

BETTER DELIVERY

beyond MMC



WHAT IS THE STATE OF PLAY?

We believe it is time to shift the dial when it comes to the debate around Modern Methods of Construction (MMC). The term MMC is used to describe contemporary innovation in the construction sector, including new technologies such as digital tools, offsite manufacture and use of efficient processes to deliver productive, sustainable and better outcomes. However, whether by accident or design, MMC has come to mean systems and solutions manufactured in a factory (or 'offsite').

The term MMC was first used in 1990s and many of the systems it refers to are not that 'modern' anymore. However, in recent years MMC has become part of the construction industry vernacular and most clients are exploring how they can utilise it with the right noises coming from government. We have the world's tallest modular building here in the UK, the Department for Education have a £2bn MMC schools framework and it is regularly appearing in government policy and directives. Most recently via Homes England whose £11.5bn Affordable Housing Programme states that 25% of homes must be delivered with MMC.

AND WHERE ARE THE BUMPS IN THE ROAD?

Despite the momentum, there are some serious questions which remain unanswered:

- **Is this support and momentum translating into reality, at scale?**
- **Are we in danger of swapping bricks for panels and not really addressing the issues clients are facing?**
- **Are we still going to call it MMC in 15-20 years' time? When does 'modern methods of construction' become simply 'construction'?**

It is important to state that we are far from being 'anti-MMC'. On the contrary, we are huge proponents and believers in the benefits it can bring. What we need to do is move on from the narrow focus on supply chains and products manufactured offsite and look at the bigger picture. Addressing the wider benefits it can bring, to society and the environment. It is our view that we need to stop talking about MMC as the answer and move **"Beyond MMC"**.



WHY SHOULD WE THINK 'BEYOND MMC'?

When a client approaches us saying “we want to use MMC, modular or offsite” we always start by questioning “**why?**”. The received wisdom is that programme, quality, cost and performance are improved, which can certainly be the case, However, this requires buy in from the client, procurement of an experienced design team, deployment of the right solution for the project, early supplier engagement and the systems and processes in place to successfully deliver the project.

With the exception of a few standout groups and efforts to aggregate demand, our experience is that many client groups are dabbling and perhaps experiencing FOMO (Fear Of Missing Out) or perhaps even ‘jumping on the bandwagon’ without truly understanding why they really want it, what problems they are trying to solve and whether their organisations are ‘MMC Ready’ in terms of skills and processes.

We believe that before discussing **how** we are going to build, we need to understand **what** we are trying to achieve and define the desired outcomes. Sustainability requirements, social

value criteria, whole life cost, good design, carbon targets and compliance all lead us towards the optimal solution for construction and delivery, with MMC being an important tool in the toolkit. Crucially, like most other sectors, we must harness data to understand design parameters, performance and drive objective decision-making . This would enable us to digitise the supply chain marketplace and create platforms that inform better procurement. By doing this we can truly ‘modernise’ the sector and create the new jobs and skills needed for the next generation.

Bringing about this transition requires a change in mindset and a move away from siloed working practices, lowest cost, subjective decision-making and a project-by-project mentality that’s at the root of what is holding us back.

If we start to view MMC as an enabler for positive change and better outcomes rather than an outcome in its own right, then things will start to change. We will drive sustained uptake and efficiencies both at a project and an organisation level.



WHAT DO WE MEAN BY BETTER DELIVERY?

No matter what challenges we are facing, we believe there is always a better way of doing things. We start by listening to clients about the issues they have, then establish whether MMC solutions can be used to address them and advise on the skills required to deliver the change.

This fundamental shift in mindset will allow clients to view their decision-making and strategic direction differently, using data and technology to guide them. We provide every client and every project with bespoke **'key driver metrics'** which we collectively assign **'weighted value'** to.

This can differ depending on the types of buildings with programme, defects, quality and brand standards weighted more heavily for hotel clients compared to social value, inclusion, net zero carbon and maintenance for housing clients, for example.

Better Delivery enables us to use the weighted values of a client's key driver metrics to quantify and provide the optimum solution.

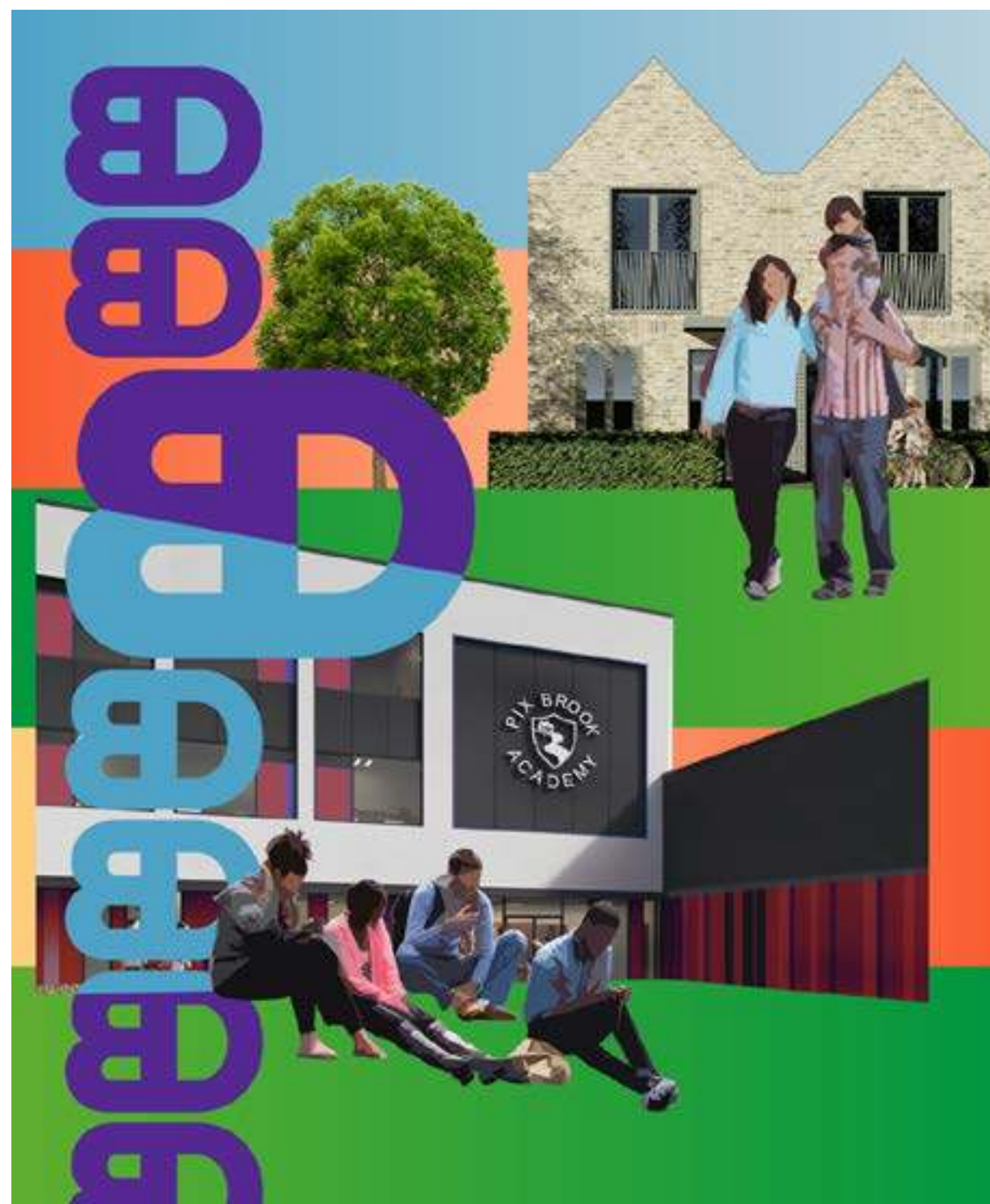
Better Delivery requires us to be objective, impartial and solution-agnostic. Combining learned experiences with supply chain intelligence and data to inform our decision-making.

We have always considered that approaching MMC as a binary choice is counterintuitive, our focus is on **Optimised Construction**. The right solution for the project and programme, which may or may not be 'MMC' depending on tenure type, geographic location, volume and the aspirations of the client

THE NINE PILLARS FOR 'BEYOND MMC'

Remember MMC should be viewed as an enabler. Any one of these nine pillars may lead you to MMC, but you should not start with MMC as the answer. Instead, focus on the principle of **Optimised Construction**, establishing the best approach for your scheme by considering all of the factors collaboratively and holistically.





1. TYPOLOGIES

There are a number of different building types, from homes to schools and offices, all of which have particular requirements. Before we determine the way to build them, we should spend more time considering functional and operational issues as well as the desired performance criteria. Our multi-disciplinary team has experience across all sectors in the built environment, ensuring knowledge is transferred from one typology to another.



2. SYSTEMS

Within the construction sector there are a number of different systems and solutions that can be combined to deliver buildings. Some of these have evolved over hundreds of years, often described as 'traditional' construction. The recent drive is towards so called 'modern methods of construction (MMC)'. We believe MMC is a valuable part of the toolkit, however it should not be the default without having properly considered the implications against project specifics and desired outcomes. We have developed a robust method for determining the optimum solution, with over 400 suppliers prequalified and assessed on our database.



3. COSTS

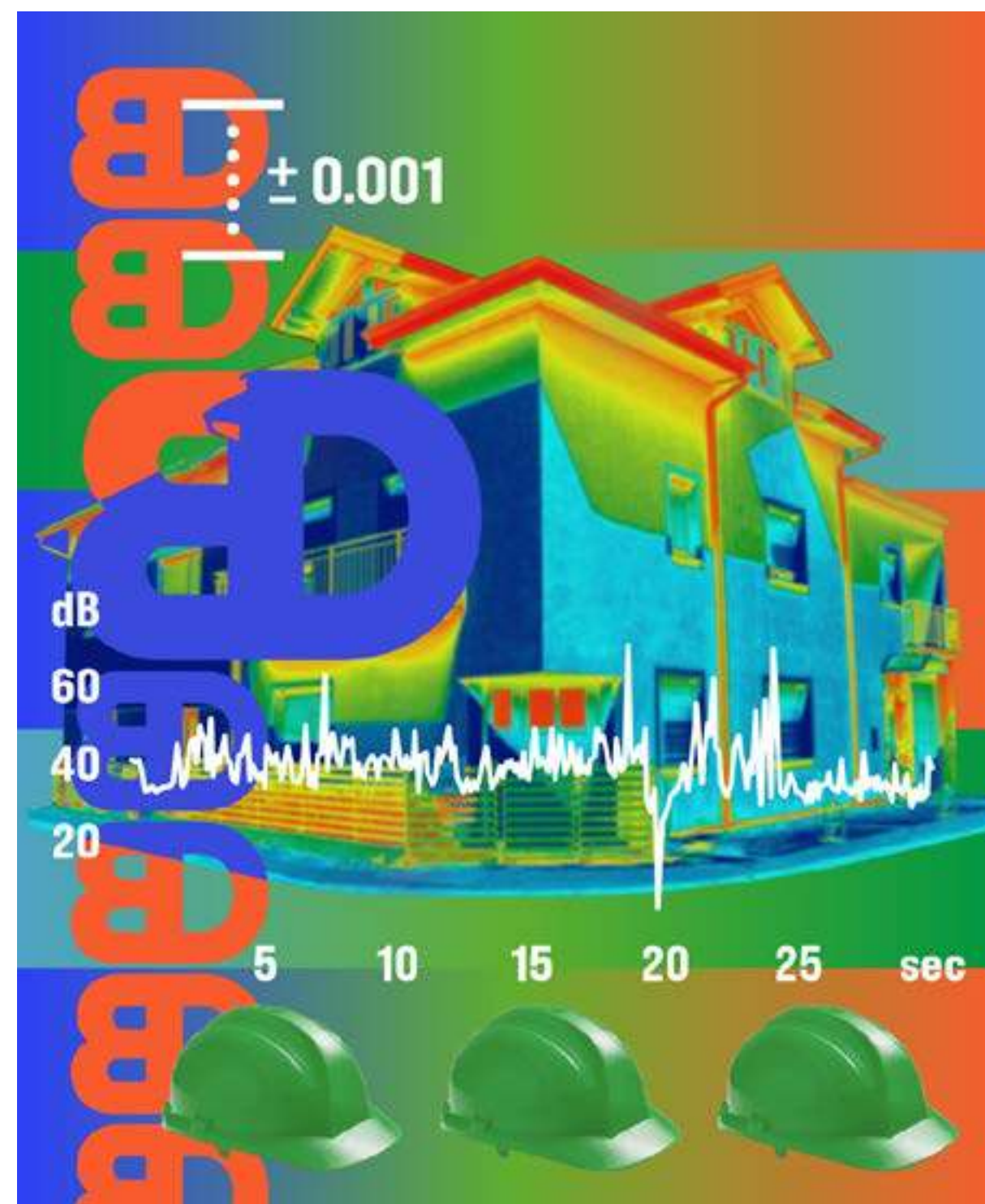
Commerciality is a key driver for projects and often means the difference between projects being viable or not. However, there is a clear drive from Government to consider wider value-based evaluations when determining the true value of projects. We understand the wider definitions and work with our clients to achieve environmental and social value as well as financial returns.





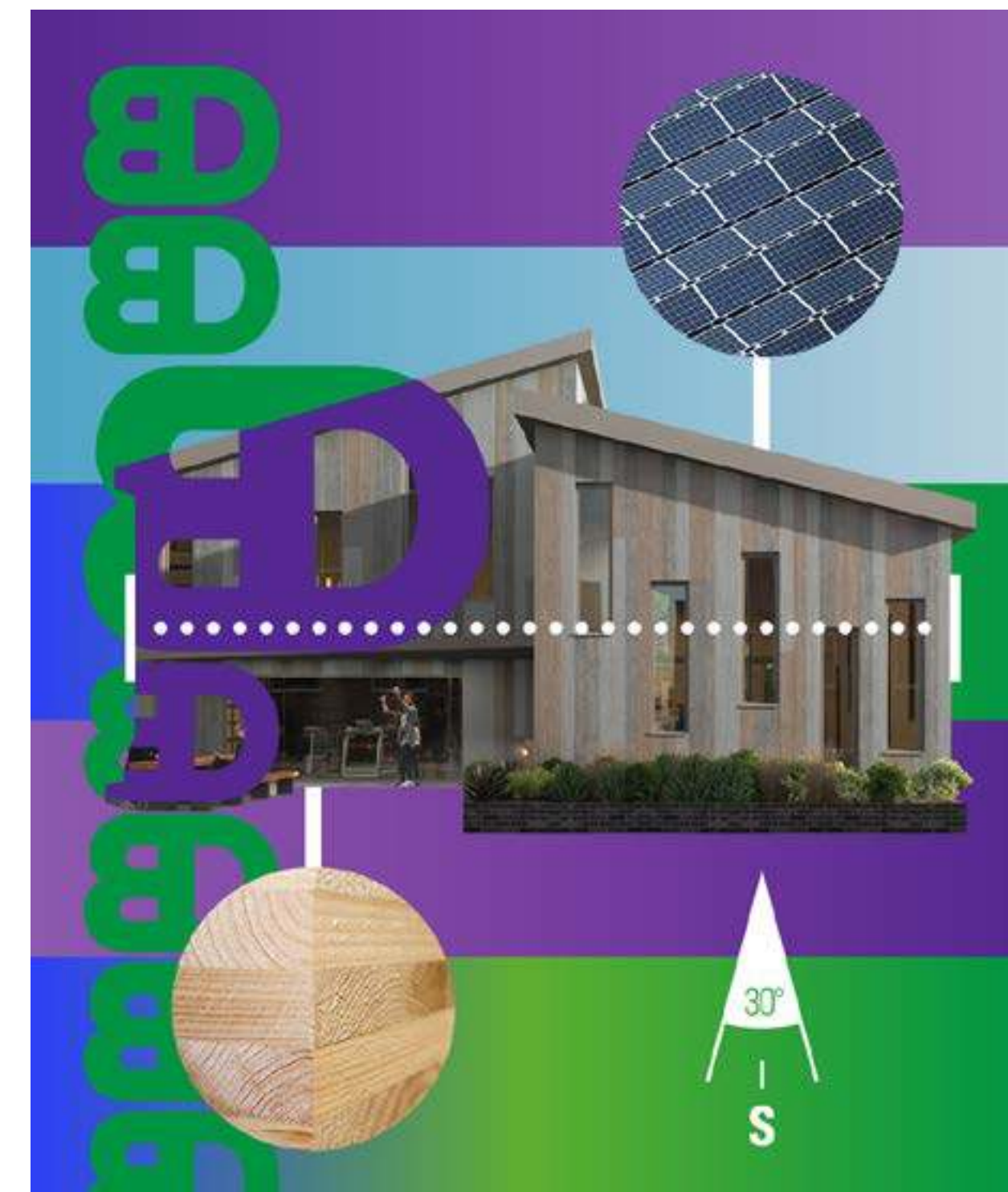
4. PERFORMANCE

Determining the required performance criteria before starting a project will drive you towards more sustainable building methods. The problems arise when the criteria are considered too late in the process, at which point some of the key decisions have been made and less options are available.



5. COMPLIANCE

The regulatory environment is evolving at a rapid pace, with updates and changes happening in real time. All of this has an impact on the decision-making process when it comes to selecting the right method of construction and delivery. We are always abreast of the latest changes and make sure our clients are too, which means our projects remain on track and compliant at every stage.



6. SUSTAINABILITY

Within the broad topic of sustainability, offsite manufactured solutions can deliver benefits in a number of areas. Most significantly, a greater resource efficiency and drive towards zero waste and the circular economy. It can also reduce the number of deliveries, time on site and potentially noisy works benefiting local ecology, neighbours and the wider community. We can support you in assigning value to those metrics and determining the best approach.





7. CARBON

As the industry plays its part in the nationally legislated drive towards net zero carbon, clients must develop a considered strategy. This should incorporate direct and indirect metrics for projects, optimal buildability options and setting up of robust measures for embodied carbon and operational carbon. Our Sustainability Lead is on hand to assist with strategic development and has experience across the built environment, working on major construction projects and MMC options.



8. SOCIAL VALUE

We are living in a society that requires social value to be front and centre of business practices, now more than ever. A post Covid recovery, combined with recent Government legislation relating to procurement, places the spotlight on the social and local legacy that an organisation achieves. There is more to it than creating employment during a project. Social Value, when properly considered, has lasting impact and every organisation has an obligation to understand, measure and grow its impact. We can help you establish a strategy and monitoring framework to inform continued progress.



9. TECHNOLOGY

There is a plethora of incredible digital tools already in the market that can be harnessed to inform better decision-making throughout the construction process. From front end feasibility to generative design & project management tools and platforms, we continuously scour the global market for optimal solutions and develop our own options as part of a suite of solutions.



KEY TAKEAWAYS:

1. MMC does not exclusively mean offsite construction.
2. MHCLG categorisation of MMC has reinforced this paradox.
3. We do not separate offsite solutions from traditional, rather we optimise construction.
4. We use our know how and technology to extract and agree weighted value metrics to provide the optimised construction solution.
5. We never double up MMC or traditional workstreams and strategies. We consider all options holistically.
6. We encourage and undertake data capture to provide benchmarks from which to improve.
7. Data establishes the pros and cons, leaves all viable options on the table and informs stakeholder decisions.

HOW CAN WE HELP YOUR ORGANISATION?

As a specialist consultancy spanning the design, manufacturing, construction and technology sectors, our mission is:

“To enable our clients to become more efficient, effective and resilient in an ever-changing world.”

Whilst our multidisciplinary team spans the recognisable roles of design, engineering, M&E, technological solutions, ESG, social value and sustainability, we do not believe in pigeonholed roles. Siloed working has no place in the modern age, we believe in collaboration and the power of collective thinking. We offer a unique and holistic suite of strategic and technical services designed to add value and achieve **Better Delivery**.

Please do get it touch. Contact: enquiries@betterdelivery.co.uk

