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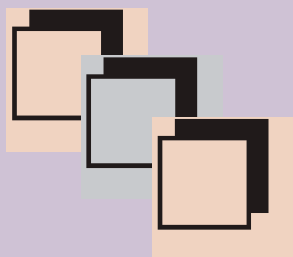
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# THE FABRICATOR

## Comment

We survived the pandemic and a six-month shut down. We even survived Brexit so what next for the industry? It is not all good out there despite the window industry's hyper optimism. Recently we lost Duraflex, one of the UK's original systems companies. Also a major fabricator recently issued a profit warning. Newbuild, on which we have come to rely strongly for growth in recent times, is itself struggling.

As providers of insulation products, we are also having to cope with net zero even if the government doesn't take us seriously. Net zero is a government policy – or fantasy – and, like it or not, we are involved. The nub of the issue is the 'Future Homes Standard' and this affects the whole house building industry. It dictates what materials should be used in construction – triple glazing gets a special mention – what forms of energy systems should be used for heating and hot water.

Heating and powering buildings accounts for 30% of the UK's total energy usage. This is what future homes is set to address.

The revised parts F and L of the building regulation are part of this and must be adhered to when 'constructing, extending or renovating UK homes'. The contradiction between insulation and ventilation will not be discussed here (again) or, apparently, by any of the legislators who clearly haven't thought that one through. Part L sets out minimum energy efficiency performance targets for buildings, *airtightness requirements* and improved minimum insulation standards. Part F is just about ventilation – so no airtightness needed there then.

A recent report indicated that the fenestration industry is 'not ready' to implement the standard and I suspect that a lot of people don't know much about it beyond the headlines. Not to worry: there is a committee set up to implement future homes and at least the co-chair is a proper person, not a politician or civil servant. Matthew Pratt is the chief executive of housebuilder Redrow, so knows about the business. His co-chair is Catherine Adams, director of building systems and net zero at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

Other members of the board include National Federation of Builders' head of housing Rico Wojtulewicz, Construction Industry Training Board's chief executive Tim Balcon, Home Builders Federation's managing director Neil Jefferson and Construction Products Association's deputy chair Peter Caplehorn.

This is going to be serious stuff for the industry. There is already talk of upping the requirements of doc L and could make triple glazing mandatory. Good news for glass makers but it could affect the whole building chain needing not only substantial frames but the construction side will have to accommodate it too.

Edgetech MD Chris Alderson and Kevin O'Neill, commercial manager at Rehau both write about the future homes standard in this issue. (pages 20 and 22). Their message is clear: we have to work to this standard and we had better get on with it. There isn't much time.

*John Roper*