

# Building excitement

**Richard Hall, managing director of Reynaers Aluminium UK, looks ahead to what's in store for the fenestration industry in 2024 as new legislation is expected to drive change through the introduction of the Building Safety Act and the build-up to the Future Homes Standard in 2025**

The past few years have seen considerable change for the fenestration industry – tighter regulations, economic uncertainty, and supply chain challenges. As we venture into 2024, the situation continues to be unpredictable with high interest rates and further increases in the cost of living continuing to impact investment in projects.

However, opportunities in aluminium remain; new regulations are imminent, and digitalisation can provide customers an even greater service.

According to the latest Construction Industry Forecast from Glenigan, commercial project starts are expected to see an increase of approximately 8% in the next 12 months, and then a further 7% in 2025. The Glenigan report also suggests a 4% increase in private housing project starts in 2024 and an 11% increase in 2025. Whilst we'd all like to see growth in both commercial projects and private housing developments, the latest Construction Products Association (CPA) forecast suggests a marginal fall of -0.3% in construction output in 2024, which includes no growth in private housing for either new build or repair, maintenance and improvement.

In addition, the latest Insight Data report shows a concerning decline in the overall number of fabricators and installers over the past five years. However, the demand for aluminium windows and doors looks set to continue, with the number of aluminium fabricators continuing to increase, standing at 921 in 2023. This is a good sign for the aluminium windows and doors supply chain.

Whilst the economic backdrop is one of uncertainty, Reynaers will rise to the challenge, developing innovative solutions to support the growth of our customer base.

## Future Homes Standard

Great strides have been made in increasing the thermal efficiency of window and door systems to cut energy use and support global efforts to reach net zero. Our comprehensive Part L campaign in 2022 outlined changes to Part L and the continuing requirement to achieve lower U-values, as well as the comprehensive range of compliant window, door and façade systems we can provide. Now, following the recent release of the consultation document, which sets out government plans for changes to the Future Homes Standard in 2025, we acknowledge that these have provided the industry with mixed news. However, you can be reassured that Reynaers will continue to provide aluminium solutions that are fit for a better future.

To support sustainable building design, Reynaers will introduce a number of new and updated products throughout 2024 and beyond, which will provide further improvement in the thermal efficiency and sustainability credentials of our windows, doors and curtain walling. All



**Richard Hall**

of which will be tested and certified to stringent standards.

## Building Safety Act

The introduction of the Building Safety Act will have a significant impact on the construction industry as a whole, driving up standards in manufacturing, specification and installation to support improved safety and accountability.

Proof of testing, certification and an accessible trail of traceable information will be essential for any parties involved in building projects to evidence the golden thread of information. With tighter regulations for buildings above 18 metres, curtain walling and window systems for high-rise projects will need to be specified at the design stage and demonstrate that they do not contain combustible material.

## Digitalisation

Digitalisation will continue to be a major focus. Reynaers has a range of new digital solutions due to be launched throughout 2024, including digital passports, a new digital document portal, enhancements to our BIM offering, and an embodied carbon calculator.

We aim to bring absolute clarity to product information, which will deliver the accountability needed for the golden thread and sustainable building design. Product-specific manuals will also be made available through our new digital document portal to support fabricators and installers to find information and instructions easily. □

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