

**Responses attributed to Andrew Orriss, [need position to quote] Insulslab SFRC**

**1. Has sustainability fallen down (or even off) the specification agenda among sections of your customer base, because of cost or (more accurately), perceived cost? Is achieving true sustainability simply a fanciful goal in the current constrained market?**

It is not a case of sustainability 'falling off' the specification agenda. Sustainable specifications have always been annexed to a handful of companies that have a strong sense of environmental responsibility. By the same token, mainstream product specification has always focused on cost, with the general perception that 'sustainable' denotes cost uplift.

**2. What's your prognosis for the Code for Sustainable Homes and 'zero carbon' in 2016, is it going to have to be shelved for the time being due to recent announcements of 10 years of pain for the industry?**

The Government simply cannot afford to shelve the Code for Sustainable Homes. Failure to meet the zero carbon targets will result in severe financial penalties, which means carbon reduction schemes will continue to be a priority. Whether or not the Code for Sustainable Homes exists in the same form by the time we reach 2016 is another story. What we might expect in its place is a tightening up of the Building Regulations so that legislation governs zero carbon construction.

**3. Has the meaning of sustainably become clearer in the industry over the past couple of years, or has it become more obscured/complicated? Have events like the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' scandal in terms of the new National Planning Framework damaged the concept and reputation, by broadening it even further to economic and social issues?**

Sustainability in the truest sense of the word has always been associated with economical and social issues. It is only in the construction industry that the term has become synonymous with 'energy efficiency'. I wouldn't say the National Planning Framework has caused any damage at all, instead I think we need to remember that sustainability is not a concept exclusive to construction and that it extends far beyond the meaning of 'green'.

**5. How have chemicals used in construction products been enfranchised into the sustainability discussion in recent times? Is there a greater focus on holistic building performance producing the results, which means that products' composition is of a lesser concern? How much of the success of bringing more products into the 'sustainable' category is down to strong lobbying?**

There have been attempts to enfranchise chemicals in construction products into the sustainability discussion, but in reality the complexity of the issue means that it rarely gets properly addressed. Quite simply, this is because there are very few, if any, construction products which do not use chemicals.

'Fabric First' has resulted in an increased focus on the overall building performance rather than individual materials but there is still demand for products which are either made from recycled materials or can be recycled. For example, the expanded polystyrene pods used to construct Insulslab SFRC can be recycled whilst the system itself provides a highly insulated foundation solution for a Fabric First approach.

**6. Are some of the energy efficiency standards that have been introduced to the mainstream, such as air-tightness in Part L, counter-productive, in that they require other mechanical systems such as heat recovery to be introduced, which may compromise 'sustainable' credentials?**

Not at all. For starters, air-tightness was originally introduced as a quality control measure in construction – the greater the leakage, the poorer quality of the build. Fast forward to air-tightness being an indicator in energy efficiency and the last thing it can be deemed is 'counter-productive'. The energy used to power mechanical systems controlling air flow is insignificant when compared to the energy saving they are helping to support.

**7. Is it essential that changes to regulations in 2013 more closely recognise the behaviour of buildings in the British climate? Eg U-value targets should not perhaps be too low if designs are likely to generate excess moisture and mould?**

Absolutely. Regulations must always be relevant to the environment in which they will be applied. However, moisture and mould are not connected to U-values – it is poor ventilation and poor design which generate excess moisture and mould.

**8. Why is the ability of sustainable materials' to sequester carbon not officially recognised or measured?**

The complexity of mapping the true carbon footprint of a building material is almost impossible. To make such calculations effectively requires major research and significant investment. There's currently no driver to demand this level of information from the construction industry, and more importantly, if it was required at this point in time, it just would not be viable from a financial perspective.

**10. Is the true future for sustainability locally-produced/grown building materials allied to low energy construction, and can you see a time where global fuel prices might force more local sourcing to be done, so that almost by economic necessity buildings become more sustainable?**

Based on regional variations in the availability of natural sources, I can't ever see this happening. As it becomes increasingly difficult to extract raw materials out of the ground, it is more likely that we will need to travel further to source the necessary materials.