

## WEB WATCH

### [www.3Mconstruction.co.uk](http://www.3Mconstruction.co.uk)

The diversified technology company 3M has created a dedicated website for its construction products. The site is divided into sections based on products for roofing, flooring, walls, personal protective equipment (PPE), adhesive bonding and fastening, structural glazing, window films, electrical and data communication and asset management. Alongside information on each product range, with downloadable pdf brochures on each, the site features case studies.

### [www.armstrong-ceilings.co.uk](http://www.armstrong-ceilings.co.uk)

An online book illustrating Armstrong's canopy range is now available to help specifiers select the right ceiling solution for a range of projects. The easy-to-use website presents ideas on how discontinuous ceilings can be used in a variety of spaces, both new and retrofit, including waiting rooms, reception areas and corridors. Users can see images of installations and download project case studies to assist them in creating original designs.

### [www.electric-heatingcompany.co.uk](http://www.electric-heatingcompany.co.uk)

The Electric Heating Company has added an online TV channel to its Website, featuring four short films which welcome to explain the choice of products on offer. Additional films will be uploaded over time as an aid to specifiers and customers who find this type of visual information easier to understand and digest. The online channel has been created in association with Moviecom TV.



## GUEST COMMENT



Mark Bramah, assistant chief executive, Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE), says the potential for councils to build new homes is warmly welcomed, after three decades of national housing policy favouring owner occupation and

local authorities divesting themselves of their stock through right to buy and stock transfer.

**A**nnouncements from housing minister Margaret Beckett and the Prime Minister indicate common sense has finally prevailed and councils could have a chance to give both affordable housing and the economy a much-needed boost. Brown and Beckett's fine words must, however, be turned into reality in the shape of jobs and homes in local communities — with council housing becoming an option of choice as it was in the 1950s, rather than a stigmatised last resort of sink estates for the 'Shameless' generation.

Margaret Beckett's consultation on proposals for changes to revenue and capital rules for new council housing would allow authorities to retain 100% of Right to Buy receipts on newly built and acquired properties and those brought back into use. But as they stand, the proposals are only likely to apply to a limited number of properties purchased or brought back into use as a result of council investment outside of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) redistributive system. APSE would like to see the principles applied more widely. We are calling on councils to put forward schemes to test the limits of proposed changes.

Gordon Brown's pledge to remove barriers to council building shows

acknowledgement at the most senior level that councils are part of the solution. We at APSE have campaigned for local government's role as house-builders to be recognised and are confident that councils will be more than capable of meeting challenges the

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Prime Minister has set them in delivering high quality, sustainable homes to meet targets of three million new properties by 2020.

However, the existing housing financial and regulatory system is widely acknowledged as unfair and incomprehensible. Any new building must be looked at within the context of a fundamental overhaul of the HRA system, which is currently under way and council building must be backed by investment from central coffers. If barriers are not properly removed, the consequences will be felt for generations to come.