

Housing Minister announces new champion for modern housebuilding

- Construction and real estate expert Mark Farmer appointed as Champion for Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) in housebuilding
- New Champion will oversee delivery of minister's Advanced Construction Corridor in the North
- Comes at a turning point for MMC just as the government launches biggest ever investment into an offsite manufacturer to boost production and the UK sets a world record for the tallest modular building

Housing Minister Esther McVey MP has announced a new Champion for Modern Methods of Construction as part of the government's drive to make the UK the global leader in housing standards.

Mark Farmer brings 30 years' experience in construction to the role and will provide independent scrutiny and advice to the Government on how to increase the use of MMC in homebuilding. He will also be charged with developing the '[Construction Corridor](#)' in the North and promoting wider innovation in the sector.

Farmer will also act as an ambassador overseas for the UK's MMC activities in homebuilding, using international networks and trade opportunities to attract investment into an industry that could be worth an estimated £40 billion once mature.

It follows a major funding deal, as the Housing Minister announced the government was injecting £30 million into ilke Homes, the biggest ever government investment in an MMC factory, as we develop a Construction Corridor in the North. This new, transformational funding will play a crucial role in the scaling up of production, bringing down production costs and allowing up to 8 homes, which will create less waste and be more energy efficient, to be built a day.

Housing Minister Esther McVey MP said:

I want to see modern methods of construction – the new gold standard of building – being used up and down the country to usher in a green housing revolution. That's why it is such fantastic news that Mark Farmer has agreed to be our new MMC Champion – to really drive forward innovation, and to help the government deliver a new generation of green homes.

MMC Champion Mark Farmer said:

I am delighted to have been asked to carry out this new role. This is a really important time for the construction industry and there is an urgent need to rethink how we build homes, delivering better quality, improved safety, carbon reduction and an array of exciting new career opportunities.

I look forward to working with both industry and Government to make sure we now accelerate the uptake of modern methods of construction.

Russell Pedley, co-founder at Assael Architecture who co-chairs the Urban Land Institute UK Residential Council with Mark Farmer, said:

Mark is the perfect ambassador for the sector and this welcome appointment shows ministers are really prioritising ways to build cleaner, better quality homes more quickly in factories

Modern Methods of Construction are a combination of offsite manufacturing and onsite techniques that provide alternatives to traditional house building, allowing homes to be built quickly, be more energy efficient and better designed. It can deliver high-quality housing at pace and it has been shown that some homes built using modern methods have 80% fewer defects and can reduce heating bills by to 70%.

Some of the main benefits of MMC housing include:

- Speed – homes delivered using MMC are manufactured offsite with less disruption than onsite construction.
- Reduced carbon footprint – homes built using MMC have the potential to contribute significantly to the reduction of carbon emissions, through greater precision in the manufacturing process leading to more energy-efficient homes and reduced construction waste.
- Skills – production lines enable companies to take apprentices and train them on specific tasks irrespective of their backgrounds.
- Safety – As Dame Judith Hackitt points out ‘Over the longer term, it is expected that the changes set out in the report will lead to the greater use of more standard and better quality assured systems being constructed offsite and less elemental construction onsite.

This news also comes days after the final piece of the world's tallest modular building was installed in Croydon, just 35 weeks after construction started. The two towers of 101 George Street, developed by Tide and its sister company Vision Modular Systems in its Bedford factory, stand at 44-storeys and 135.6m it is the tallest modular apartment tower in the world – the same height as the London Eye.

- To date more than £233 million of loans have been agreed for projects using modern methods of construction from the Home Building Fund.
- The definition framework identifies the following 7 MMC categories:
 - Category 1 – Pre-Manufacturing – 3D primary structural systems
 - Category 2 – Pre-Manufacturing – 2D primary structural systems
 - Category 3 – Pre-Manufacturing – Non systemised structural components
 - Category 4 – Pre-Manufacturing – Additive Manufacturing
 - Category 5 – Pre-Manufacturing – Non-structural assemblies and sub-assemblies
 - Category 6 – Traditional building product led site labour reduction / productivity improvements
 - Category 7 – Site process led labour reduction / productivity improvements
- Mark Farmer has 30 years' experience in construction and real estate. He is Founding Director and CEO of Cast Consultancy. He authored a review of the UK's construction labour model entitled 'Modernise or Die'. He is a member of the Construction Innovation Hub Industry Board, the Construction Leadership Council Advisory Group and chairs the MHCLG joint industry working group tasked with enabling greater use of Modern Methods of Construction in the residential sector. He is also a member of the Mayor of London's Construction Skills Advisory Group, a board member for the Construction Scotland Innovation Centre, a co-chair of Constructing Excellence, a vice chair of the Urban Land Institute (ULI) UK Residential Council, a trustee of the MOBIE educational charity and is an honorary professor at The University of Salford's School of Built Environment.