

# Timber Topics

*Making the most of merchant sales throughout the year*

*August 2021*

## Demand remains high for Panels

UKCA marking also on its way

Photo: Garnica from James Latham



### Demand still exceeding supply

A range of factors coming all together mean that demand for panel products is exceeding manufacturers' capacity to supply. The radical rise in house-building activity, and in products such as OSB being more frequently used as an alternative to structural plywoods, continues to promote unprecedented global demand for panel products of all kinds. It is therefore no surprise that manufacturers are finding it difficult to match market demands.

More panel products are being produced than ever before, but it is still insufficient. Housing starts on-site are currently at a 14-year high, despite the pandemic. Timber products more widely are also in huge demand due to their carbon capture and storage potential.

Photo: Hanson Performance Plywood



### Other factors affecting supply

Pine and Spruce plywood for flooring, flat roofs and other essential construction purposes are also seeing demand exceed supply, which will likely continue into early 2021 if not longer. Further afield, COVID is taking its toll in South America, the source of much of the structural Pine plywood used in the UK. Staff shortages are beginning to bite in countries like Brazil, further diminishing the available supply of structural plywood.



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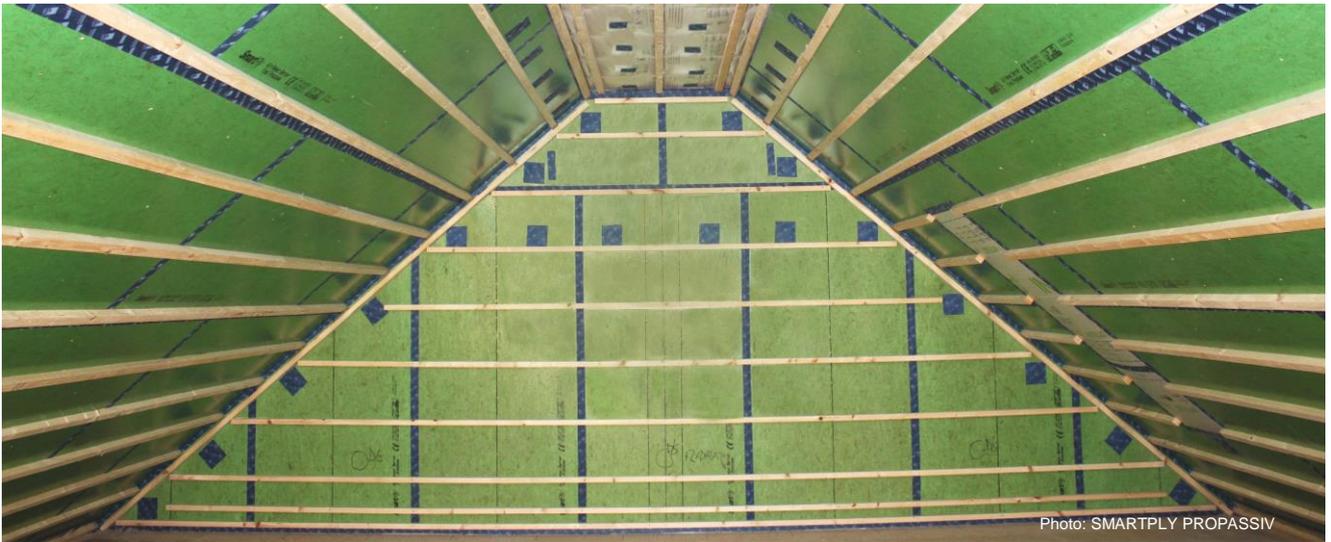


Photo: SMARTPLY PROPASSIV



Photo: UPM WISA Plywood



Photo: International Timber FINSA MDF

## UKCA marking is on its way

When the UK left the EU, a new UKCA mark, to replace the CE mark on structural panel products, was due to be introduced across a period leading up to 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022. However with the advent of the Building Safety Bill, currently making its way through Parliament, the timetable for the introduction of UKCA marking to replace CE marking has been set back, possibly by as much as 9-12 months.

### Can I sell products with both marks?

Both the EU-defined CE mark and the UKCA mark are currently being used by producers who sell into the UK and the EU. Both are equally valid and technically acceptable at the current time. The CE mark and UKCA mark standards and quality systems are essentially the same, but eventually only the UKCA mark will be valid on structural wood products across Britain. You may therefore continue selling panel products displaying either mark (or both) until after the legislation is created to bring the UKCA mark into UK law. Producers are preparing for the eventual requirement for the UKCA mark to replace CE marking. Merchants are advised to begin looking to the future themselves and adapting their staff training, and electronic and product information systems to be ready for the change. To help TTF merchant members with information, there is a dedicated UKCA marking page at [tff.co.uk](http://tff.co.uk)



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