

INDUSTRY LEADER QUOTES ON LAUNCH OF ITB REVIEW: *TRANSFORMING THE CONSTRUCTION WORKFORCE,*

Mark Allnutt, Executive Director - Europe, Greystar, said: "Planning reform must be supported by measures to resolve the bottlenecks around construction, which are driving up costs and increasing uncertainty. It can cost 30% more to develop a build to rent scheme in the UK versus the USA, so we have to address outdated models and embrace innovation. Modular housing is one of a number of important delivery methods that present an opportunity to deliver high quality homes at speed while addressing the growing skills gap and the challenges posed by an ageing workforce. Bold steps must be taken to acknowledge and tackle the skills crisis to drive innovation."

Alan Bunting, Head of Development Delivery, British Land, said: "The ITB review aligns with our own aspirations to assist in attracting and retaining competent, well trained, and motivated workforce. The merging of the construction and construction engineering bodies into one is welcome; together with the strategic and operational recommendations they will drive improved productivity and resilience within increased construction sector capacity."

Chris Carr, Managing Director of Carr & Carr Builders and Federation of Master Builders National President, said: "Mark Farmer's review of the two Industry Training Boards is a vital step toward addressing the construction industry's skills crisis. The skills gap has hindered economic growth and the ability to complete critical infrastructure projects and housing targets.

The Transforming the Construction Workforce 2023 report advocates for a radical overhaul of training, especially in areas like retrofitting, to align with the evolving needs of the industry.

I support the report's call for modernising occupational and qualification standards but also acknowledge that the CITB is already making strides forward and hope the Government will implement some or all its recommendations to meet our infrastructure and housing goals."

Jennie Daly, CEO of Taylor Wimpey said: "I am delighted to see the thorough work that has gone into this review at a time when it is imperative to address skills gaps in the construction workforce to meet the UK's future housing needs. A focus on upskilling the entire workforce, rather than solely new entrants, including the introduction of an industry-wide digital skills passport scheme, could have a transformative impact on our workforce planning capabilities and allow the sector to build resilience."

John Dunkerley, CEO of Apache Capital Partners, said: “The recent market headwinds for the construction sector have been closely monitored by institutional investors and an important part of any investment case is building industry financial health and capability. In line with Labour’s objectives and growing the volume of homes across the tenure spectrum, including BTR, that will require a fundamental expansion in workforce as well as a step change in productivity. It is also vital that the skills gap is addressed, including the appropriate focus on modern methods of construction, and investors are actively engaged in shaping these industry outcomes through demand-side levers.

Rob Perrins, Berkeley Group Chief Executive, said: "The Government has made a hugely positive start to its pro-growth, pro-homebuilding agenda and is working hard to enable businesses like Berkeley Group to invest with greater certainty and confidence.

"As housing delivery begins to recover we need the industry and Government to work together to address the serious skills and workforce challenges that have hampered our productivity for far too long. This review provides a valuable blueprint for future collaboration and a more joined-up and flexible skills system that supports many more people into truly rewarding and successful built environment career

Leo Quinn, Balfour Beatty Group Chief Executive said: "This report provides a timely, thorough analysis as the sector considers the Consensus. However, its recommendation of an overhaul and merger of the two ITBs should be seen as the last chance to get this right. After years of reforms and reprieves, skills shortages continue to hold back this economically critical industry. With the Growth and Skills Levy approaching, the risk of duplication and inefficiency grows. The priority is clear: we must have a system that delivers real results."

David Thomas, Barratt Redrow Group Chief Executive, said “The construction industry has had a long-standing challenge on skills, a challenge that we have to overcome if we’re to build 1.5 million high quality homes over the next five years. Construction offers varied and rewarding career options and we must think differently if we’re to attract and grow the talent we need to be successful.

“Therefore, we support Mark Farmer’s thoughtful review and the recommendations designed to enable CITB to fully focus on the training and upskilling required to drive industry-wide competency and increase productivity. There is no quick fix, but alongside the HBF sector skills plan, the creation of Skills England and the new Growth and Skills Levy, this is a positive step towards creating the skilled workforce required to build the homes the UK needs.

Steve Wood, National House Building Council (NHBC) Chief Executive, said: “I welcome this timely report which highlights the urgent need for a transformation and expansion of the construction industry’s training practices and workforce. NHBC recognises many of the challenges noted within and is committed to working with Government and industry in closing the competency and productivity gaps.

“In support, NHBC will be investing £100m in a network of multi-skill training hubs, significantly increasing industry training capacity. The hubs will tackle the skills shortage head-on, making a real difference to the future of the industry.

“It is vital that workforce expansion goes hand-in-hand with a relentless focus on quality. That is why the apprentices at our hubs will be intensively trained to NHBC’s standards in real-site conditions, fully preparing them for life on site.

“From Government and industry to individual builders and developers, it is everyone’s responsibility to support the development of a skilled workforce fit to meet the country’s needs.”