



**Smart
Construction**
CONSTRUCTING EXCELLENCE SW

Smart Construction Theme Group (Digital and Offsite)

14 July 2020, 3-5 pm

Meeting Notes

3.0 Intro from Chair : Mary Bennell

3.05 Review of notes /minutes of last meeting

3.10 Bristol Innovate Awards and LGA reports promoting Offsite/Modular Construction

In April 2020, a consortium of partners led by YTKO and including Bristol City Council, Bristol Housing Festival, BRE, and 9 leading modular housing companies were awarded an Innovate UK grant for their project, Enabling Housing Innovation for Inclusive Growth.

This is an 18 month programme working with multiple partners towards the delivery of a major Research, Development and Innovation (R,D&I) in the use of Modern Methods of Construction (MMC).

Jez Sweetland – Project Director for Bristol Housing Festival Provided an introduction and overview of the idea behind the setting up of the Bristol Housing Festival . For more information go their website.

Ellen Grist from Bristol Housing Festival went through the two reports that they had commissioned one from the LGA and one from BRE that were the basis for the Innovate Bid and the ongoing project . For details of the reports please follow this link : The LGA grant funded research outputs are at <https://www.bristolhousingfestival.org.uk/resources>

Philip Stott from YTKO - Outlined what the Innovate project was all about:-

A study of 9 exemplar projects covering a number of different approaches to modern methods of construction and looking very much at the outcomes in all aspects of social value .

Some key points in the presentation and the discussion afterwards:

- The aspiration for modern methods /offsite is to provide homes /buildings quicker and cheaper but the partners involved in the Innovate project feel it is more nuanced than that – we want to provide better places to live - look at place, community , social value ,environmental sustainability and embodied carbon .
- On the project (Innovate) the people involved have to be able to collaborate and cooperate .
- We are developing an optioneering tool – it looks at sites and sets out what options can be used to build homes on it . This will be done from a public sector point of view in order to bring land in public ownership forward to be developed.
- Only 17% of existing supply chain have worked with MMC . Want to work closer with local supply chain and ensure that they are trained and qualified in MMC
- Social Value in Construction – A report was mentioned produced by the Institute of Economic Development : Social Value in Traditional Construction
<https://ied.co.uk/insights/>
- Social Value Act has not really matured

3.50 Mapping MMC Cat 1 and 2 suppliers with production facilities based in the South West Opening remarks from Paul Read Chair of CESW Client Group and Andrew Carpenter CE of CESW about benefits of collaboration and the potential for developing a collaborative group of MMC Suppliers

An update on the work of the project group to date and discussion with those suppliers joining the meeting about how the map and directory will 'look'

Building up the knowledge base of who is out there – who are the suppliers in the South West and looking at where the gaps are .

Key points made in the discussion

- Not shouting enough about the South West .
- One of the key requirements to get offsite moving is for clients to define what they want . It is unfair to expect suppliers to be working blind – just coming up with products that they think the market may want .
- Are suppliers offering solutions to problems that clients didn't know they had ?
- Some issues that usually arise when supplier collaboration is discussed
 - Aren't we meeting our competition
 - There is enough work for all to get their chance
 - It will be good to support the South West but one shouldn't put a wall around the boundaries
- Setting up local factories – there was an initiative to do so in Bristol that never got off the ground . reason was that after much work and discussions for over a year the site was disposed of
 - Flying factories – can bring work and construction to site
 - Even if modular /offsite system is not local the craneage , ground works etc will be local
 - How do we measure social value in a tender ?

- Social capacity of company delivering project to deliver employment and training opportunities
- WECA (West of England Combined Authority) very keen on standardisation and looking at a common interface for production

4.20 The Digital Agenda - Means of Promotion

Discussion should forget this thought stream but given limited resources is important to focus on one initiative at a time .

Further discussion to be had with the digital leaders on this point .

It is very important that the adoption of digital technologies in construction has a bottom up approach ie ensuring that site based operations and operatives become technologically enabled.

4.40 AOB – Date of next meeting 3rd November 2020 when we shall all be back to ‘normal’