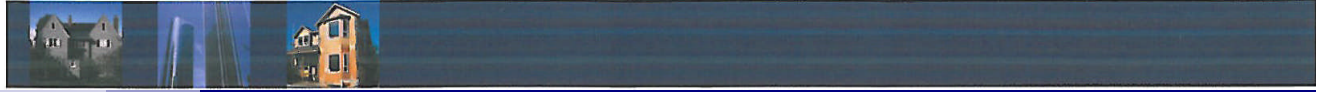


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## RICS Survey points to increasing Workload



**Rising workloads in the private commercial and housing sectors led to an overall improvement in the construction market, despite public sector activity continuing to fall during the first three months of 2011, says the latest RICS Construction Market Survey.**

Overall workloads improved during the last quarter, moving to a net balance of +6 from -5. However, this was largely boosted by the dramatic rise in activity seen by the private sector, with 17% more surveyors reporting workloads in commercial construction rose rather than fell.

The private housing sector also saw a welcome hike in activity, moving to a net balance of +8 (from -10). In contrast, however, public housing and public non-housing sectors continued to be the hardest hit, with net balances in both sectors remaining in negative territory.

The overall rise in workloads also masked stark regional differences, with work levels varying significantly across the UK. A North/South divide was apparent, with respondents in the South reporting increased activity and workloads seemingly dipping in the North. London and the South East reported the strongest figures, with a net balance of +24, whereas Northern Ireland recorded the largest falls in activity with a reading of -68.

Elsewhere, material costs continue to rise, with 62% more surveyors reporting a hike in prices, up from 56% during the previous three months. However, the cost of hiring tradespeople and professionals continued to slip, reflecting increased competition for jobs, which is driving down the cost of labour.

Looking ahead, surveyors revealed that the market remains competitive but are positive about future job prospects, for the first time since Q1 2008, with 5% more respondents expecting employment levels to rise rather than fall over the next 12 months.

Surveyors were similarly upbeat with predictions for workloads, at a net balance of +18, the best reading in three years. Nevertheless, perhaps unsurprisingly, estimated profit margins remain negative, with 30% more expecting profits to fall rather than rise over the coming year.

RICS chief economist Simon Rubinsohn said: "The stronger reading for construction output workloads in the first quarter of 2011 compared with the final three months of 2010 contrasts directly with recent ONS data - strengthening the case for an investigation into the quality of the official statistics. We are particularly encouraged by the indications that the private sector is not only seeing an increase in workloads but planning to raise employment.

"With impending public spending cuts, the construction industry is still likely to face significant challenges over the next twelve to eighteen months, but our latest results do provide a chink of light that things are beginning to get better."

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## Glasgow Legionnaires' now an outbreak

Health officials are treating the [incidence of Legionnaires' disease](#) in the Glasgow and Lanarkshire health board areas as an outbreak.

Of the seven people to have been confirmed as having the disease, three have died.

Public health protection units are investigating to identify the source of the disease that cannot be spread from person to person.

Legionnaires' disease is a form of pneumonia caused by inhaling small droplets of water suspended in the air, which contain the legionella pneumophila bacteria.

They are usually spread through aerosols produced from water, such as air conditioning systems and showers.

As design Engineers we all need to be vigilant against this disease and maintain Hot and cold water temperatures in line with recommendations

Poorly-maintained water and plumbing systems are often blamed for increasing the risk of the bacteria developing. It can grow in water temperatures between 20 and 45°C, although most healthy people who are exposed to the bacteria do not often become ill.

Instead, it mainly affects people who are susceptible because of age, illness, smoking and other pre-existing health conditions

## Chief Nuclear Inspector publishes interim 'lessons learnt' report

An interim assessment of the implications of the nuclear crisis in Japan concludes there is no need to curtail the operations of nuclear plants in the UK but lessons should be learnt.

The UK's Chief Inspector of Nuclear Installations, [Mike Weightman](#)<sup>[2]</sup>, today publishes a report, requested by the UK Government, in which he calls for action to be taken to learn from events at Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power station.

His report identifies 25 recommended areas for review - by either industry, the Government or regulators - to determine if sensible and appropriate measures can further improve safety in the UK nuclear industry. These include reviews of the layout of UK power plants, emergency response arrangements, dealing with prolonged loss of power supplies and the risks associated with flooding.

The 26th recommendation calls for plans to be published by the middle of June detailing how each of these 25 matters will be addressed.

Mike Weightman, executive head of the Office for Nuclear Regulation, said: "The extreme natural events that preceded the accident at Fukushima - the magnitude 9 earthquake and subsequent huge tsunami - are not credible in the UK. We are 1,000 miles from the nearest fault line and we have safeguards in place that protect against even very remote hazards.

Our operating and proposed future reactor designs and technology are different to the type at the Fukushima plant.

"But we are not complacent. No matter what the differences are, and how high the standard of design and subsequent operation of the nuclear facilities here in the UK, the quest for improvement must never stop. Seeking to learn from events, and from new knowledge, both nationally and internationally, must continue to be a fundamental feature of the safety culture of the UK nuclear industry.

"The Japanese people are still dealing with the aftermath of this terrible event. The full facts are not clear. I depart for Japan next week to lead a fact-finding mission on behalf of the International Atomic Energy Agency, with support from nuclear experts from across the world. This will help inform my final and more comprehensive 'lessons learned' report which I will publish in September."

The report published on 18th May 2011 was requested by the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change within days of the earthquake and subsequent tsunami of 11 March that led to the crisis at Fukushima Dai-ichi. This is the interim report requested by Chris Huhne. The full, more comprehensive report will be published in September.



Still some delegate places available.  
Don't miss out - Click here to register now

# GREEN DEAL OR NO DEAL

26TH MAY 2011 - HATFIELD

ASK THE QUESTION AT THE IDHEE CONFERENCE



With so many new developments in the world of heating and energy efficiency, our 2011 Conference will bring delegates up-to-date and look at what the future may hold, and can we really afford £6500 for each household to improve their energy efficiency?

## Fielder Conference Centre, Hatfield

### THURSDAY 26th MAY 2011

#### Conference Programme

- 09:00 Registration, tea and coffee
- 09:45 Introduction
- 10:00 Keynote paper - What's the Deal?  
David Purdy Head of Installation & delivery
- 10:45 Coffee break with bacon butties etc.
- 11:15 Paper 2 - Heat Pumps  
Max Halliwell
- 12:00 Paper 3 - Domestic Combined Heat & Power  
Simon Osbourne
- 12:45 Lunch break      Lunch break      Lunch break
- 14:15 Paper 4 - Rainwater harvesting  
David Byers
- 15:00 Paper 5 - Flue heat recovery  
John Wilson
- 15:45 Summing-up and Close.

#### Speaker Representing

- Department of Energy & Climate Change ([Confirmed](#))
- Mitsubishi Electric ([Confirmed](#))
- Baxi Group ([Confirmed](#))
- UK Rainwater Harvesting Association ([Confirmed](#))
- Ravenheat ([Confirmed](#))

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Take a Break—  
Good to have a sit back and  
Think DAY , Some times

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CDB consulting engineers is a new consultancy, with a team of engineers, the main parties who have been working within the building services industry each for over 30 years.

We all have a wide ranging experience across all types of building design which includes offices, retail, residential, schools, hospitals and all types of industrial buildings. We are working towards being in close partnership with our clients, design and contract team, offering advice from conceptual consultation through to full system design to ensure high-performance.

Having a wide experience, our personal and professional approach we offer to assist Architects, Developers, Main Contractors Local Council's and Health Authorities etc. CDB Consulting will deliver a complete range of mechanical and electrical services from industrial engineering to HVAC, hot and cold water services, public health engineering, network distribution, power and lighting control.

Other services include fire protection, security systems, voice and data communications technologies, as well as consultations and services that focuses on energy efficiency.

CDB Consultants aim to provide optimal solutions that meet the requirements of the building and the client, recognizing the importance of energy efficiency and cost management

Please feel free to visit our website where more information is available

**WE'RE ON THE WEB**  
**WWW.cdbconsulting.co.uk**

## Shapps Promises More Help for House builders

**Housing minister Grant Shapps welcomed new figures that show the country is starting to build more homes again and said that the industry can expect more help.**

Increasing the rate of housebuilding is a top priority for the government, he said, pointing incentives that have been introduced through the New Homes Bonus.

This week's figures show that there were just over 29,000 housebuilding starts in the first quarter of 2011, an increase of 26% compared with the previous quarter, and the highest quarterly figure for almost three years. Annual housing starts have also increased, with a rise of 22% compared with the 12 months to March 2010.

Shapps said the results show reasons for optimism in the construction sector, but that there would be no room for complacency in the drive to build more homes.

"When this Government came to power last year we surveyed the smoking wreckage of the construction sector and made a promise - that we would take swift and bold action to get Britain building again," he said. "Today's figures are welcome, but they are only the start of the story.

"I'm determined that there should be no slowing down on the road to recovery, so we will continue dismantling the failed Regional Strategies and their legacy of animosity between developers and communities, and return powers to the local level so communities can drive economic growth and create new jobs in their area. "

Welcome news for all, perhaps ?



**SAFETY, Will always come FIRST then THE CLIENT**