

# Building a brighter future for Britain, one brick at a time

Unfazed by Brexit, these companies are driving on — and should be supported

**SCOTT BARTON**  
Lloyds Banking Group



The performance of the private, mid-market companies featured in this year's Top Track 250 league table shows what an integral part of the economy they represent.

Hundreds of thousands of people rely on them for work, supporting families up and down the country. Their efforts, helped by investment in new technology and, for many, expansion overseas, have seen the companies in this table grow at pace.

Combined sales in their latest financial years rose by 17% to £66.7bn, or the equivalent of 3.3% of GDP,

according to Fast Track's research. Operating profits performed even better, rising 27% to £6.4bn.

Outside the household names — such as Holland & Barrett (No 6), Lush (No 26) and Travelodge (No 8) — most are the unsung heroes of British industry. Unfazed by unstable global politics, all of them are generating bold new ideas and contributing significantly to the prosperity of the UK.

In order for this country to continue to thrive, it needs quality homes, robust manufacturing, and buoyant international trade. Fortunately, there are plenty of fantastic examples of companies on this year's league table delivering all three. For instance, Keepmoat Homes (No 18), a Yorkshire firm that we have supported for six years, has built more than 30,000 quality affordable properties since it was founded.

"Last year we built 3,717 new homes with an average selling price of £149,000,"

said chief executive James Thomson, "with 51% of our buyers under the age of 35, and 48% buying a home for the first time."

We recognise the importance of increasing the housing stock of all tenures, and offer favourable loan packages to builders as part of our wider support for the housing sector, which includes our mortgage lending through Scottish Widows bank.

Thomson said: "As one of the largest mortgage lenders to first-time buyers, Lloyds Banking Group understands the home builder market and its customer base."

Together with Ilke Homes, his company has developed, an innovative way of building homes off-site using modular production. It is an example of the clever thinking that is helping to drive the success of companies across the construction and manufacturing sectors on this year's league table.

Lloyds Banking Group is committed to supporting UK



ARTHUR EDWARDS

Stephen Shaylor and Prince Harry at the Silverstone launch

manufacturing and has pledged £3bn to this sector by 2020 as part of our Helping Britain Prosper initiative.

Lloyds Bank also supports the Advanced Manufacturing Training Centre in Coventry, which helps Britain's leading engineering firms develop their talent, as well as commercialise innovations.

Nurturing young talent is critical to the future of British industry, which is one reason why we are proud to work with Shaylor Group (No 217).

Among its many projects is the Silverstone Experience, set to open in spring next year at the home of British motorsport.

Prince Harry was welcomed to the site by chief executive Stephen Shaylor in March to officially kick off the venture.

"There is a very limited pool of talent within the construction industry", said Shaylor, "so we developed a 'grow your own' strategy to ensure a talent pipeline within our organisation.

"We forge strong links with

local schools and colleges, recruiting school leavers, enrolling them onto a construction or degree apprenticeship while they attend our own in-house training scheme — the Shaylor Group Academy."

Britain clearly builds, but it also trades. It is a hallmark of top-performing private companies that they look overseas for growth, and are confident that British products, ideas and services have global appeal.

Top Track 250 companies generated more than £10bn in exports last year. To help reduce some of the pain of trading overseas, Lloyds has streamlined the process of putting the finance in place.

Exporters who bank with us can use our Lloyds Online Trades Services, which help them manage all their international transactions online without any fuss, as well as our trade portal, which includes a database of buyers and suppliers in every country.

Many companies also look

to external investors to provide additional capital and expertise to support their growth plans.

Our private equity arm, LDC, has backed four companies on this year's league table and its patient, long-term support makes a significant difference.

Look at NEC (No 186) the live events specialist, whose arenas have accommodated Strictly Come Dancing and This Morning Live.

Since LDC backed the buyout of the NEC in 2015, the group's performance has been transformed.

At Lloyds we have a direct banking relationship with 62 companies on the table — and with the majority based outside London, it illustrates our strong presence across the country.

We pledge to give all these companies the support, insight and encouragement they need.

*Scott Barton is managing director, Large Corporates, Lloyds Banking Group*