

Contributor



Build back better

The outlook for the UK economy remains positive despite current supply chain issues, with the success of the vaccination programme and the gradual easing of the pandemic restrictions supporting activity. The latest estimates suggest the economy will grow by around 7% this year followed by a little over 5% in 2022.

In the residential sector, property prices rose rapidly, driven by a combination of factors including the drop in the cost of money to close to zero, the stamp duty holiday and the desire for more living space with the increased prevalence of home working. The RICS UK Residential Survey from August suggests that after some very strong sales numbers there are indications that new buyer demand has begun to ease.

That said, while the closing of the stamp duty holiday was widely expected to have some dampening effect on the housing market, previous experience indicates that any drop in transactions will be short-lived before the picture stabilises. Meanwhile higher prices are likely to continue to be underpinned by the demand supply imbalance.

In the commercial property market, occupier demand for retail space continues to fall. However, the latest RICS UK Commercial Property Survey show the office picture has

begun to settle down particularly for prime space while industrial demand remains very strong. The results also show that close to two-thirds of survey respondents now believe market conditions are consistent with an upturn, compared with 36% of respondents in the early part of the year. This is reflected in the somewhat more positive trend in investor appetite that is gradually beginning to emerge.

As individuals and businesses continue to adapt to the realities of the pandemic, it's important that the opportunities to build back better from the pandemic are not lost within the built environment. To support the green agenda, RICS believes that a key focus for governments and elected representatives now should be on the creation of affordable, low-carbon homes across all tenures while championing the retrofitting of housing, high streets and urban town centres.

As the UK prepares to host the COP26 climate summit in November, there is a prime opportunity to ensure that sustainability is at the heart of future decisions we make about the built environment, and that planning and development decisions increasingly prioritise economic, social and environmental wellbeing.

Bradley Tully
Senior Public Affairs Officer – England



CREDIT: ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Proposal for Riverside Park, Ashford.



CREDIT: HOLLAWAY

Proposal for St Mary Bredin, Canterbury.

Opposite: Kent and Medway Medical School campus, Canterbury.
CREDIT: HMY Architects

