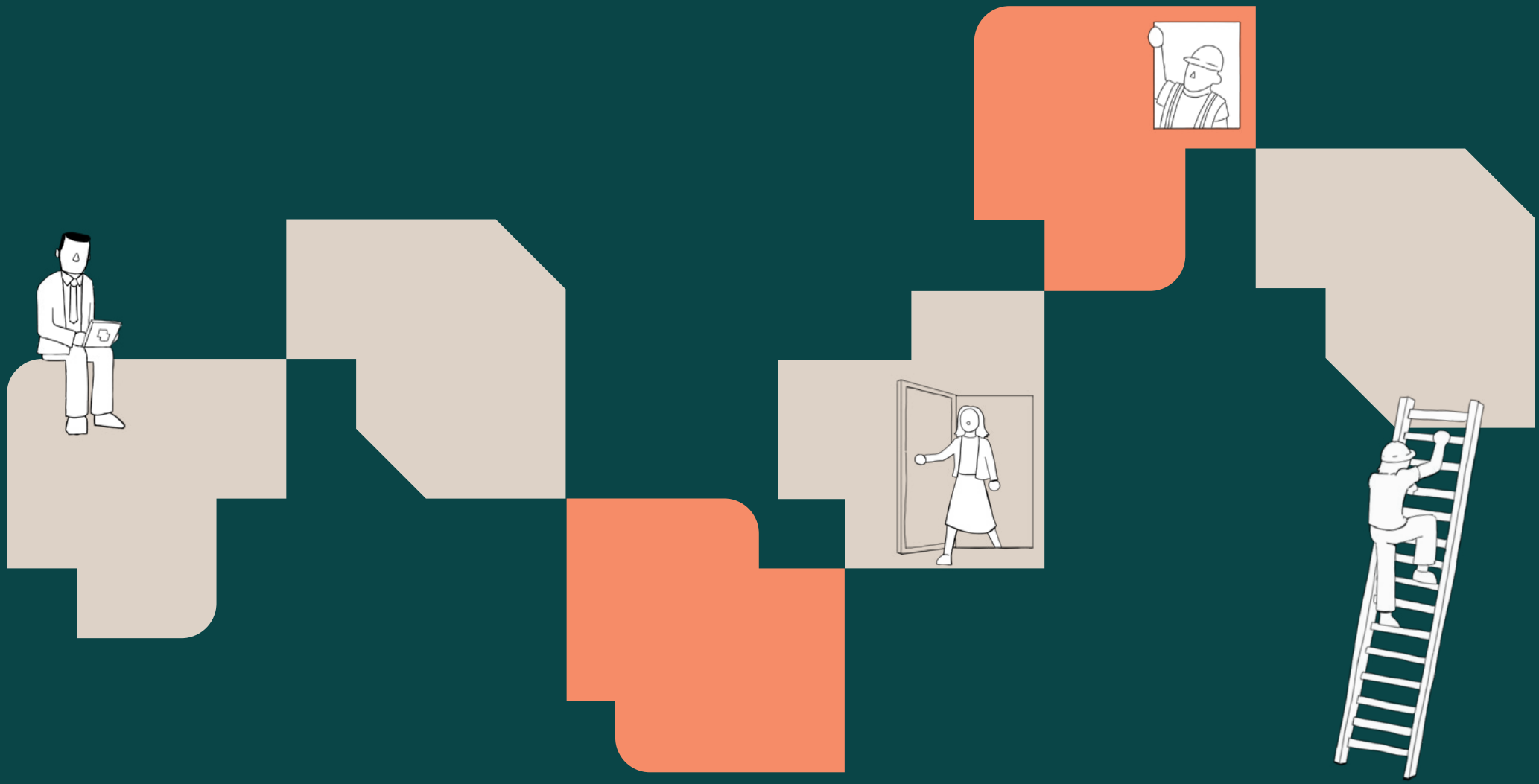


The Building Safety Act: Where are we now

A cross-industry roundtable exploring learnings, observations and what's next

BURO FOUR



Event date: 14th May 2026

Following the implementation of The Building Safety Act, the industry has moved beyond the initial challenge of understanding the legislation and the implications for existing pre-construction and delivery processes. We are now moving towards a broader conversation about how compliance is demonstrated.

Bringing together representatives from development, investment, design, construction, engineering and legal disciplines, our recent roundtable explored the lessons learned so far and the impact of the legislation on the way projects are procured, designed and delivered.

While participants acknowledged ongoing challenges around programme certainty, funding and evolving regulatory expectations, there was a strong consensus that the Act is driving a more rigorous and collaborative approach to project delivery.

Key:
BSR - The Building Safety Regulator
HRB - Higher-Risk Building

Introducing our experts

Ben Oram, Buckley Gray Yeoman
Keith Davies, Buro Four
Victoria Panting, Buro Four
Nick Tibbitts, Buro Four
Matt Floyd, Cheyne Capital
Rob Harris, Civic
Harrison Paul, Core Five
Chris Wilkinson, Cowen + Partners
Matt James, LGIM
Andrew Mott, Royal London Asset Management
Duncan Athol, Simmons & Simmons
Jon Ratten, Vista Building Safety
Garreth Joyce, Walsh

A culture of due diligence

The strongest theme to emerge from the discussion was the increased emphasis on due diligence. From asset purchase to project inception, through to completion, developers, investors, designers and contractors are placing greater focus on competence, accountability and the level and quality of information necessary to support decision-making.

Participants noted that project teams are being scrutinised more closely than ever before, with experience, capability and track record becoming key considerations in appointments and procurement decisions.

Matt Floyd of Cheyne Capital highlighted the growing importance of demonstrable experience; "time has been spent with consultants getting comfortable with the Regulation, and we are now looking at those with experience and track record. This also helps balance risk as there is an understanding of 'headwinds' they face."

The discussion also emphasised how due diligence is extending beyond engaging suitably experienced teams, to the expectations of investors and funders. Today's investors are undertaking far more detailed assessments of project risk, exit strategy, programme certainty and team capability before committing capital.

Andrew Mott of Royal London Asset Management noted that Higher-Risk Buildings are often perceived as carrying a higher level of uncertainty. This creates concern that investors may favour simpler asset classes, unless there is confidence in clear understanding and management of risks before committing capital to the scheme.

"Time has been spent with consultants getting comfortable with the regulation and we are now looking at those with experience and track record. This also helps balance risk as there is an understanding of 'headwinds' they face."

Both Matt James at LGIM and Matt Floyd remarked that the Act will also support in providing comfort to purchasers, funders and tenants that a quality standard and asset is being achieved.

Chris Wilkinson at Cowen + Partners noted that due diligence increasingly extends into the supply chain. As projects become more dependent on specialist contractors, tested systems and detailed product information, developers and main contractors are undertaking greater scrutiny of supply chain capability, capacity and financial resilience. The loss of a specialist subcontractor during delivery can have significant implications for programme, compliance and the maintenance of the golden thread. Consequently, procurement decisions are no longer based solely on price, but increasingly consider experience, resource availability, technical competence and long-term resilience.

The result is a more robust approach to project governance, but one that requires greater upfront investment and commitment from all parties.

Evolving approach and phased applications

Whilst improving, a remaining risk is the duration for determination at the gateway stages and the point at which debt funding is available. Matt Floyd noted this is being managed with realistic programme periods and recognition of the level of upfront investment required to get a scheme through Gateway 2. Both Jon Ratten of Vista Building Safety and Duncan Athol at Simmons & Simmons remarked that 'Approval with Requirements' is an option but the understanding and adoption of this is still in its infancy.

Garreth Joyce at Walsh noted that in their experience to date of phased approaches and Approval with Requirements, there are stringent deliverables, and concerns and uncertainty around the timing of the next approval to maintain momentum during construction. However, use of the Approval with Requirements approach could better support Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDTs) in managing a timely review of documents to determine approval.

Ben Oram and Jon Ratten assured attendees that there is forthcoming guidance on Approval with Requirements, although this is presently limited, and noted this creates potential uncertainty.



Successful at Gateway 3 - George Street, Derwent London/ Native Land



Successful at GW1 - GW2 Submitted - Plots 1.02 & 1.03, Knight Dragon

Better informed decisions are being made earlier

The importance of defining project objectives, understanding operational requirements and considering exit strategies from the very beginning was raised repeatedly throughout the discussion.

Participants agreed the Act is encouraging more strategic thinking at the outset of projects. Longer feasibility periods; more detailed design processes sooner; increased stakeholder and operator engagement; testing of assumptions; and consideration of the exit strategy are all attempts to reduce uncertainty and create more robust decision-making.

Harrison Paul at Core Five noted the front-loading of effort can impact programme and cost, particularly when set within the backdrop of viability challenges which also push the team towards cost reductions on projects. The group acknowledged this could result in under-resourcing and reduction of scope, which can create challenges later in the process. The designers within the room, Civic, BGY, Cowen + Partners and Walsh each noted that to support this, more specialist design input is required earlier, with the ability to legally rely on the information provided.

Rob Harris at Civic remarked; “the process is reorientating the industry, there is enhanced focus on being up to date with the evolving y framework.”

Ben Oram at BGY noted this knowledge is important as designers are now “designing strictly to guidance and tested details”. The group also agreed there is a marked reduction of fire engineered solutions due to the risk this brings to the scheme around statutory rejections and extended determination periods.

The group’s view was that the Act has been marked as a positive shift in reducing uncertainty and risk in the latter phases of the design and construction process. By exposing gaps in coordination, scope definition and information quality which could previously have remained hidden until much later, it is creating better-informed projects.

> **“The process is reorientating the industry; there is enhanced focus on being up to date with the evolving regulatory framework.”**

Collaboration is no longer optional

Another key takeaway was the extent to which the Building Safety Act is driving greater collaboration across the industry.

The gateway process, golden thread requirements and enhanced duty holder responsibilities all depend upon clear communication and coordinated and reasoned decision-making. Many participants reflected that fragmented approaches which may previously have been tolerated are becoming increasingly difficult to sustain.

Garreth Joyce of Walsh observed; “gone are the days where there might be a weak link with consultants. Everybody needs to be pulling together and schemes must be coordinated. Onboarding of the team is key, so there is a clear understanding of expectations and the bringing in of others [designers] and CDP at the right time.”

Several contributors viewed this as one of the legislation’s most significant benefits. Greater transparency around decision-making, improved coordination and better engagement between consultants, contractors and clients are helping to establish a stronger culture of collective responsibility. Collaboration was also marked as key; with the and their MDT team to ensure there is a clear understanding of the information provided and appropriate signposting to better support the timely review of the gateway applications.

Whilst Chris at Cowen + Partners reflected on the initial challenges with conflicting expectations and inconsistencies, Garreth noted, that in Walsh’s experience there has been a positive step change, with the now welcoming engagement with project design teams once the application has been lodged.

> **“Everybody needs to be pulling together and schemes must be coordinated.”**

Safer buildings through greater accountability

Perhaps the most thought-provoking question raised by Keith Davies of Buro Four during the discussion was whether the legislation is genuinely making buildings safer or simply creating additional layers of administration.

As Jon Ratten at Vista Building Safety observed; “Building Regulations themselves haven’t changed. It is the responsibility and the visibility.”

Garreth Joyce also questioned, “do the Act, and risk, drive a simplification in form of buildings to smooth the design process, and reduce creativity and innovation, to simply get things built?”

> **“Is the legislation genuinely making buildings safer or simply creating additional layers of administration?”**



Successful at Gateway 2 - Upper Brook Street, McLaren Properties

Buro Four reflected on whether this then in turn starts to impact the ability for a design to successfully get through the planning process. This is a conundrum which can only be solved over time, reflecting on the attitude towards design and programme risk versus route to compliance against the backdrop of a developer’s appetite and risk profile, local authority expectations, overall cost and programme to delivery.

The discussion of safety highlighted a growing emphasis on understanding who is responsible for what, and when. The Building Safety Act has brought greater focus to the allocation of design responsibility, duty holder roles and the management of risk throughout the project lifecycle.

More time is needing to be spent defining responsibilities at procurement stage, ensuring scopes are aligned, interfaces are understood and accountabilities are clear before design progresses. This is particularly important as projects move through novation, contractor engagement and gateway approvals, where historically ambiguity around responsibility could introduce significant programme and compliance risk.

This topic also sparked conversation around impacts on contractor procurement. There was consensus in the room that the level of site and design complexity drives the timing of contractor engagement, i.e. very complex schemes tend to invite the need for earlier contractor engagement to review buildability and help design development, however, the appetite and willingness from sub-contractors experienced to date has been mixed.

Overall, participants felt the legislation is driving behavioural change across the industry, increasing accountability and encouraging higher standards of coordination, documentation and decision-making in creating safer buildings.

> **“Do the Act, and risk, drive a simplification in form of buildings to smooth the design process, and reduce creativity and innovation, to simply get things built?”**

Education remains critical

Despite the progress made over the last two years, the roundtable highlighted that the industry is still on a learning journey.

Victoria Panting at Buro Four remarked that much of the guidance under the Act has been focused on the gateway process, while the industry needs to recognise the Building Safety Act applies to all buildings.

Participants identified ongoing challenges around understanding roles and responsibilities, defining information requirements and achieving consistency in how projects are reviewed and assessed. Education was repeatedly cited as essential, not only for designers and contractors, but also for clients, investors, funders and supply chains.

Ben Oram of BGY highlighted, “the gateway system is ultimately a set of procedural requirements, HRBs must comply with the same Building Regulations relevant requirements as non-HRBs” with industry bodies such as the Construction Leadership Council (CLC) developing guidance based on knowledge share and industry learning, to support a more robust and consistent approach. Other sector groups are also recognised as playing an important role in helping establish shared approaches and improve consistency across projects.

> **“Building Regulations themselves haven’t changed. It is the responsibility and the visibility.”**



Carpenters Station - Populo Living (image credit Metropoliton Workshop)

Equally important is the willingness of organisations that have already navigated the gateway processes to collectively share lessons learned and help build collective industry knowledge.

The group also reflected that the refinement of the Gateway 2 process results from industry learnings, while there has been limited exposure to Gateway 3, which appears less defined. Education of the contractor, supply chain and wider industry is required to better understand this stage and implications to plan ahead appropriately.

Reflection

Two years on, the Building Safety Act continues to present challenges for the industry. However, the conversation has fundamentally highlighted the Act is perhaps offering more than a simple process but driving a cultural shift within the construction industry. Greater due diligence, earlier decision-making, stronger procurement processes and enhanced collaboration are becoming embedded within project delivery.

While the industry is still developing consistency in its approach, there was a clear sense that shared learning, improved guidance and growing experience are beginning to create a more mature and confident framework for delivering safer buildings.

The challenges of the process and adaption of the industry are still notable concerning consistency, programme certainty and route to funding. However, the roundtable highlighted a growing consensus that success under the Building Safety Act is not ultimately defined by navigating Gateway 2 or Gateway 3. It is defined by building the right team, creating the right information and making better decisions earlier to support this process.

It can therefore perhaps be concluded the Act is changing how the industry thinks about competence, accountability and risk. Shifting focus in the industry to reshape attitudes towards evidencing competence, compliance, collaboration and continuous improvement in the procurement, design and delivery of projects.

Join the conversation

What do you think? Is there a specific point we raised you want to talk more about? Get involved and chat to us on LinkedIn or contact our team. We’d love to hear from you.



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