

## Press release

28<sup>th</sup> February 2024

### Swedish Wood hosts high level event at the Residence of the Ambassador of Sweden to the UK.

Last Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup>, 40 senior representatives of construction companies, the insurance industry, developers, architects, academics and policy-makers gathered at the Residence of the Ambassador for Sweden to the UK in London's Portland Place for a discussion event hosted by Swedish Wood in co-operation with Timber Development UK and the Structural Timber Association.

The purpose of the event was to encourage an exchange of views on how targets for increased home-building could be achieved, while helping – rather than hindering – plans to meet the UK's zero carbon ambitions.

The event was hosted by the Ambassador, Stefan Gullgren and the Director of Swedish Wood, Anna Ryberg Ågren. Chaired by Paul Brannen, head of public affairs at CEI-Bois, the event's guests included Baroness Hayman of Ullock, Shadow Spokesperson for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Lord Khan of Burnley, Shadow Spokesperson for Levelling up, Housing and Communities, and Tom Copley, Deputy Mayor of London for Housing and Residential Development.

The panel of experts included Professor Jose Torero, Head of Civil, Environmental and Geomatic Engineering Dept, UCL; Dr Julie Bregulla, Chief Technical Officer, BBA; David Hopkins, Chief Executive, TDUK; Susanne Rudenstam, Director of Construction, Swedish Wood; and John Smith, Technical Director, Donaldson's Timber Systems, representing the STA.

Anna Ryberg Ågren welcomed the increasingly close ties between Sweden and the UK, as demonstrated by the strategic partnership agreement signed in 2023 by prime ministers Rishi Sunak and Ulf Kristersson, which not only addressed joint security issues but aimed at deepening co-operation between the two countries on innovation, research, trade and investment. Anna said: "I am absolutely convinced that the partnership the UK and Sweden have developed over the years is the perfect foundation for leading the way towards a net zero future."

Paul Brannen's introductory remarks positioned timber construction as part of the UK's bio-economy and explained the role of carbon storage in timber buildings as well as the importance of timber as a method of low carbon construction. Noting the widespread agreement that the next government would need to step up the delivery of new homes, he warned that the decisions taken about what materials to use in building those homes would make the difference between increasing carbon emissions or reducing them in the built environment. England, he pointed out, was significantly behind other countries, such as the USA and – closer to home – Scotland in the proportion of new homes being built using timber.

David Hopkins, Chief Executive of Timber Development UK, reminded the audience of the conclusions of the UK government's timber in construction roadmap to 'Use more wood', of the latest work by TDUK publishing embodied carbon data for timber products, and of the work done by Waugh Thistleton Architects, recently presented at the GLA, showing how to design taller timber buildings to meet UK building regulations.

Following the introductory remarks, there was a highly-informed, wide-ranging discussion and exchange of views, with the points raised to be followed up by members of the group and by Swedish Wood.

Ends

Photo caption: (left to right, Baroness Hayman of Ullock, Shadow Spokesperson for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; Stefan Gullgren, the Ambassador of Sweden to the UK; Lord Khan of Burnley, Shadow Spokesperson for Levelling up, Housing and Communities)

Swedish Wood disseminates knowledge about wood, wood products and wood in construction, contributing towards a sustainable society and a thriving sawmill industry. Swedish Wood represents the Swedish sawmill, glulam, CLT and packaging industries and is part of the Swedish Forest Industries Federation.

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