

# Stay ahead of the game with LABC

Wouldn't it be nice if we could build good quality homes, meeting the needs of our changing demographics, all at a rate to match supply with demand? This would be perfect, but in reality it's a hard trick to pull off in a market driven economy

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**W**ith the credit crunch has come a decline of consumer confidence. Borrowing costs are still higher than new owners have been used to. Lenders are more cautious. Buyers are understandably reluctant to buy property now in case their new home drops in value. With additional burdens on sellers like the Home Information Packs, it is not hard to see why sales have slowed so quickly.

The pressure is already showing. Some major new home developers are already using that wonderful euphemism 'restructuring'.

But does this mean bad times are looming for the industry?

Possibly not. Gordon

Brown appears to be committed to driving social housing forward and to stimulate growth in new towns with affordable homes.

Fundamentally, there is an in-built shortage of supply in the country. So whilst the most entrepreneurial developments may take a hit, there should be growth in other areas. But a lot depends on the Government's conviction and ability to help all the organisations (public and private sector) to get things built.

Funding and planning are the two toughest areas. If these are made easier, then the rest of the industry has little to overcome.

Take building control. Local authorities have never provided a better service than they are now. They are

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flexible, consistent, more amenable to risk-based working, innovative and truly willing to add value to customers by focusing on the design phase.

So despite the slowdown in housing over recent months, LABC has seen its new housing market share grow.

SAP ratings, EPCs, Part L, Part E and Part B are all additional challenges to the industry at a time when some would say it needs it least. But every cloud has a silver lining and property marketers are finding that with fewer buyers available, being able to demonstrate that you are selling a quality built home with a reputable warranty, makes it easier to win those buyers. LABC does this.

The best way to get LABC contributing is by finding an LABC Partner Authority. This means that developers, builders, architects and contractors can use just one local authority to provide plans approvals for projects anywhere in England and Wales. It provides consistency, a single point of contact and strong relationships. It saves time, money and helps deliver quality units. It's a big improvement that's got to be worth exploring in a tough market.



Are tough times ahead for housebuilders?

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