than 250 subcontractors and suppliers £4.4m. Avtar worked for regional offices of major house builders like Vistry, Persimmon and BarrattRedrow turning over around £20m last year, and was hit by a string of bad debts culminating in a loss of £730k during its last financial year.