



Solving the building crisis

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Housing

The on-going struggle to build homes, the business case for sustainability and how to drag construction efficiency into this century are just some of the themes of interest.

The UK housing shortage has become a big political issue and with London's population alone expected to grow by a million in the next decade, concern is growing about where people are going to live. The Government is trying to tackle this by introducing legislation to drive housebuilding, including the Housing and Planning Bill 2015. This bill is highly controversial as it prioritises home ownership at the expense of social housing. New "affordable" homes proposed are not so affordable, requiring up to a £97,000 deposit in London and, according to former head of the civil service *Bob Kerslake*, writing "social housing out of the script". With an increasing number of people being priced out of home ownership every year and the cost of rent soaring, the need for affordable housing is vital.

Business case for sustainability

The Climate Change Act 2008 set out legally binding targets to reduce carbon emissions but the current Government has delayed the introduction of zero carbon homes, scrapped the Green Deal and cut feed-in tariffs for low and zero carbon energy generation. Because regulations and incentives have been stripped away the only way to ensure new buildings are high quality, low energy and built with minimal environmental impact is to demonstrate this makes sound business sense.

Sustainability needs to stay at the top of the built environment agenda and how to cope with an uncertain future for green building.

Efficiency

The construction industry continuously strives to increase efficiency of delivery, with the Government's construction strategy pushing towards a reduction of 20% in construction costs and adopting of BIM for all public sector projects.

Roadblocks, however, continue to stand in



the way. A recent report estimates that a million extra workers are needed to compensate for an ageing workforce and expanding industry but the supply of construction workers has dried up. Alongside these delivery challenges, clients are increasingly demanding efficient buildings to keep energy costs down. It is important to examine how to repurpose buildings for extended life, smart demolition and the benefits of designing for deconstruction and reuse. The current skills shortage is one of the biggest barriers to housing delivery. And off-site manufacturing is an important way of delivering buildings more efficiently in terms of productivity and quality as a way to mitigate the limited workforce available.



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