

GLOOM AND DOOM FOR 2023 -

OR IS IT?



Andrew Orriss of the Structural Timber Association (STA), picks out some key themes that the organisation and its members will be concentrating on over the next 12 months.

With a somewhat uncertain year on the horizon for 2023, some in the construction industry are growing increasingly nervous about a tough year ahead, but this may not be the whole picture for the structural timber industry.

Economic downturn

The ongoing economic pressures are certainly having an adverse effect on the commissioning of new construction projects, meaning 2023 will be somewhat of a challenging year. However, the story could be a little different for the timber construction industry. The STA and the Timber in Construction Working Group (TiC), along with collaboration with Confederation of Forest Industries (Confor) and Timber Development UK (TDUK), have worked vigorously to increase the safe use of timber in construction through clarifying perceptions within the construction industry.



Bringing together key industry stakeholders, the TiC is tasked with identifying important actions that should be taken by the Government, the construction industry and the timber industry to increase the number of timber and hybrid structures built in the UK. There is a roadmap currently being developed by the TiC that offers guidance and information to construction companies about how they can implement structural timber systems into their projects, along with revealing how this is beneficial in everything from build efficiency to carbon savings.

Zero carbon design

Talking of which, the benefits of timber are widely recognised now in terms of its versatility and sustainability. Timber presents the opportunity for the construction industry to reduce its carbon output significantly, through zero-carbon design and low embodied carbon in particular.

This is reinforced by market research that shows there is a growing interest in seeing environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles being applied by construction professionals to projects driven by their clients. The property investment market is starting to demand low to net zero carbon timber buildings. As such, the goal is now to help more designers and developers incorporate structural



timber into their building design plans at an early stage.

Apart from encouraging the use of structural timber, the STA works to support members with changes in regulations, updates to the Future Homes Standard, the Building Safety Act and any other aspect of the industry which impact STA members and the wider timber construction industry. Additionally, the testing and research that we invest in works to clarify structural timber is a safe building material, and in 2023 more results from this testing and research will be published.

While the STA is unable to affect the overall downturn for the construction industry, it most certainly is working to safeguard and develop the structural timber industry through support and collaboration, as well as the continuation of research and testing for the benefit of all.

 www.structuraltimber.co.uk

IMAGES:

- 01. Andrew Orriss, STA
- 02-03. Timber has a huge role to play in the road to net zero carbon buildings