August 2026

INNOVATION

CONNECTED PLACES SEEKS SMES FOR DIESEL-FREE PROJECT (see story here)

Innovation agency Connected Places Catapult is seeking SME developers of diesel free construction tools, giving them support to deploy these in partnership with Costain and Anglian Water. The programme has been established to provide evidence on on-site performance. Up to four successful applicants will receive up to £60,000 each to trial their solution over a four-month period. The programme will give them access to live infrastructure sites, working alongside Anglian and Costain through the Strategic Pipeline Alliance.

TECHNOLOGY

TRIMBLE HELPS ENSURE EARTHWORKS GO TO PLAN (see story here)

Trimble has launched software to connect its modelling software with earthworks positioning systems, making it easier to implement civil engineering plans. The new software, SketchUp Pro Civil Contractor, targets contractors performing earthwork, grading and utility construction. It aims to gives users without deep 3D modeling skills a fast, intuitive way to create 3D earthwork models in Trimble SketchUp and bring them into Trimble Siteworks and the Trimble Earthworks grade control platform. This connected 3D-to-field workflow, Trimble says, carries a single digital model from design through layout, construction and verification, reducing rework and improving accuracy.

SELLAFIELD ENGINEERS PLAN DECOMMISSIONING IN THE ROUND (see story here)

AtkinsRéalis has helped nuclear engineers at Sellafield implement an immersive environment for decommissioning planning, using technology from Igloo Vision. Igloo's 360° immersive technology is designed to accommodate ten users at a time. Installed at the West Cumbrian nuclear site's Robotics and Artificial Intelligence Collaboration (RAICo1) facility, it gives the specialists a way to plan and deliver decommissioning work more safely, bringing together remotely operated robotics systems and data visualisation in a single interactive space. It will reduce time spent in hazardous environments by up to 40%, using robotics and live data streaming to enable remote operations and monitoring. A team planning work in a restricted area can walk the route virtually, with live imagery from robotic platforms on site displayed as conditions change. The facility also provides a dedicated space for collaborative operations planning, enabling multidisciplinary teams to test approaches and respond quickly to emerging issues.

PROLEC JOINS TRIMBLE ECOSYSTEM (see story here)

UK excavator safety specialist Prolec's virtual barrier system SiteGuard Pro will be available as part of Trimble Earthworks' grade control platform. Trimble is part of a wider digital construction ecosystem, giving planners, surveyors, designers, safety managers and operators a shared site view that connects design data, real-world conditions and machine activity across the job site. SiteGuard Pro halts heavy plant machinery when pre-programmed virtual barriers are at risk of being breached.

EQUIPMENT

ALTRAD TO MERGE GENERATION HIRE & SALES AND TRAD UK BUSINESSES (see story here)

Has confirmed plans to merge Generation Hire & Sales and Trad UK into a single business. Generation Hire & Sales is a provider of non-mechanical access, scaffolding, fencing, and groundwork equipment, operating a nationwide network of 36 branches across the UK and Ireland, supplying equipment for domestic, commercial and industrial construction projects. Headquartered in Dartford, Trad UK is a provider of scaffolding and construction safety equipment, offering innovative access, fall protection, temporary roofing, and containment systems nationwide. From 1 September 2026, the pair will operate as a single entity, Altrad Hire & Sales.

STEVENS EQUIPMENT RENTAL TRIALS HYDROGEN ADD ON POWER (see story here)

Has trialed the use of Ultimate Cell hydrogen retrofit power systems, designed to boost the efficiency of conventional diesel engines. SER trialed the system over nine months, on a 35t Volvo excavator and an 18t loading shovel. The results were monitored using the excavator manufacturer's telematics, starting with a three month baseline prior to installatian and six months of monitoring post-installation. During the six-month active monitoring, the excavator showed consistent fuel savings of over 25% in peak conditions. The loading shovel trial showed savings of around 10%.

ABAX ADDS AI CAMERA MONITORING (see story here)

The fleet management platform has launched Vision AI, a single or dual camera system using AI to capture accident related video and monitor risky driver behaviour. The system, using in-vehicle edge processing, combines high definition cameras with AI incident detection, to spot accident footage or to identify risky driver behaviour, and to issue audio alerts. The system can detect hazards and risky behaviors, providing real-time in-cab alerts to actively support safer driving. It automatically uploads event footage to the cloud for remote retrieval, with no SD card access required. As part of ABAX's wider platform, it seamlessly connects video clips with trips, drivers, and route.

NIFTYLIFT ADDS HYDROGEN OPTION AND AVAILABLE AS A RETROFIT (see story here)

Is launching a new fuel cell powered version of its HR21 access platform with the hydrogen electric option available for retrofit on two existing models. The HR21E is a 20.8m electric access platform. Its new hydrogen electric variant is the HR21 H2E, which uses fuel cells to charge the batteries on board. The approach, which doesn't impact the base machine, allows for retrofits to existing units of the platform, along with the HR15E and HR17E.

FIRST LIEBHERR 300-TONNE 90M BOOM FOR FORSYTH'S (see story here)

Has taken delivery of the first Liebherr LTM 1300-6.4 in Scotland. The long boom will aid work on tower crane erection and wind turbine maintenance. The company now operates two 300t Liebherr cranes equipped with 90m main booms, targetting a wide range of applications, including renewable energy and infrastructure projects. The LTM 1300-6.4 features an eight-section 90m telescopic boom that can be carried complete on public roads while maintaining a 12t axle load. A range of jib and boom configurations enables a maximum hook height of 120 metres and a radius of up to 90 metres,

FINNING POWER HEADS SOUTH (see story here)

Finning Power has opened a new depot in Ashford, Kent, bringing its power solutions and support closer to customers in London and the South East than is currently offered through its Cannock, Staffordshire, HQ. As construction investment remains strong in the region, temporary power is needed to support commissioning, maintenance, upgrades and operational continuity.

CLEVELAND GROUP LAUNCHES DONCASTER DEPOT (see story here)

The north east-headquartered group has continued its rapid national expansion with the opening of a new site in Doncaster, following the opening of a new five-acre depot in Newport, South Wales, in 2025, and building its other existing locations in Middlesbrough, Ashby de la Zouch and Cambuslang. Based in Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland Group comprises Cleveland Containers, Cleveland Modular and Cleveland Hire. The additional space will be particularly valuable for Cleveland Modular, enabling larger projects to be planned and prepared on site.

BLADE PICKS BÖCKER (https://www.theconstructionindex.co.uk/news/view/blade-picks-bcker)

Blade Lifting and Logistics have placed a multi-unit order for long and light Böcker cranes, and taken delivery of the first, an AK 48 with a 3t, 49m boom. The cranes offer outstanding speed and state of the art control technology. A powerful hydraulic system guarantees rapid assembly, a hook speed of 60 m/min, and a high working speed.

RIDGWAY ON A ROLL WITH JCB (see story here)

Ridgway Rentals has ordered three of JCB's brand new VM118D soil compactors, along with 220X tracked excavators and articulated booms, joining the Oswestry-based fleet of more than 400 JCB machines. The new machines have gone straight out to hire to Ridgway's customers which span the quarrying, waste and recycling, large infrastructure, housebuilding, events and agriculture sectors.

EAST WEST USE THERMALDRONES TO IMPROVE WILDLIFE PROTECTION see story here

East West Railway Company (EWR Co) has adopted an innovative drone-led approach to its survey work to better protect wildlife and improve efficiency during archaeological investigations for the rail project connecting Oxford, Milton Keynes, Bedford and Cambridge. Developed alongside EWR Co's surveying contractor Kier, the new methodology uses thermal imaging drone surveys for large sites, supported by environmental professionals to identify and protect ground-nesting birds before archaeological trenching begins. The approach enables environmentally sensitive areas to be accurately mapped, allowing works to progress safely in unaffected locations while ensuring nesting birds and their habitats remain protected.

MATERIALS/USES/METHODS

UNIVERSAL SIGNS AGREEMENT FOR U-CROSS ROLLOUT (see story here)

Universal Signalling has signed an agreement with Network Rail, supported by Transport for Wales (TfW), for the implementation of U-Cross technology across the full 96 miles of the Heart of Wales line. The deal covers deployment to more than 100 user-worked crossings on the route, and full system support through to the end of the current control period, following the conclusion of a successful trial installation in Q4 2025. The rollout will deliver a significant upgrade in safety, efficiency and user experience for communities along one of the UK's most rural and iconic railway lines. Once implemented, U-Cross will provide signallers with accurate train arrival time information and positive clearance confirmation, enabling them to allow crossing users to cross promptly when safe to do so, drastically reducing long waiting times sometimes experienced.

ENVA RECYCLES FRIDGES FOR CONSTRUCTION (see story here)

The specialist recycler has launched a new plastic compound, White HIPS-8513, recycled from refrigerators, for use in construction applications. Applications include piping and ducting, ventilation components, access panels and loft hatches. It is a high-quality recycled high impact polystyrene (HIPS) compound containing 93% post-consumer recycled content, delivering the consistent colour, physical performance and dependable long-term supply demanded by today's construction product manufacturers.

GRAMM BARRIERS JOIN GCRE BENEFITS SCHEME (see story here)

Working with Turkish manufacturer HATKO, Gramm have developed new acoustic panels designed to cut noise and reduce carbon emissions. Made from recycled rubber car tyres, the system has been developed to reduce noise generated by rail traffic, as well as cut rail industry emissions. The high-density barriers are being showcased at GCRE to demonstrate to rail and transport industry customers the commercial features of the new system, acting as a sound absorber for trackside rail noise as well as having wider application for road and industrial use. The product has been installed at GCRE as part of the Bronze Tier of the GCRE Benefits Scheme.

GRAHAM SIGNS UP WITH MUKAWAY (see story here)

Has signed a three year deal with materials management platform MukAway, one of the biggest deals in the platform's history, to be Graham's 'number one solution' for managing its materials strategy across its sites. The volumes involved were

central to the deal. The infrastructure portfolio of Graham across the UK and Ireland moves earth at scale, including some of the UK's nationally significant infrastructure projects, and MukAway's ability to manage that volume of material movement efficiently, transparently, and with full visibility was a decisive factor in the contractor choosing the platform.

RECYCLED GLASS PANEL HOMES GET GO AHEAD (see story here)

VASO Global has received approval to build four homes and a home working space near Dumfries, using panels made from recycled glass. The project aims to show that the panels can efficiently deliver affordable, low energy cost, low carbon homes which are efficient to keep cool in summer and warm in winter. The panels will be manufactured and constructed off-site at the company's new 60,000-square-feet manufacturing site at Irongray Park, Dumfries, flat-packed, and reassembled on site.

SUSTAINABILITY

PEATLAND RESTORATION PROJECT BOOSTS WILDLIFE AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE (see story here)

Network Rail, in partnership with Forth Rivers Trust and NatureScot, has completed a major project to restore 273 hectares of peatland at Knoxfauld Farm north of Dunblane, to support flood management, improve wildlife habitats and increase climate resilience. Specialist teams worked o restore the site by blocking drainage channels and reshaping parts of the landscape, helping to retain more water and restore natural peatland processes Over the next 100 years, it is expected to store around 40,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide, while providing valuable habitat for wildlife and helping to slow the flow of water through the landscape during periods of heavy rainfall. The project forms part of Network Rail's wider efforts to tackle climate change and reduce the potential risk of flooding on the railway.

NETWORK RAIL AND NATIONAL RAILWAY MUSEUM UNVEIL SUMMER RAIL GARDEN (see story here)

Network Rail has unveiled a garden installation at the National Railway Museum in York, giving visitors the chance to learn more about how increasingly hot and dry weather is affecting Britain's railway. The free-to-visit museum is now home to Network Rail's 'Summer Rail Garden'. Originally displayed at London Victoria station, the installation helps bring to life the challenges that extreme weather can create for the railway, and some of the measures being taken to help keep passengers and freight moving safely and reliably.

Grayson upgrades green certification (see story here)

The construction supplier has achieved ISO 14068 carbon neutrality certification, after working to reduce waste and increasing renewable energy generation, replacing PAS 2060 with more rigorous international framework requiring organisations to measure, reduce and offset emissions using independently verified methodologies. Grayson achieved the certification after investing in reducing waste and increasing renewable energy generation, investing in solar energy, battery storage, lower-carbon logistics and a range of initiatives designed to reduce its environmental impact. It has also developed products to help contractors improve on-site sustainability.

FPS BASELINES FOUNDATION CARBON (see story here)

The Federation of Piling Specialists has completed an extensive review of foundation carbon emissions, creating a baseline from 63 projects that can be used to assess progress on decarbonisation. The data shows that FPS members generated approximately 330,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO_2e) on projects during 2025, associated with a combined turnover of £618 million. The trade association said this represents a significant first for the UK construction sector, establishing a credible baseline against which future performance and progress in reducing embodied carbon can be assessed.

PLASTERBOARD MANUFACTURER CUTS CARBON (see story here)

Drywall manufacturer Siniat has demonstrated a 5% cut in carbon intensity of its products, after a £170m investment in its Bristol and Ferrybridge sites, part of a programme by parent Etex to reduce Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions by 35%, through a combination of actions including increased use of recycled materials and a zero waste to landfill pledge. The investment allowed Siniat to retire older equipment and take advantage of the latest technology to achieve improved thermal performance and a reduction in energy intensity per tonne of product. The carbon intensity data is reflected in verified Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs), covering more than 86% of Siniat products, enabling specifiers, contractors and architects to incorporate accurate sustainability reporting into their projects.

SPEEDY APPROVES SYNTECH BIOFUEL (see story here)

Speedy Hire has approved Syntech's ASB B100, a UK-sourced 100% waste vegetable oil based biofuel, for use across its full range, meaning customers can benefit from full fuel duty relief, as well as cutting carbon emissions. The approval comes after extensive trials across the hirer's Stage III and Stage V generators which demonstrated that Syntech ASB performs in line with conventional EN590 diesel, with no loss of performance, no operational issues and no impact on SCR or DPF functionality. The only equipment adaptation required was the replacement of standard cellulose fuel filters with B100-compatible alternatives.

MCALPINE REPORTS SUSTAINABILITY SUCCESS (see story here)

Sir Robert McAlpine has reported on the results of a five year sustainability strategy, showing a 33% reduction in carbon emissions and that 98% of waste materials were diverted from landfill. In the 2020-2025 period covered, the contractor baselined its Scope 1, 2 and 3 carbon emissions, and introduced carbon benchmarking across projects. It rolled out Carbon Literacy training; expanded renewable energy use; developed Carbon Minimum Standards; and secured validation of its emissions targets from the Science Based Targets initiative. By 2025, 92% of its electricity came from renewable tariffs and

45% of the concrete used across the business was lower embodied carbon, exceeding a 30% target. It also became the first Tier 1 contractor to achieve PAS 2080 certification across its entire business.

ENVIROCALL DECONTAMINATES WITH SUNLIGHT (see story here)

The asbestos removal specialist will power its 19 decontamination units with solar power, supplied by D G Electrical Services. The decontamination units (DCUs) consist of a dirty area, where operatives enter from the asbestos work zone and remove contaminated clothes and equipment; a hot and cold water shower to wash away fibres; and a clear area, where workers get dry and dressed in clean clothing. Envirocall and D G Electrical worked together to develop the solar powered DCUs, aiming to be able to work without a grid connection.

ORGANISATIONS SIGN JOINT STATEMENT CALLING FOR URGENT ACTION ON TRANSPORT (see story here)

A multi-sector coalition of more than 50 organisations representing public transport, walking, cycling, shared transport, climate, clean air, health, communities, equalities, workers and local economies is calling on the Government to act urgently on transport in response to the climate emergency. In a joint statement, the organisations say: "Transport is responsible for more carbon emissions than any other sector, so we call on the Government to fulfil the commitment it made in opposition and set a national trajectory for delivering a sustained modal shift in line with the sustainable transport hierarchy, increasing the proportion of journeys made by public transport, shared transport, walking, wheeling and cycling, alongside its commitment to a rail freight growth target".

DOKA GIVES A CLEAR VIEW OF CARBON COSTS (see story here)

Doka, the formwork company, has created product carbon footprints (PCFs) for more than 9,000 products, helping customers to create accurate carbon lifecycle assessments. Julia Weber, head of sustainability, said, "Expanding our product carbon footprint data to more than 9,000 products creates even greater transparency throughout the entire construction process. Reliable emissions data helps customers understand the CO_2 impact of their projects, make informed procurement decisions, and support their own climate targets."

A product carbon footprint measures the total greenhouse gas emissions generated by a single item throughout its entire life cycle.

TRAINING, RECRUITMENT & EMPLOYMENT

HEALTH AND SAFETY TRAINING FIRM TARGETS SCAFFOLDING OPPORTUNITY (see story here)

A West Midlands-based health and safety training provider is targeting a major scaffolding opportunity after investing more than £200k into a new dedicated area and the recruitment of three new instructors. The new facilities and expertise have helped PLT Training secure the Prefabricated Access Suppliers' and Manufacturers' Association's (PASMA) internationally recognised accreditation, meaning it can now offer accredited courses on the safe assembly, use, inspection and dismantling of aluminium scaffold towers. This works alongside IPAF training for Mobile Elevated Work Platforms and allows the Oldbury-based firm to provide training for two major areas of working at height.

INSULATION TRAINING EXPANDS AS APPRENTICESHIPS SOAR (see story here)

The Thermal Insulation Contractors Association will expand its National Training Centre in Darlington, as apprentice enrolments hit 199, up from 130 last academic year, continuing a longer-term trend. TICA says the rise reflects the growing recognition of the vital role thermal insulation plays in reducing energy consumption, lowering carbon emissions and strengthening energy security, as well as its own efforts to promote and highlight careers within the industry through visits to schools, colleges and careers fairs.

CONSTRUCTION TECHNOLOGY EXCELLENCE CENTRE PLANS FOR FORMER DATA CENTRE AND offices (see story here)

Plans have been lodged by **Leeds College of Building** (LCB) for the conversion of a former data centre and offices to create a new Construction Technology Excellence Centre. The works would create a number of classrooms and workshop spaces, as well as staff, amenity, ancillary and storage spaces. LCB was named as one ten Construction Technical Excellence Colleges (CTEC) in August 2025, and as a result now requires significant additional teaching space to supporter an increase in student numbers.

BARROW HILL RAIL INNOVATION CENTRE OPEN FOR BUSINESS (see story here)

Barrow Hill has been transformed into a "hub for rail innovation" thanks to the the opening of the £6 million Derbyshire Rail Industry Innovation Vehicle (DRIIVe). The state-of-the-art rail innovation and training centre, located next to the historic roundhouse building, features modern classrooms and training areas and specialist research and development facilities, including a digital laboratory, alongside high-quality commercial workshop space for rail businesses, researchers and learners. The centre is expected to support businesses across the rail supply chain while helping develop the skilled workforce needed for future industry growth.

HS2 LAUNCHES APPRENTICESHIP PATHWAY FOR UNEMPLOYED WEST MIDLANDS RESIDENTS (see story here)

HS2 is launching a fast-track training programme designed to help unemployed West Midlands residents secure a construction apprenticeship on the new railway, led by HS2's West Midlands construction partners, Balfour Beatty VINCI (BBV) Mace Dragados. The two joint ventures are teaming up to provide 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. Candidates who successfully complete the six-week course, and want to progress their career in construction, will automatically qualify for an interview for an 18-month apprenticeship.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

MODERN EQUIPMENT DONATED TO HERITAGE RAILWAY (see story here)

Staff and volunteers at the East Lancashire Railway (ELR) are set to benefit from a raft of tools and equipment delivered through an exciting new partnership with Network Rail. Through a policy of reusing and recycling, redundant track pieces, along with tools, equipment, trolleys and a large piece of machinery used to help lay down the track, have all now been handed over to the heritage railway by Network Rail teams. The deal allows railway materials that are no longer needed on the national rail network – such as rail, sleepers and equipment – to be reused safely on heritage lines, helping to keep historic trains running while reducing waste and costs.

SIEMENS DONATES TWO DEFIBRILLATORS TO TRAIN STATIONS (see story here)

Has donated two defibrillators to South Gyle and Dalmeny stations through a partnership with ScotRail and Street Soccer Scotland. The company revealed that, for cardiac arrests that occur outside of hospital, a defibrillator can increase survival rates by 50 –70 per cent if used within three-five minutes. The donation coincides with Siemens Mobility's delivery of signalling and electrification upgrades along the route as part of a £342m Scottish Government investment to electrify the Fife and Borders lines.

PUBLIC WORK BIDDERS FACE 20% JOBS AND SKILLS HURDLE (see story here)

Contractors bidding for major government work will have to place far greater emphasis on creating jobs, raising skills and improving pay under a shake-up of Whitehall procurement rules. From 1 January 2027, firms competing for central government contracts worth more than £5m will see social value account for 20% of bid scoring – double the current weighting. The new Cabinet Office Social Value Model shifts the focus away from a broad range of social measures and instead rewards contractors that create quality local jobs, deliver apprenticeships, tackle skills shortages and support young people into employment. Bidders will also score higher by offering jobs that pay above the legal minimum wage and by targeting opportunities at young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs), care leavers and people with long-term health conditions.

The changes apply to central government contracts worth more than £1m, where social value will carry a minimum 10% weighting, rising to 20% on procurements above £5m. For major projects in key industrial sectors, departments will also set jobs and skills targets and publicly report contractors' performance against them through annual key performance indicators. The Government said the streamlined model would reduce bidding costs for SMEs by removing less relevant social value requirements and limiting the rules to contracts above £1m. Major contractors, including Amey, welcomed the news.

NETWORK RAIL TEAMS UP WITH WILDLIFE CHARITY (see story here)

Network Rail has teamed up with wildlife charity Butterfly Conservation to support the environment along the railway in Warwickshire. Volunteers and teams from both organisations have been spreading freshly cut 'green hay' onto Harbury cutting, near Leamington Spa, as part of ongoing work to restore a rare butterfly habitat. The cutting was badly damaged by a major landslip in February 2015 impacting a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which was previously used by several rare butterfly species which are now being encouraged to return. The latest phase of the project had used a technique known as 'green haying', where a wildflower meadow is cut and the seed-rich hay is quickly moved to another site and spread across the ground, to introduce local wildflower seed to the railway land, improving habitat for butterflies.

WEST MIDLANDS INTERCHANGE DELIVERS BOOST TO JOBS, LOCAL BUSINESS AND COMMUNITIES (see story here)

West Midlands Interchange (WMI) has launched its first Social Value Impact Report (2022–2025), revealing how the project has already delivered more than £7 million in social value across South Staffordshire, Staffordshire and Wolverhampton. The report highlights how investment linked to one of the UK's largest logistics developments is already creating lasting benefits for local people, businesses and communities.

The £7 million comprises £4.9 million supporting local business growth and strengthening the regional economy, and £2.4 million creating jobs, developing skills and improving employment opportunities.

GREATER ANGLIA TO FUND PROJECTS IN BOOST TO COMMUNITIES (see story here)

Greater Anglia is investing more than £350k in 33 community-led projects in the third year of its Customer and Community Improvement Fund (CCIF). Grants of up to £50,000 were available, with the train operator pledging a total of £350,000 this financial year, to projects across the Greater Anglia network as part of its ongoing support for communities. Funding has been awarded to a wide range of projects that benefit both the community and the railway – from small-scale station enhancements and help for volunteers to integrated transport projects and schemes to introduce new or disadvantaged groups to rail travel.

SCAFFOLD ARTWORK SHROUDS FAITHDEAN FENWICK STORE SITE (see story here)

A 120-metre long by 24-metre high artwork is now shrouding scaffolding at the former Fenwick department store on New Bond Street. Emerging Forms by British artist Hugo Dalton gives a glimpse of how the revamped store will look after its transformation by main contractor Faithdean. The artwork was installed following completion of work to raise the original facade of the building. The finished project will also feature permanent artworks by the artist.

HEALTH, SAFETY & WELLBEING

BRICKLAYER BREAKS BACK AFTER FALLING THROUGH ROOF (see story here)

A contractor has been sentenced after a bricklayer broke his back after falling through a barn roof. He had been part of a team carrying out repairs to the roof when he stepped on a polycarbonate roof sheet and fell eight feet to the concrete floor below. He suffered two broken vertebrae in his back, as well as having a fractured sternum, that required surgery. An

HSE investigation found that the company had failed to ensure that there were adequate measures in place to protect employees or contractors when working at height. There was no risk assessment or safe system of work for the work activity being undertaken.

FORMWORK PANEL HITS HINKLEY WORKER AFTER FALLING 29 METRES (see story here)

Two improvement notices served on contractors Bouygues Travaux Publics SAS and Laing O'Rourke Delivery – operating as the BYLOR joint venture – have been extended following an incident at the Hinkley Point C construction site. The Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) served the notices in June after a formwork panel fell approximately 29 metres which left a worker with serious injuries at the site in Somerset. ONR established that BYLOR, in its role as contractor, failed to ensure that construction work was planned, managed and monitored so that, so far as reasonably practicable, it was carried out without risks to health and safety.

LIFT SUPERVISOR KILLED BY REVERSING TELEHANDLER (see story here)

A self-employed telehandler driver has been given a suspended jail sentence after he reversed over his colleague on a construction site, causing fatal injuries. The deceased was working as a lift supervisor on a large construction site where the telehandler operator was employed. Whilst walking back to his work area from the welfare compound, the lift supervisor was struck and reversed over by the telehandler. An HSE investigation found that the principal contractor had taken steps to minimise the need for reversing on site, including the creation of a turning circle, which was unobstructed at the time of the incident. Despite this the telehandler, who was qualified and experienced, chose to reverse the vehicle without the aid of a banksman. The investigation also found that he had been using his mobile phone while in control of the telehandler, contrary to the site rules he had signed up to.

WERNICK LAUNCHES RESTPODS SO BUILDERS CAN SLEEP ON SITES (see story here)

Wernick Hire has introduced RestPod overnight site accommodation to help staff recover from early starts, night shifts and long hours. RestPod can support engineers, supervisors, commissioning teams and specialist contractors on remote construction and infrastructure projects. The self-contained cabins are designed with premium features, including ensuite shower rooms, integrated heating and LED lighting, USB charging points, and overhead storage. Accommodation options range from Solo or Twin bed setups, to the larger Twin Luxe solution designed for longer stays and enhanced comfort on site. In terms of construction, RestPod is built for demanding environments with a robust steel structure and fully insulated walls, ceilings and floors.

PUBLIC RAISE ALARM OVER ROOF WORK AT LONDON HOTEL (see story here)

A construction company and director have been fined after workers lives were put at risk with unsafe roof work in central London. The HSE took action after members of the public raised concerns about unsafe working practices, sending photographs to HSE showing people working on a roof at the site with no control measures to protect them from falling, such as edge protection. There was no safe means of access to the roof, with operatives photographed standing on a makeshift platform balanced on a stepladder. The HSE investigation found that there were no controls in place to prevent the workers, who were employed by a subcontractor, from falling from height on at least two separate dates. Measures which had been identified in the roofing subcontractor's risk assessment as necessary controls, including scaffolding around the roof, were not in place.

QTS LAUNCHES FIRST AID INITIATIVE (see story here)

QTS Group has introduced a new series of practical first aid drills, designed to test the team's response in a live safety emergency and simulate a workplace medical emergency on site. Led by Andrew Sullivan, assistant HSQE advisor at QTS Group, teams are run through a series of realistic, on-site scenarios covering major bleeds, CPR and defibrillation, burns, spinal injury, crush injury and electrocution. Rather than focusing on first aid techniques alone, these scenarios focus on the non-technical skills, testing how a whole team manages an emergency including communication, delegation, calling the emergency and evacuating a casualty once they have secured the scene.

CORPORATE & COMMERCIAL

BUILD UK RELEASES FIRST RETENTIONS BENCHMARKS (see story here)

Build UK, tasked with new reporting requirements, has released new information on retentions, showing impact on cashflows throughout the supply chain. The construction industry group now tracks whether companies use retentions, the amount withheld as a percentage of supplier payments, and the amount as a percentage of the amount withheld by clients. The data shows that the average rate of retention withheld by Build UK tier one contractor members is 2%. Of the retentions withheld against them by their clients, contractor members are currently withholding on average 74% from their own supply chains, absorbing the remaining 26% themselves.

WEST YORKS COUNCILS PUT A PRICE TO ROAD WORKS (see story here)

Leeds, Wakefield, and Kirklees councils in West Yorkshire will launch lane rental schemes later this year, charging utility companies and others up to £2,500 per day to work on key routes. The schemes aim to educe the impact of works on the highway and delays by encouraging organisations to schedule works outside peak periods, and to collaborate or work more efficiently. The three councils have worked together and each secured Department for Transport approval for their schemes.

TRADE CREDIT INSURER COULD CUT COVER FOR VISTRY SUPPLIERS (see story here)

Trade credit insurer Allianz Trade could cut the credit insurance cover it provides to suppliers of Vistry. The potential reduction in cover, understood to be as much as 70% for some suppliers, comes as Vistry steps up efforts to generate cash and reduce daily net debt, which stood at £470m at the half-year.

LEGISLATION AND REGULATION

Metro mayors given power to override councils on big schemes (see story here)

Mayors across England are set to be handed powers to seize control of major planning applications from councils in a fresh drive to speed up development. The new call-in regime will cover schemes of more than 150 homes, commercial projects above 15,000 sq m and buildings taller than 30m, roughly equivalent to ten storeys. Under proposals due to be published next week, regional mayors will be able to take over strategically important applications and decide whether they should go ahead or be refused. The move will bring metro mayors broadly into line with powers already held by the Mayor of London. Mayors will also be able to grant upfront permission for development, potentially allowing work to start without developers having to submit separate applications.

SECTOR NEWS

RAIL

HS2 SIGNS NEW CIVIL ENGINEERING DEALS (see story here)

HS2 has successfully renegotiated contracts with two of the civil engineering joint-ventures building Britain's new high-speed railway as part of the programme reset. New commercial contracts have been signed with EKFB and Align which collectively account for more than 100km of the HS2 route between London and the West Midlands. This has been described as representing a significant step forward in the commitment to get HS2 back on track and deliver the remaining works at the lowest reasonable cost.

REDEVELOPMENT OF OFFICE BUILDING TO CREATE RAIL INDUSTRY HUB IN LEEDS (see story here)

Network Rail is currently carrying out a £40m upgrade of Princes Exchange, Leeds, to create a new rail industry hub in the centre of Leeds. The project is funded by the Department for Transport and Network Rail and being delivered by Network Rail and Platform4, working with contractor Willmott Dixon. Network Rail said it would bring track and train colleagues in Leeds together in one location – with energy efficiency, sustainability and digital connectivity at the heart of the development. The scheme will deliver social value through apprenticeships, work experience placements, educational activities and support for community projects, while sustainable reuse of furniture and materials from the site is expected to save around 80 tonnes of carbon and provide £10,000 worth of donated equipment to charitable organisations.

HIGHWAYS

NATIONAL HIGHWAYS TARGETS A38 FOR RENEWAL (see story here)

National Highways is investing more than £10m in upgrading the A38 through Devon, refurbishing two viaducts, improving drainage, tackling trees affected by Ash dieback, and enhancing road surfaces. The investment, alongside a scheme to enhance electronic signage on overhead gantries at Kennford, aims to maintain the safety, resilience and reliability of this busy Devon route for many years to come, the agency says.

OTHER

WORK STARTS ON GREENPOWER PARK PROJECT (see story here)

Work has started on Greenpower Park, marking a significant milestone in the creation of a landmark location for battery research, industrialisation, manufacturing, testing, recycling and electrified logistics, on the site of the former Coventry Airport. Planning permission has been secured for up to 5.7 million sq ft of industrial development, with the aim of creating thousands of jobs and injecting £2.5bn into the local economy. Enabling works, connect the site to a dedicated power supply from National Grid, are now underway. Matrix Networks and Ashwell Construction are installing a new primary sub-station, made possible thanks to £23m from mayor Richard Parker and the West Midlands Combined Authority's Investment Zone programme.

PLANS LODGED FOR £340M GOLDEN TRIANGLE DEVELOPMENT (see story here)

Plans have been submitted for the development of 1.26 million sq ft of employment space at an established East Midlands logistics destination, with the scheme having an estimated gross development value of £340m. The outline plans for Brackmills Logistics Park, a 54-acre site within Northampton's Brackmills Industrial Estate, have been lodged by Royal London Asset Management Property.

REDEVELOPMENT OF FORMER SKI VILLAGE SITE SET TO MOVE FORWARD (see story here)

The long-awaited redevelopment of the former ski village site in Sheffield looks set to move forward with a planning application expected later this year. New Zealand-based adventure tourism specialist Skyline Enterprises is advancing plans to transform the site at Parkwood Springs into a major new leisure development.

PLANNING CONSENT SECURED FOR 107MW DATA CENTRE IN SLOUGH (see story here)

Developer Tritax Big Box has secured planning permission to build a 107MW data centre in Slough, Berkshire. The facility, located on a 74-acre site within the Slough Availability Zone at Manor Farm, will follow an accelerated pathway to power provision, putting it potentially ahead of competing schemes.

GATWICK SECOND RUNWAY CLEARED AFTER COURT CHALLENGE FAILS (see story here)

Gatwick Airport's £2.2bn second runway expansion has cleared its final legal hurdle after the Court of Appeal dismissed a challenge against the project, paving the way for construction to begin. The government said the privately financed scheme is now on course to bring the airport's standby northern runway into full use from 2030, allowing up to 100,000 additional flights a year and supporting 14,000 jobs across the region.

TRIBE LODGES TWIN GREENWICH STUDENT TOWER SCHEME (see story here)

Developer Tribe has lodged plans for a pair of high-rise towers on the Greenwich Peninsula delivering student accommodation, co-living homes and affordable housing beside the Silvertown Tunnel. The application proposes a 27-storey block with 673 purpose-built student bedrooms alongside a 23-storey tower providing 380 co-living homes. A further 80 affordable homes are also included within the wider development.

PANATTONI SUBMITS PLANS FOR 1M SQ FT KENT SCHEME (see story here)

Developer Panattoni has submitted a hybrid planning application for a major new 1.04 million sq ft industrial and logistics development in Maidstone, Kent. The application includes detailed proposals for the first phase, comprising two units of 100,000 sq ft and 150,000 sq ft. Outline permission is also being sought for the second phase, which will provide customers with opportunities to secure flexible built-to-suit facilities tailored to their operational requirements.

PLAN IN FOR 53-STOREY BIRMINGHAM BUILD TO RENT TOWER (see story here)

London-based Bluecastle Capital has lodged plans for a 53-storey build to rent tower that would bring 729 homes to Birmingham city centre. Designed by architect Squire & Partners, the mixed-use scheme would be built on the long-vacant former Marks & Spencer site opposite the future HS2 Curzon Street station, forming part of Birmingham's Central Heart regeneration strategy.

CAPITAL&CENTRIC APPOINTED TO IPSWICH REGENERATION (see story here)

Capital&Centric has been as development partner for Ipswich Borough Council's regeneration of Pauls Silo and the nearby waterfront, working with Drees & Sommer to develop detailed plans for the site. The vision for the site will see the Pauls Silo building retained and restored, while new uses are developed around the site. Plans being explored, Capital&Centric says, include independent cafés, bars and restaurants, alongside a mix of new homes designed to bring activity to the waterfront throughout the day and into the evening.

PLANS IN FOR RETROFIT OF LONDON CHARING CROSS OFFICE ICON (see story here)

Plans have gone in to retrofit one of London's best-known 1980s office buildings above Charing Cross Station. Developer Bridgemont wants to reinvent 1 Embankment Place rather than demolish it, retaining around 90% of the existing structure and floorplate and about 60% of the façade in one of Westminster's largest retrofit-first commercial schemes.

PLANS IN FOR STRIKING HSBC CANARY WHARF TOWER REVAMP (see story here)

Plans have been lodged to transform HSBC's landmark Canary Wharf headquarters in what is being billed as the world's largest office building transformation. Canary Wharf Group and building owner Qatar Investment Authority have submitted proposals to Tower Hamlets Council to overhaul the 45-storey tower at 8 Canada Square. The cost of the project has not been revealed but could be somewhere between £800m and £1bn.

GO-AHEAD FOR HIGH WYCOMBE WAREHOUSE SCHEME (see story here)

Pension fund manager Railpen has secured planning consent for Phase 2 of the High Wycombe X industrial and logistics scheme. The latest round of construction at Cressex Business Park will deliver 145,000 sq ft of space across five units. Developed in partnership with Wrenbridge, High Wycombe X forms part of Railpen's growing X portfolio, an industry-first branded collection of small and medium-sized industrial and logistics developments.

TRENDS

CONSTRUCTION BUYERS SEE FIRST SIGNS OF A TURNAROUND (see story here)

Construction buyers saw output levels fall at the slowest rate since March last month as first signs of an industry turnaround appeared. The bellwether S&P Global UK Construction Purchasing Managers' Index was 44.7 in July, up from 38.4 in June but still below the 50 growth threshold. Much slower rates of contraction were seen in all three main sub-sectors in July. Commercial work (index at 46.8) showed the greatest resilience, while civil engineering activity again saw the steepest pace of decline (38.3).

RICS SURVEY SEES MODEST RECOVERY IN Q2 (see story here)

The latest RICS UK Construction Monitor survey saw respondents' assessment of construction activity improving slightly in the second quarter of 2026. The survey's net balance data reflects the proportion of respondents reporting either a rise or a fall in a specified area and does not quantify the scale of change in the underlying variable itself. A reading of –100 indicates that no respondents are reporting increases (or no change), while a reading of 100 indicates the opposite. The headline workloads indicator, which captures respondents' assessment of activity across the wider construction industry, returned a net balance of –4% in 2Q2026. This was up from –12% in the previous quarter but still indicates that overall, firm s reported no increase in workloads.

THOSE WE HAVE LOST (AND SOMETIMES REGAINED)

ADMINISTRATION CONFIRMED AT MODULAR HOUSING BUSINESS (see story here)

East Midlands-based modular housing specialist, Qube Structures, has entered administration, with options for the business currently being reviewed. The Northampton-based business is a manufacturer, supplier and installer of modular buildings and rapid build structures, including across the educational, healthcare, retail and business commerce sectors. Qube Structures forms part of ACS Modular

SWINDON GROUNDWORKS FIRM FILES ADMINISTRATION NOTICE (see story here)

House building groundworks specialist **Avtar Construction** has filed a notice of intention to appoint an administrator. The Swindon-based civils and groundworks specialist has worked for regional offices of major house builders across the south west, turning over around £20m last year, employing around 60 staff.

FORSHAW DEMOLITION GOES INTO ADMINISTRATION (see story here)

Bolton based, family-owned **Forshaw Demolition** has gone into administration. It has been in business since 2003 taking on packages worth up to £2m across the UK across all aspects of demolition including residential, city centre, high rise, road & rail infrastructure and industrial dismantling.

M&E SPECIALIST FILES ADMINISTRATION NOTICE (see story here)

Bristol-based M&E contractor **Avon Combined Electrical Services** (ACES) has filed a notice of intention to appoint administrators just a year after opening a London office to target bigger and more complex projects. Founded in 1988 as an electrical contractor, ACES spent nearly four decades building its reputation across the South West before broadening into mechanical services, fire and security, HVAC, renewables and general works to become a full MEP contractor. ACES operates across commercial, healthcare, education, defence, infrastructure, residential and public sector markets for both main contractors and end clients and is understood to employ over 50 staff.

CLANCY CONSULTING ADMINISTRATION MOVE SHEDS HISTORIC LIABILITIES (see story here)

Manchester engineering consultancy **Clancy Consulting** has filed a notice of intention to appoint administrators as part of a restructuring to shed historic liabilities while safeguarding its civil and structural engineering business. The firm's core civil and structural engineering operation will transfer to newly formed **CCE Ltd**.

HOUSING GROUNDWORKS CRISIS DEEPENS AS JAO CEASES TRADING see story here

Taunton-based **JAO Groundworks** has become the latest residential groundworks specialist to collapse as the prolonged downturn in house building continues to claim trade contractor casualties. The Somerset firm, which employed more than 100 staff and delivered more than £43m of work since launching in 2019, has ceased trading with immediate effect. The closure is blamed on the depressed housing market, rising costs, late payments and the working capital needed to keep the business trading.

SCAFFOLDING FIRM BLENCOWE FILES ADMINISTRATION NOTICE (see story here)

Wiltshire based specialist **Blencowe Scaffolding** has filed a notice of appointment to appoint an administrator. The family-run firm has been in business for more than 60 years and is a familiar face on sites across the south of England, operating from a head office in Salisbury and two depots in Basingstoke and Eastleigh.

MANSELL BUILDING SOLUTIONS FILES ADMINISTRATION NOTICE (see story here)

MMC specialist contractor Mansell Building Solutions has filed a notice of intention to appoint an administrator just six months after opening a major new factory and headquarters in Oldham. The light gauge steel frame specialist, established in 1992, operates from a 45,000 sq ft facility at Broadway Business Park in Chadderton. The new factory and MMC Centre was 50% larger than Mansell's previous facility and significantly increased capacity to manufacture panelised light gauge steel frames for residential, care, student and education schemes across the North of England. In its latest filed accounts, the business reported turnover of around £13m and employed more than 50 staff.