

LARGE PARTS OF DIRECTIVE STILL NOT INTRODUCED

UK receives warning from Europe over EPBD

The UK government has received an official warning from the European Commission that it may not be complying with the requirements of the Energy Performance of Buildings directive. Energy commissioner Andris Piebalgs has issued a formal infringement notice.

The directive was agreed in 2002, to be implemented from January 2006. The then environment minister Michael Meacher promised that the UK would “comply in full from Day One” (*EiBI March 2003*). However, large parts of the directive have yet to be introduced, with even delayed timetables slipping further and further.

Many owners of substantial commercial property portfolios had assumed the scheme would begin on schedule last year. This would have meant every building due to be let or sold having an energy certificate attached. Now they are being told that the ratings scheme will not begin until next April, for buildings over 10,000m² – and that buildings less than 2,500m² need not begin to comply until next October.

Energy performance certificates had been due to be available for all homes put up for sale from this June. At the last minute, ministers restricted such surveys only to larger homes. Under the directive, the only permitted reason for such



The ratings scheme for buildings over 10,000m² will now not begin until next April

certificates not being mandatory from January 2006 is concerns about insufficient numbers of qualified surveyors being available. But even back in May, junior minister Baroness Andrews was assuring the House of Lords “there are enough assessors to meet demand.”

Subsequently, it has become clear that there are now more trained surveyors than work available. This is because her ministerial colleague Ian Wright has now placed a moratorium on requiring surveys for smaller homes, citing “housing market conditions”. This, as National Energy Services CEO Brian Scannell told his annual conference, is not a justification which is compliant with the directive.

Meanwhile, the European Commission has announced its intention to seek to strengthen the directive further. In particular, the Commission intends to press for the removal of any building size restriction regarding renovation of existing buildings. At present, only those over 1,000m² are required to be brought up to “contemporary energy standards” when refurbished. The Commission also wants all governments to provide incentive schemes to ensure that any improvement advice received during energy certification is implemented.

IP convergence could lead to dramatic energy saving

A buildings’s total energy costs could be reduced by up to 30 per cent through further IP convergence, according to Panduit, a global supplier of network cabling infrastructure.

Brett Swett, business development manager at Panduit, commented, ‘The first wave of convergence began when voice communications started moving onto data networks. Businesses are now looking for additional efficiency gains and cost savings through IP

convergence. A facility’s security, access control, climate control and lighting systems have all traditionally been run on dedicated, divergent systems. They are now prime contenders for IP convergence.’

“The key to convergence is the integration of individual systems onto a single infrastructure platform that can achieve a high level of interoperability between building systems. In addition to enabling optimisation, convergence of these

four systems onto a single IP infrastructure considerably reduces installation costs of the cabling infrastructure. Panduit estimates savings of between 60 per cent and 90 per cent in the initial cabling costs alone.”

Further cost savings are available through ongoing reductions in energy usage. For example, with convergence of systems in place, scheduling a meeting using Microsoft Outlook will communicate to the

lighting system to turn light fixtures on and off and adjust the HVAC system based on the number of people scheduled to attend the meeting. Not only does this enhance the work place environment but, according to the US Green Building Council (www.usgbc.org), by intelligently managing when and how devices within a building consume power, total energy used within the facility is reduced by up to 30 per cent.