

# Homes England commissions MMC research study to drive construction innovation

- As part of the agency's strategic objective to improve construction productivity and encourage the uptake of MMC in housing delivery, a series of Homes England's own sites will participate in the study.
- Monitoring the construction of around 1,500 homes at sites across country over several years, the study will test the performance of different types of MMC.
- The research will explore a range of themes and seek to learn lessons about how MMC technologies might be improved upon in future.

Homes England has commissioned its own research study into modern methods of construction (MMC) to drive innovation in the construction industry.

As part of the government housing agency's strategic objective to improve construction productivity and encourage the uptake of MMC in housing delivery, a series of Homes England's own sites will participate in the study, delivering ambitious levels of MMC which are higher than the market norm.

Monitoring the construction of around 1,500 homes at sites across country over several years, the study will test the performance of different types of MMC to provide long-term, in-depth and verifiable data so that informed decisions about emerging construction technologies can be made.

Sites confirmed as being part of the study so far include:

Northstowe Phase 2a, a 406-home 100% MMC neighbourhood in Cambridgeshire being brought forward by House by Urban Splash; the partnership between Urban Splash, Sekisui House and Homes England. The modular homes will be manufactured in the House factory in Alfreton, East Midlands.

Spencer's Park in Hemel Hempstead, a 600-home development by Countryside, where all the homes will be closed panel timber frame units.

The 87-home York Road development being delivered by Vistry Partnerships in Birmingham. The homes will be built using a timber frame closed panel system, delivered to site for assembly.

The study will also monitor sites in Swindon, Warrington, Newcastle and Milton Keynes, with details to be announced in the coming months.

Covering a range of offsite and modular building techniques, modern methods of construction have the potential to be significantly more productive than traditional building methods; allowing homes to be built more quickly, addressing labour and skills shortages and improving the quality, consistency and energy efficiency of newly built homes.

The research will explore a range of themes, including cost and pace of build compared to traditional building methods, skills required, safety performance, snagging and defect issues, construction wastage, energy efficiency performance and post-occupation performance. The study will also seek to learn lessons about how these technologies might be improved upon in future and give confidence to the industry to encourage more widespread use of MMC technologies.

Atkins and Faithful+Gould have been appointed as the agency's research and development partner for the project. Working with the Building Research Establishment and University College London, they will collect and monitor data from the developers and produce annual updates on the research findings, before a final report is published at the end of the build programme.

Housing Minister Rt Hon Christopher Pincher MP said:

"Building the homes the country needs is a priority for the Government and modern methods of construction have enormous potential to not only accelerate this work but to deliver better quality homes too.

"I am delighted that this research will bring together some of the most promising housebuilding innovations around today. Such an extensive and practical study will no doubt inform housebuilding for years to come."

Nick Walkley, Chief Executive of Homes England, said:

"If we are to deliver homes at the scale, pace and quality the country needs, we have to seriously shake up how we build homes in England. This is at the very heart of our mission and it means embracing new technologies like modern methods of construction.

"Despite the impact of coronavirus being felt across the housebuilding sector, Homes England is open for business. We can be certain that the demand for high-quality homes will remain and concerns about labour supply or quality will not go away.

"Now more than ever, we recognise that more needs to be done to share learning and build confidence in MMC. This large-scale, long-term and in-depth research project will provide the sector with the critical evidence it needs to make informed decisions about MMC and deliver better homes faster."

Jon Swan, Client Director for Homes England, Atkins, said:

"With UK-wide expertise in the housing sector, we have an appetite for doing things differently. Relying on a solutions-based approach, our team will gather comparable and verifiable data to evaluate how MMC could be used to solve the construction industry's flatlining productivity and other key challenges within the UK's residential sector.

"The first step will be to establish a benchmark approach to measuring the impact of MMC. This consistency in analysis across the industry will lead to an ever-growing data set on MMC, with the potential to inform and improve the housing industry for years to come."

Andrew Prickett, Head of Residential, Faithful+Gould, said:

“The UK is currently tasked with the target of delivering 300,000 new homes every year. Through this landmark initiative, we will collect and analyse a substantial body of data to quantify the performance of modern methods of construction and bring clarity to the housing industry on the benefits of choosing this technology. Working closely with Homes England, this is a great opportunity to explore house building best practice and find ways to make housing safer, more affordable and more efficient to build.”

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### **About Homes England**

[Homes England](#) is the Government’s housing accelerator. We have the appetite, influence, expertise and resources to drive positive market change. By releasing more land to developers who want to make a difference and investing in infrastructure, we are making possible the new homes the country needs.

We welcome partners who share our ambition to challenge the traditional norms and build better homes faster.

### **About Atkins**

[Atkins](#) is one of the world’s most respected design, engineering and project management consultancies, employing over 18,300 people across the UK, North America, Middle East and Africa, Asia Pacific and Europe. We build long-term trusted partnerships to create a world where lives are enriched through the implementation of our ideas. You can view Atkins’ recent projects [here](#).

### **About Faithful+Gould**

[Faithful+Gould](#) is a world leading integrated project and program management consultancy. Operating at the forefront of our industry for 70 years, our integrated approach delivers business improvements and efficiencies across every environment and every sector. Faithful+Gould is a member of the SNC-Lavalin Group.

### **About SNC-Lavalin**

Founded in 1911, [SNC-Lavalin](#) is a fully integrated professional services and project management company with offices around the world. SNC-Lavalin connects people, technology and data to help shape and deliver world-leading concepts and projects, while offering comprehensive innovative solutions across the asset lifecycle. Our expertise is wide-ranging – consulting & advisory, intelligent networks & cybersecurity, design & engineering, procurement, project & construction management, operations & maintenance, decommissioning and sustaining capital – and delivered to clients in four strategic sectors: EDPM (engineering, design and project management), Infrastructure, Nuclear and Resources, supported by Capital. People. Drive. Results.

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