



**secbe**

South East Centre for  
the Built Environment

# YOUR **Business**

The magazine of the South East Centre for the Built Environment

Issue 7

## **Balanced Trading**

A bright idea!

**Delivering carbon neutral  
neighbourhoods**



# Deadline October 30: important landfill changes

Changes to 'Duty of Care' arrangements will be introduced on 30th October 2007, to comply with requirements of the EU Landfill Directive. A few businesses will be ready for the change, but SECBE is keen to ensure that as many construction firms as possible are aware of the new requirements.

Under the revised plans, a Waste Transfer Note must show that all non-hazardous materials have been "treated" before they will be accepted for disposal at a landfill site. Neither will liquid wastes be accepted for disposal at these sites from this date.

The Environment Agency's official guidance, is available at <http://publications.environment-agency.gov.uk/pdf/GEHO0207BLWJ-e-e.pdf>

Treatment is intended to:

- reduce the amount of waste going to landfill
- reduce the impact of waste when it is landfilled.

You can define 'treatment' by using the following 'three-point test'. All three criteria must be satisfied for all of the waste to have been deemed treated:

- It must have gone through a physical, thermal, chemical or biological process including sorting.
- The characteristics of the waste must have changed.
- It must do this in order to:
  - reduce its volume; or
  - reduce its hazardous nature; or
  - facilitate its handling; or
  - enhance recovery.



Some wastes being landfilled may already be the product of a treatment process, so you do not have to provide additional treatment for such wastes.

Example treatment processes for construction and demolition waste (e.g. concrete, bricks):

- Potential treatment processes
  - Direct reuse (e.g. as bricks); or
  - Physical treatment (e.g. size reduction or screening) to make the waste suitable for use (e.g. as aggregate)
- If there is no outlet for reuse even after such treatment, then the waste may be landfilled without treatment.

Government policy, supported by research and guidance, strongly favours the minimisation and recycling of construction and demolition wastes. Separation is therefore the normal option. Separation and the role that Site Waste Management Plans take in encouraging the recovery of construction and demolition waste are integral to meeting this requirement.

The Environment Agency advises that one of the simplest ways to pre-treat

your non hazardous waste is to separately collect your waste as individual streams and recycle the separated streams. Alternatively, a waste management company can treat the waste for you before it is sent to landfill. This can include simply sorting your waste at a transfer station and recycling part of this waste. Alternatively your waste management company may use more advanced technologies such as Mechanical Biological Treatment or Anaerobic Digestion.

Dr John Henry Looney of Sustainable Direction Ltd notes that "such segregation has delivered significant financial benefit to construction and waste companies, building on a concept developed for the SECBE Real Time Data System and implemented via a large building supply company, where it has not only reduced costs but generated income as well". And with standard rates of Landfill Tax rising £8 per tonne, per year from 2008 until 2010/11 – costs will become an increasingly important consideration.

For information about organisations and initiatives that provide assistance with minimising and disposing of waste go to SECBE's Waste Portal: [www.secbe.org.uk/planet/waste](http://www.secbe.org.uk/planet/waste)

## Disclaimer

YOURBusiness is intended for general information purposes only. You should seek appropriate professional advice before taking or refraining from taking any action in reliance of this information. So far as permissible by law, SECBE does not accept any liability to any person relating to the use of any such information. (The views of contributors are not necessarily the views of SECBE.)

## Credits

YOURBusiness is designed and produced by Moxx Creative Design, [www.moxx.co.uk](http://www.moxx.co.uk), tel: 01491 834097. It is printed on Revive 75 – a carbon neutral 75% recycled paper.



PROJECT PART-FINANCED  
BY THE EUROPEAN UNION



SECBE works in partnership with:

To make sure you receive **YOUR**Business regularly, register on our website today. It only takes a minute, and guarantees you up-to-date news on progress in your region. Subscribe now at [www.secbe.org.uk](http://www.secbe.org.uk)

# SECBE makes an impact

Chairman, Bob Heathfield, extols SECBE's performance so far and tells how it is making a big contribution to the South East Regional Economic Strategy.



It's an exciting time for SECBE. We're growing strongly, more companies are engaging with us, we're constantly creating programmes which add value to the sector and we've been charged with some pretty important tasks to deliver the Regional Economic Strategy (RES).

To say SECBE has been growing strongly would be an understatement. We've achieved a massive increase in turnover as well as doubling staff resources to meet the growing demands on us. But, of course, we're also leading by example by keeping ourselves as lean as possible as we step up our delivery for the sector.

We're increasing our business engagement with key companies in the sector; businesses want to work with, and through, SECBE to improve their performance, and our events and web resources are being attended and used by hundreds of companies and key players in the South East. Leading businesses such as Wilmott Dixon and Laing O'Rourke are recognising the benefits of working with SECBE, as companies are

increasingly attracted to our unique blend of networking, influence and expertise. Our strategic programmes and supply chain services are tailored to meet the real needs of construction and built environment business operating in the region.

We're also making a real difference through our ability, as a sector consortium, to influence policy and develop strategic partnerships through our 3-way business model of engagement with government, key businesses and their supply chains, and support organisations. A good example of this is the development of a 'hub' with ICE and RIBA, where we share resources and collaborate.

Of course, we don't do those things in isolation. We're very aware of the agenda of the Regional Economic Strategy developed by SEEDA and now being put into action. The RES highlights three core challenges for the region - Global Competitiveness, Smart Growth and Sustainable Prosperity - which we see as the economic, social and environmental strands of the sustainable agenda. SECBE has been identified as the

lead for five of the projects in the RES Implementation Plan, and we're also involved as a partner with a further 12.

The RES is also a living process where the strategy will continue to evolve. We identified many other areas where the Built Environment Sector can make a big contribution to economic growth. These include identifying capacity/capability gaps to inform import and export of construction services, highlighting the key factors affecting international competitiveness and effective R & D investment.

These are just some of the issues which we think will shape the future of the built environment in the South East, and we are very interested to hear your thoughts and contributions. As Derek, our CEO says on page 9, there's never been a better time to be identifying the competitive advantage for your firm. We would be delighted to hear what you think will keep the South East as a global leader. Join the Global Competitiveness discussion on our forum website: [www.secbe.org.uk/secbe/forums](http://www.secbe.org.uk/secbe/forums)

## Go for Growth



Going for Growth is an exciting project, supported by SEEDA to help companies in the South East achieve fast growth inside 12 months. SECBE is encouraging Built Environment sector companies to Go for Growth.

SECBE Chief Executive Derek Rees says: "Sector growth is vital if we are to meet the needs of our region and I encourage all eligible companies to apply for a place. It's a real opportunity for businesses to obtain a competitive edge."

A key part of the project is the Encouraging Growth Training Programme, designed specifically by specialist consultants PERA, a leading player in the field of management development and training, to assist companies to start

generating new revenue streams and increase bottom line profits.

A maximum of 75 companies in the South East can access the PERA programme which will consist of four central one-day training workshop units:

- Vision and Strategy
- Strategic Marketing
- Innovation Leadership
- Change Management

These central modules will be interactive, allowing key business issues to be addressed. The delivery of the central modules will be in three different locations across the South East offering

easy access for businesses. In addition, Encouraging Growth offers a further eight optional modules covering topics such as business intelligence and managing intellectual property. Participating companies will receive training worth thousands for a contribution of just £385 for the package.

For further information, contact Tony Inga on **01844 210 453** or **07775 501 684**, fax: 0870 161 5853 or email: [anthony.inga@businesslinksolutions.co.uk](mailto:anthony.inga@businesslinksolutions.co.uk) or visit [www.businesslink.gov.uk/southeast/growth](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/southeast/growth) to check eligibility and download the company referral form.

# New managers to power SECBE growth

Three key appointments have been made to step up SECBE's contribution to the Sector

## Terry McGivern – Development Manager

Terry is SECBE's new Development Manager responsible for securing £1 million of Government investment to drive innovation and improvement throughout the sector.

With over 25 years of marketing and business development experience in the sector, he's the man with the right kind of contacts. He worked with major construction names such as Hanson and Marley, before becoming Chief Executive of The Building Centre in London in the '90s, and was closely involved in the early days of the Egan and Latham processes.

Terry has also run his own specialist company promoting innovative products and technologies into the construction marketplace. He is looking forward to playing a key part in defining SECBE's future strategy, not just coming up with the ideas but making them happen to help the organisation become commercially successful as it delivers on its objectives.

## Julian Carter – Operations Manager

"Joining SECBE is a wonderful opportunity," says Julian. "It's great to be working in such a high profile sector, especially in the South East where more homes have to be built with few resources - while keeping down the carbon footprint. Here's 'where it's all happening'"

As Operations Manager, his role is to make sure all SECBE projects for the public or private sectors are being delivered to brief, on time and on budget. He's had plenty of experience as he has held similar jobs with IBM, FENSA and ELECSA, the Building Regulations bodies for windows and electrical installations respectively.

Julian expects to be pretty busy, as SECBE grows and more projects come on line. He will need to deliver value for money and make the maximum use of resources.

## Jo Cannon – Systems Manager

Jo is going to be a key player as she manages SECBE's business systems, internal communications and acts as PA to Chairman Bob Heathfield, and Chief Executive Derek Rees.

With four years at Ernst & Young and as Management Reporting Co-ordinator at Siemens, she's highly experienced and skilled at creating and implementing systems.

Jo has a brief to streamline all internal systems and processes including IT, finance, facilities and HR. Multi-tasking Jo says that she wanted a role where she could really make a difference. "I'm a kind of one-stop-shop, which lets everyone else concentrate on their work, so we can all deliver change to the region."



Terry McGivern



Julian Carter



Jo Cannon

# Are you one of the South East's most dynamic businesses?

The South East Business Awards, managed by The South East England Development Agency (SEEDA), recognise enterprising, innovative companies making an outstanding contribution to the region. Log on to [www.southeastbusinessawards.co.uk](http://www.southeastbusinessawards.co.uk) to download your entry form.

Judges will be looking for companies which have helped raise productivity in the South East and whose environmental and social commitment demonstrate best practice in sustainable business.

Up to 32 short listed companies will be visited by an expert panel and will receive a special in-depth report, analysing their business and suggesting how they could improve their performance further. These companies will then be involved in a two month publicity campaign to promote sustainable business excellence around the region. A promotional DVD of each company will be made to be presented at the Awards dinner.

The closing date for applications is 7th November. The winners will be announced on 6th March at the Awards Ceremony at Ascot Racecourse.



SOUTHEAST  
BUSINESSAWARDS



# Delivering carbon neutral neighbourhoods

## an innovative SECBE project

Housing programmes have been brought back to centre stage by the new Prime Minister this summer. But ambitious house-building targets have to be matched by delivering high environmental standards, progressively moving to zero carbon by 2016. The debate about whether and how both volume and carbon targets can be met is gathering pace – will we have carbon neutral neighbourhoods by 2016?

The path to zero carbon new housing development will be rocky. The volume builders and many leading local authorities have signed a Statement of Intent to deliver the 2016 target. But the House Builders Association, which represents small and medium sized firms, is challenging the feasibility of on-site renewable power and is arguing that the 2016 target could damage housing output, as small builders do not have the large sites needed for on-site renewables.

The rate at which the house building can progress up the levels of the Code for Sustainable Homes is by no means clear. The only certainty is that, whatever the rate of progress towards zero carbon, tens of thousands of carbon producing dwellings will be built in the run-up to 2016. Moreover there is the huge problem of the continuing high levels of carbon emissions from the existing stock which will account for over 90% of dwellings in 2016.

In September, SECBE launched a project to address the key strategic issue of reducing carbon emissions from housing as quickly as possible by linking new housing development with reducing emissions from existing

dwellings. The Balance Trading Project has been commissioned by eaga which delivers energy efficiency improvements to some 250,000 households a year on behalf of Government and energy companies through installing insulation and renewable energy systems.

Balance Trading is a process whereby the net carbon emissions from new housing development can be offset by providing for S106 funded investment in energy efficiency measures (such as roof and cavity wall insulation) to retrofit adjacent neighbourhoods, which delivers the carbon emission reductions equal to the gap between the standard achieved in the new development and zero carbon. Balance Trading is a simple, robust and cost-effective process.

Thus new housing developments incorporating Balance Trading will be carbon neutral in the short term and this will accelerate carbon savings in the housing stock over the next decade or so. Moreover this approach will provide additional funds for energy efficiency investment in the existing housing stock in nearby neighbourhoods. Thus local residents in growth areas will have some immediate and tangible benefit from new housing development in their area.

Balance Trading can also be applied to achieve water neutrality in new development to achieve further carbon reductions and conserve increasingly scarce water resources. The Environment Agency are currently making threatening noises about blocking development on the basis of its impact on water resources, but to date they have not acted. When they do the

developers in the South East will be in the front line, given the region's worsening water supply problems.

Over the next six months we will be working in partnership with eaga to promote the application of the concept of Balance Trading in new housing developments in the South East Region. This will involve raising awareness of the potential of Balance Trading with Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) and developers. The project aims to establish a dialogue with LPAs which are delivering growth and identify those which are interested in enabling developers to incorporate Balance Trading in housing development proposals. The project will then work with them to the point where the relevant policy commitments are made. In parallel, the project will work with developers to identify and address their concerns and refine the application of the concept.

This project is very timely. The Balance Trading concept was originally developed by the Sustainable Development Commission. The government is sensitive to the criticism that it has concentrated its efforts so far on reducing emissions from new building and will soon be launching new initiatives to reduce emissions by retrofitting.

Professor Mike Gibson, SECBE's managing consultant for this project, will be facilitating workshops on the concept and application of Balance Trading at two forthcoming SECBE conferences - Action for Sustainability on 27th September and Making the Planning Process More Efficient on 25th October – see page 12 for details.

# Off-site on track

**Off-site assembly is far from a new technology, but it's been relatively slow to take off in the UK. Joe McNulty, Director of Integra and Chair of SECBE's Planet Strategy Group, tells us how he's helping to blaze an innovative trail to efficiency in the South East.**

We like to think that British know-how is world-beating, but just occasionally we need to look elsewhere for our inspiration. That's why Joe McNulty developed a close relationship with the Sussex-based OSM Homes & Streif GmbH, an Anglo-German collaboration working to bring German innovations in off-site assembly to the South East region.

"I've been over to Germany and seen the factory," says Joe, "and, because they've been doing this for a long time now, their product is really advanced. For example, their technology means they can build a house in just two days. And, with Germany in recession, the sector is keen to develop new overseas markets through technology transfer." Hans Kohl, Director of OSM Homes & Streif GmbH, wasn't even involved in construction when he was asked to research the potential of prefabricated housing in the UK. He found the potential was 'fabulous', however, and quickly got involved.

"It will now take off hugely," he predicts. "The materials are sustainable and eco-friendly, so the product already complies with level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes. If you bring in additional technologies such as photovoltaics, it could easily reach a higher level, and it's absolutely future-proof."

Joe, already well-known for his pioneering approach to waste, will naturally also be in the vanguard of the change to German techniques. So does he see any barriers at all?

"Once again, it's a question of skills," says Joe. "Currently, we have German workers coming over in crews to erect the buildings. So we're in talks with Brighton City College to develop an NVQ at their new campus, as well as trying to persuade the manufacturers to invest in giving us a few houses for the students. It would be an almost perfect solution because each set of students could learn the practical side of putting the houses up and take them down again. May be they could even live in them for a while?"

"Either way, we need to teach workers a different skill set. Although not highly skilled, you could train someone in six months for example, it's a very different learning curve. We need 'generalists' with basic skills in many trades, people who know how to put things up level and straight."

***"We need 'generalists' with basic skills in many trades, people who know how to put things up level and straight."***



With Joe's expertise in waste – this is, after all, a man who knows exactly what the contents of his skips are worth – it's also natural to ask about the waste issues associated with prefabricated housing.

"Almost zero," he says. "Off-site manufacturing creates 80% less waste, and the 20% gets dealt with in the factory, where they use off-cuts to fire the boiler. And there's no cutting to do on site as it's pre-assembled." But the use of prefabricated housing also means the end of another sort of waste – that of time.

"Obviously you're not so dependent on the weather," says Joe. "You can be in the dry after the first two days, and get a house finished in six weeks. And clearly that's going to compare very well with the 32-35 weeks needed for a brick-built house."

Is this also going to be the solution to that holy grail – affordable housing in the South East? Unfortunately not, we're told. "It doesn't really affect pricing," says Joe, "although the cost is more predictable, and the building will be going up more quickly. But, unfortunately, costs can still increase half-way through the building process; you might still receive a letter from the builder's merchant informing you of a 15% increase on bricks and there's nothing you can do!"

Aside from affordability, the whole concept of prefabricated housing seems to be beneficial to everyone. So the question remains as to why it has taken the UK so long to catch up with the continent. "Housing demands are unpredictable in the UK," Joe says. "We tend to boom and then bust. It's so volatile that no one wants to spend £50 million on a factory. But the social housing agenda has changed things – factories are forming partnerships with housing associations who can say that they will be ordering 10,000 a year, for the next five years. That kind of volume creates a climate for commercial investment. It's going take off and I predict that within five years, the majority of houses will be built off-site".

**YOURBusiness**, therefore, recommends keeping a close eye on the development of off-site in the UK – it's been shown in the past that when Joe McNulty thinks something's a good idea, it tends to catch on!

# Learn lean



Mike Nelson, Construction Director of Hillson Builders Limited and Chairman of SECBE's Productivity Strategy Group tells how his company is on the fast track to success through SECBE's Lean programme

It's 7am, a truck is at the gate with material for that day. It sits there because there's no crane to unload it. It's a tight site, access is blocked; neighbourly relations are becoming strained, and no one can move about the site. The crane rolls up an hour later. You've lost work time (and money); the crane will run late for the rest of the day losing the hire company money.

This tale is not unusual and is typical of the areas where we have to think differently if we are to raise productivity. "We are used to being at the beck and call of suppliers," says Mike Nelson. "It causes frustration, but people are used to suffering these situations."

Hillson Builders will no longer accept this as the norm, our company is putting into place a Lean Construction programme which is tackling pre-start working practices, efficient process handling and waste elimination. Improving delivery is a key target. Hillson Builders is working in partnership with SECBE and Lean Practitioners to deliver the programme.

A great example of how Lean can work in practice is illustrated by the way Hillson Builders are tackling the delivery problem where the company is working on a lot of sites restricted in size and working area, particularly in places like London and Cambridge. They talked to their supply

chain about just-in-time delivery, and agreed a process of timed deliveries throughout the day as far ahead in the project as possible. One of the options they use is taking major deliveries at their own yards to enable transportation into town in smaller vehicles. The double handling is sub-optimal, the site could be 20 miles away, but the important thing is that they have control.

Mike explains "It's a completely self-taught solution, but we found our suppliers were pretty much in favour. For example, if you're planning to have a crane on-site for two hours, and it's there for three because of supply problems, the crane company will have a problem with other clients for the rest of that day because the schedule's out. So there are benefits for them as well."

As part of the process, all supply chain partners will be monitored using Key Performance Indicators which measure performance on delivery. Mike says performance is generally good, and suppliers only get a call if it falls outside acceptable parameters."

The SECBE Lean Programme focuses on learning to work with each supplier, not unilaterally dictating terms but developing a series of partnerships. "With a new supplier, it takes about three months to get used to how they work," Mike says. "We want to understand their way of working, because we've got a vested interest in enabling them to perform well – it's a two-way-street. We see logistics as very influential on the performance of our business"

Mike thinks that this is a very real culture change and it will take time to get used to the new way of working,

but says that the will is there to achieve it. "People are very supportive at the moment, he says. " They can see that the stumbling blocks in our delivery mechanism cause internal frustration, and everyone's keen to improve that. The Lean system is a global team approach – no individual gets blamed. There's ownership of individual tasks, but within a team culture."

Mike is looking forward to the new process becoming embedded. Under the new programme, at the beginning of any project, there will be an initial all-day 'think tank' where the pre-start process is critically analysed. Then, there will be a series of group discussions to determine what will move the process forward, and what is wasted effort. "It's a massive task and we've all got to do our bit," he says, "but it's very exciting and I'm looking forward to it."

He has plenty of advice for other companies thinking of going Lean: "Discuss your requirements with SECBE, and they will be able to guide you on the best way forward for your company. You could pick 10 construction companies and they all operate in different ways. There's no universal fit."

"Lean is supported through SECBE's Productivity Strategy Group, and the aim is to get another seven companies interested in the programme for next year. I would really encourage interested companies to get in touch."

For more information about the SECBE Lean Programme contact Tina McGeachan, Marketing Manager on **0118 9207 204** or email **tina@secbe.org.uk**

# Concrete plans for sustainable construction

**Continuing our series of 12 priority technologies identified by SECBE to drive productivity gains, we highlight the three grouped under concrete - insulated concrete formwork, tunnel form construction and prestressed concrete.**

According to SECBE Project Manager Martin Camilleri, there's one important fact we often forget about concrete. "Concrete has strong sustainability credentials – in terms of the energy consumed in its manufacture. There are also a lot of myths about concrete, particularly relating to the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> produced per ton; a ton of concrete does not create a ton of carbon dioxide it actually only creates about 75-176 kilos of CO<sub>2</sub>, depending on the mix."

**Insulated Concrete Formwork (ICF)**  
Commonly called the ICF system, the approach uses twin walls of expanded polystyrene panels or polystyrene blocks. These create the formwork of the building which takes minimal steel reinforcement and are back filled with concrete. "It's particularly good on housing because of its flexibility and fast curing rate," says Martin.

"It's also very robust and very well insulated. The Building Regulations Part L1a – regarding the conservation of fuel and power in dwellings, are easily satisfied. In fact, it's quite easy to get far greater performances than demanded by the Building Regulations. The carbon rating in terms of eco homes standards, can easily achieve level 4 and above. Countries like Canada and Scandinavia are using ICF as they've seen the insulation benefits in these extreme

climates where it's really important. Also, you can render the outside to fit with tradition of building as well as offering more contemporary design possibilities for cladding and renders.

"In terms of building, it's suitable for low-to-medium rise construction. It's also great for the self-build market because it's basically using unskilled labour. 8% of the housing market is already self-build in the UK, but in Germany it's 25%. We'll see more and more of this in the future."

## **Tunnel form construction**

This technique uses formwork cast in one operation on a daily cycle. "It's good for high rise apartments, social housing and hotels" says Martin. The walls and the floors are cast in-situ on table-forms and it can be used for actual spans of 3m by 7m, which can be linked together. As Martin points out, this gives flexibility within spaces with non-load bearing partitioning, as there can be any variation of plan types within the system. It's ideal for fast track and hybrid construction using steel tunnel forms using the French based Outinorde systems."

## **Prestressed concrete beams and floors**

"There are now new systems using styrene blockwork as well as concrete beams, blocks and planks so that the technology is precast as well as prestressed," says Martin. "It's very economical for suspended ground floors on difficult sites such as filled ground and sloping sites. It's also very cost effective when used with precast microbore piling systems, in conjunction with ground beams. In terms of project programming, it gives contractors the flexibility of not having to consider

carrying out ground works only in the spring or summer season of good construction weather"

SECBE has a dedicated discussion forum and business network to drive innovative developments in technology and address related skills issues. Join the conversation today to voice your opinions, concerns or ask questions and we will ensure you receive a response from an expert.  
[www.secbe.org.uk/secbeforums](http://www.secbe.org.uk/secbeforums)

## **What and where?**

Follow SECBE's skills map to find all the answers

Taking all 12 of the technologies prioritised in the Technology Skills project, we have identified the skills and qualifications for:

- The design team: to enable you to incorporate these technologies into your design
- The site management team: to understand changes in the building process and to manage your resources
- For site operatives: to ensure safe and efficient build

We have mapped the appropriate training providers and courses in the South East. So the next time you're thinking of specifying or using something new you can find all the information you need.

See [www.secbe.org.uk/tsp](http://www.secbe.org.uk/tsp)

## Show urgency now, win plenty of business in the future

**Derek Rees, SECBE Chief Executive advises your Business that being better than the competition will be the key to long term success.**

“There should be a greater sense of urgency in the sector,” he says. “There are business opportunities coming up over the next few years which could provide any firm in the region with a bedrock for growth and a sustainable future. If we act we can ensure that one-off opportunities, created by events such as 2012, are taken by companies within the region. If we don’t, we might miss out and, worse, competitors from outside might benefit at our expense. Seize our opportunities now, and we really can ensure a prosperous future.”

Derek argues that we’re part of the

international arena today whether we like it or not. The Olympics is just one opportunity for the region; there are going to be at least 30,000 new houses built here each year until 2016, and a £10 billion Schools for the Future programme is also planned. “The major international players in the industry are going to be rushing like bees to a honey pot for this kind of work,” he says. “As an industry, we may have strong foundations for growth and we are very successful, but much more needs to be done if we are to keep predators at bay. We need innovative and creative thinking, we have to get lean and mean, if we’re going to win our share of this very attractive market.”

And to help us to prepare to compete in our own back yard, Derek also says that maybe we should be looking beyond the



region ourselves. “We aspire to be world class,” he says. “We’ll have to be to compete so we should be looking beyond our borders ourselves. It can be very good for a business - independent research confirms that businesses which are export-ready are more than 30% more productive than companies which are not. People who are seeking to become international have to be leaner and smarter.”

**“Our sector, especially here in the South East, can have a fantastic future,” says Derek. “But we have to up our competitive game if we’re going to win all those possible contracts”**

## Bidding for Gold Project evolvment

**For those who thought that the ESF-funded project ‘Bidding for Gold’ is just about forming joint ventures to win Olympic contracts, think again!**

“The original aim of the programme has not altered, but there has been a real shift of emphasis,” explains SECBE Project Manager, Martin Camilleri. “The programme was devised to help SMEs form consortia to bid for any large construction project, ones they would be unable to tender for as a single organisation. The specialist skills being taught at our series of workshops, such as market analysis, tendering and procurement, are aimed at equipping SMEs to bid for, and secure, any sizeable contract – individually or in partnership with others”.

‘Bidding for Gold’ is open to all businesses from house builders to engineering firms, as well as architects, electrical contractors, general builders or shop-fitters. Anyone, essentially, who is working in the built environment and based in the South East.

From the autumn until June 2008, ‘Bidding for Gold’ will be delivering a revised series of interchangeable half-day workshops and networking opportunities across the

South East region. Companies wanting to join will be charged a one-off fee of £242.70 (inclusive of VAT) for any of the seven workshops – which represents training worth in excess of £2,000 on the open market. This will also entitle them to attend ‘Bidding for Gold’ specialist networking events featuring renowned industry figureheads as guest speakers.

As Martin explains: “We’re structuring the programme to take members on a journey; maximising opportunities for learning to work with others and helping consortia to diversify contract opportunities. It’s about more work and about better work – developing a more stable business and income. We’ll be showing attendees exactly where contracts are available at the moment, and the guest speakers will cover topics such as getting on preferred contractors lists for local authorities.”

So what exactly do participating companies get for their money? Firstly, they’ll receive relevant workshop training on topics including market analysis, tendering and procurement processes, project management, bid writing, partnership and team working and

business improvement. Secondly, they’ll be invited to attend ‘Bidding for Gold’ networking events. These events will be themed, with upcoming events including specific information, advice and guidance sessions on topics such as ‘accessing the latest contract information’ and ‘getting on a preferred contractors list’.

They’ll also meet, and work with, other clients and companies in the built environment sector with complementary skills giving them an opportunity to form flexible consortia with access to support from key bodies in the sector.

“It really is a tremendous opportunity for SMEs looking not only to expand their business now, but also looking to pick up skills that will benefit companies and individuals in the future,” Martin Camilleri explains. So if you’d like more information on how to get involved, call Martin on **0118 9207 201** today.

Bidding for Gold is managed by Business Link Solutions in partnership with the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) and the South East Centre for the Built Environment (SECBE)

# Sustainable construction needs consistency and common sense

Buildings generate 50% of all carbon emissions and 20% of landfill, an increasing cost to construction firms and building owners/occupiers. Our sector has a duty and commercial interest to tackle these issues now. But delegates at recent seminars organised by SECBE called on the Government to provide consistency, common sense and leadership, if sustainable construction is to be achieved.

Speaking to construction companies, architects and developers, keynote speaker Dr. Richard Williams, of the Environment Centre (TEC) in Southampton, said: "Attitudes towards sustainable construction have to change and we have to address this agenda now."

Discussions highlighted the challenges faced by the industry if it is to thrive under the Code for Sustainable Homes. Lack of joined up thinking from government on targets was an issue, especially where these ignored cost implications and the present technical inability to deliver the highest standards. Equally, there was a credibility gap between the Government's new pressure to radically increase the quantity of housing while setting high sustainability targets without them being unaffordable. There was concern, too, that a lack of local authority knowledge regarding sustainable construction meant they could not advise developers effectively.

Simon Pentecost of the Jenner Group whose work includes social housing, said: "The Prime Minister's policy statement,

which argued for 'More homes, more cheaply and more sustainable' was sadly a non-sequitur. Sustainability at present cannot mean cheaper and will not, until technology advances."

Another guest speaker Nick Lomax, Managing Director of LCE Architects and a member of the SECBE Management Board, said: "It's good to aspire to high targets in the Sustainability Code. But I believe it is a blunt instrument; not enough of the code is related to global

warming, the increments in the target emissions are too large and the highest levels are unattainable without new technologies." He suggested that the extra costs using existing technologies, for the middle levels, were likely to be between £5,000 and £20,000 per home. An experimental 'zero-carbon' house, with overall 'negative' CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, which his organisation was designing would be powered by wind turbines and solar energy as well as facing south, but was likely to cost £40,000-£50,000 extra.

## UK Government Sustainable Construction Strategy – Consultation Workshops

The draft strategy for sustainable construction: a consultation document was issued on Monday 30 July 2007 with a closing date for submissions of 30 November 2007.

### **To achieve our sustainable development goals, we have to change the way we build.**

The government will consult widely in order to achieve an agreed partnership approach with industry to drive forward the sustainability agenda. This draft Government/industry Strategy provides a catalyst to achieve a step-change in the sustainability of the procurement, design, construction and operation of all built assets. You can view the consultation paper at [www.secbe.org.uk](http://www.secbe.org.uk)

Respondents/consultees are invited to submit their returns using the pro-forma attached to the consultation document. In addition SECBE, as regional partners for Constructing Excellence will be holding focused workshops to provide you with an opportunity to identify barriers and priorities for action. These workshops are supported by the Construction Sector Unit (CSU) of the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) to generate a richer dialogue and response around the draft strategy.

For more information contact Tina McGeachan, Marketing Manager on **0118 9207 204** or email [tina@secbe.org.uk](mailto:tina@secbe.org.uk)



# Green grand design

Martin Charter, Director of the Centre for Sustainable Design ([www.cfsd.org.uk](http://www.cfsd.org.uk)) at University College for the Creative Arts UK, talks to **YOUR** Business about designing for a sustainable future.

implications – until now. Various companies are starting to adapt existing business processes and management systems to take account of product-related environmental issues.”

More and more laws to encourage green consumption and production are being enacted. Terms like ‘producer responsibility’, product take back, economic incentives or penalties and eco labelling laws are hitting the statute books; early examples have included electronics, cars and packaging. The EC is trying to develop an Integrated Product Policy (IPP) to set a future framework for green and sustainable regulation and as is already clear, the built environment sector is going to be no exception.

“Addressing the organisational dimensions of this will be key issue,” he says. “The development of simple – but not simplistic – tools to analyse and enable sustainability impacts and improvements will be a growing imperative. We may see major companies start to design for their own ‘closed loops’, which means that they would develop their own systems and infrastructure to make sure eco-design happens.”

According to Martin Charter dramatic economic growth from China and India linked to ‘low-cost sourcing’ by transnationals is driving the world economy. As manufacturing moves to Asia, design, assembly and manufacturing is becoming ever more geographically diffuse, irrespective of where the point of final consumption takes place. The environment has, however, taken a back seat in the short-term – with eco-design considerations still embryonic.

A key issue for many companies is presenting the internal business case for eco-design and winning over middle-management, who tend to be, as Martin puts it, “largely concerned with three things: finance, finance and finance.” Martin believes this will be brought more sharply into focus across Europe with the forthcoming Directive implementing measures related to the Energy Using Products (EuP).

But there are dramatic future implications for product design and development, particularly for the West where interest in sustainable consumption and production is increasing all the time. Climate change has emerged as a major issue which will have a profound impact on behaviours, policy and regulation.

Martin says that public procurement could also become a leader for improving sustainable performance. “A major opportunity for product and service design and development may well emerge from the growing interest in Europe and the US in the use of public procurement as a tool to drive improvement,” he says.

Most product-related environmental improvements are incremental or based on re-designs. Martin explains. “There’s very little radical innovation focused on significant reduction in materials and energy use throughout the lifecycle. Most eco-design is practised by advanced, transnational companies and there has been very little penetration among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The focus is on eco-design compliance and design for ‘end of life’ rather than wider lifecycle considerations.” What is not being taken into account are organisational

Another strand is being driven by rising energy prices and concerns over energy security. This will lead to the increasing integration of material and energy aspects in product design and development, alongside the traditional cost and quality parameters.

But Martin admits that not all questions about the future can be answered as yet. “How will competitive pricing be affected by the rising influence of Chinese and Indian brands and acquisitions? How can companies compete in a globalised market? We can’t say. Right now, we need to consider the policies and innovations that will enable us to have a sustainable – and competitive – future.”



Dr. Richard Williams

Mr Lomax felt the Code should be mandatory, so everyone knew where they were. But it would need a lot of promotion and training so everyone in the sector knew the sustainability score.

Les Johnson, Director of GC Partnership in Ashford, agreed that cost was a major concern: “Maybe there should be some financial incentive – building societies could offer lower mortgage rates for a more sustainable house, for instance.” He added that government departments needed to work more closely together so that there were consistent targets everyone could achieve. Mr. Johnson agreed that there was a case for making the targets mandatory.

Laura Bramley, SECBE Project Manager for Sustainable Construction, told delegates that for social housing in particular the Government would have to be realistic on sustainability targets as everything would be controlled by budgets. She added that local authorities should work together to provide consistent rules and they and central government would have to find ways of promoting best practice to achieve targets rather than just set them and walk away.

The Seminars were part of a Pilot Project for Sustainable Construction funded by the European GROW programme, exploring new ways of reducing the impact on our environment that can arise from economic growth within Europe’s most successful regions.

# Forthcoming SECBE Events

## Making the Planning Process More Efficient

Thursday, 25 October 2007 from 09.00 to 16.00  
Arora International Hotel, Crawley

Gordon Brown wants an immediate increase in housing construction to meet ambitious targets for the South East. Can the sector deliver 32,000 new dwellings a year from now to 2016 and beyond?

This conference aims to:

- examine the challenges, for developers and local authorities alike, in improving the planning system;
- assess the likely impact of the further reforms of the planning system which are soon to come on stream; and
- discuss and share practical steps that the sector can take to overcome the obstacles to improved efficiency, focusing on innovation and best practice.

A mixture of presentations and workshops will provide you with an opportunity to learn and participate. There will be presentations from Paul Hudson, Chief Planner, CLG (Communities and Local Government); Huw Morris, Editor, Planning – the Journal of the Royal Town Planning Institute; Martin Tugwell, Planning Implementation Director – SEERA (South East Regional Assembly); Jane Hamilton, Chief Operating Officer, Milton Keynes Partnership; Brian White, Head of Development Services, Thanet District Council.

The workshops are all led by key players and the topics include: the work of Urban Vision in improving service delivery, speed and quality; the PAS view of the future, including prospective Planning Performance Agreements; the delivery of carbon neutral neighbourhoods; and community engagement.

This conference is a 'must' for planners, developers and designers. Go to: [www.secbe.org.uk](http://www.secbe.org.uk) for further information

Supported by:



**RTPI**

mediation of space · making of place



## 2012 Construction Commitments Roadshow 2007

Thursday, 22 November 2007 from 09.00 to 16.00  
Arora International Hotel, Crawley

The Construction Commitments bring together the six key areas vital to delivering projects in time, safely and to budget. They represent the principles by which we will endeavour to achieve a better industry and exceed current best practice.

- Procurement & Integration
- Client Leadership
- Design Quality
- Commitment to People
- Sustainability
- Health & Safety

All public sector construction projects will shortly require businesses to operate on the core values set out in the 2012 Construction Commitments. There will be a demand for delivery over and above both Common Minimum Standards and 2007 CDM regulations.

This conference will:

- Help you understand the impact of OCG's Common Minimum Standards for the procurement of built environments
- Establish the impact of the 2007 CDM Regulations
- Demonstrate how best practice can be applied in a way that delivers good results
- Provide "meet the buyer" opportunities through workshops and facilitated speed networking

For further information, contact Tina McGeachan on **0118 9207 204** or email [tina@secbe.org.uk](mailto:tina@secbe.org.uk)

## Talk adds value – SECBE's online forums

In response to demand and the needs of the industry, SECBE has developed a number of online discussion forums. They are designed to provide you with an opportunity to share experiences, gain advice and, above all, to challenge the status quo and find innovative ways of working.

### What is a discussion forum?

A forum functions much like a bulletin board; users submit postings for all to read and discussion ensues. Participants can make comments and ask questions to a large number of people from across the construction and built environment sectors. Online forums give readers a chance to reflect on postings and seek out further information before making a fully informed response. SECBE has discussions open for all five of our priority areas, People, Planet, Planning, Productivity and Procurement. Examples of topics include, wind turbines, heat pumps, structural building materials, Site Waste Management Plans and global competitiveness. Join in today: Go to: [www.secbe.org.uk/secbeforums](http://www.secbe.org.uk/secbeforums)