

Wates' Paul Chandler announces retirement

2 years ago



Paul Chandler has today announced that he will be retiring from a full-time executive role at [Wates](#) at the end of 2024, after a distinguished 42-year career in construction.

- Paul Chandler has today announced his intention to retire from a full-time executive position at the end of 2024, following a distinguished career in construction
- Wates Construction Group will expand to include Smartspace, currently part of Wates Property Services, to further strengthen its fit-out offer
- Following a period of sustained growth, SES Engineering Services will also become its own business unit at Wates, alongside the Construction, Residential, Developments and Property Services divisions

Paul has been Executive Managing Director of Wates' Construction Group since 2017 and a member of the Wates Group Board since 2018.

Under his leadership, the Construction Group has flourished, increasing its turnover from circa £700m in 2015 to circa £1.3bn in 2023, delivering profitable growth year on year in an incredibly challenging period for the industry.

Since Paul has been at the helm of Wates Construction Group, the business has delivered several major projects of national significance. This included building the state-of-the-art Sandwell Aquatic Centre for the Commonwealth Games and transforming this into a legacy for the local community as a leisure centre for everyone. Another major project completed under Paul's leadership is Borough Yards, a vibrant retail and leisure development created in disused Victorian railway arches in the heart of London. This project won the MIPIM award for best urban project in 2022.

Current major schemes include the design and build of the AESC UK giga factory in Washington which, once complete, will deliver a six-fold increase in UK electric vehicle battery production, and building the first new town centre in London for 50 years in Canada Water for British Land.

Paul Chandler will remain a member of the Wates Group board and continue to lead Wates Construction Group until the end of 2024.

Steff Battle, currently Managing Director in Wates' construction division, will become Executive Managing Director and will join the Wates Executive Committee on 1 July 2024.

Some realignments are also being implemented across the business.

Smartspace – currently part of Wates Property Services – will move across to become part of the Construction Group. This change will drive growth, allowing both Smartspace and Construction to expand their offer and build on the other's capabilities most effectively.

In January 2025, SES Engineering Services – currently part of the Construction Group – will become its own business division at Wates, joining the Construction, Residential, Developments and Wates Property Services divisions. SES Engineering Services has grown significantly in recent years, with turnover increasing 73% to £299m and nearly doubling profit before tax up to £5.8m in 2023.

This change will enable the business to continue to grow and pursue more and larger projects.

To head up this new business unit, Rob Clifford, current Managing Director of SES, will become its Executive Managing Director, joining the Wates Group Executive Committee on 1 July 2024.

Paul Chandler, Executive Managing Director of Wates Construction Group, said: "It has been a privilege to be part of the Wates success for the last eight years and an honour to lead Wates Construction Group through a period of successful profitable growth.

"Over the last 42 years I have watched the industry transform significantly. I have had the pleasure of building some deep relationships with progressive customers and partners that have driven this change.

"I know I am leaving the business in safe hands and look forward to seeing Wates continue to thrive. The business' growth and success would not be possible without its people. Wates is a company of outstanding, talented people and I would like to thank all my colleagues who have made the past eight years so rewarding."

Eoghan O'Lionaird, Chief Executive of Wates Group, said: "We would like to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt gratitude to Paul for his years of dedicated service to Wates. The business has thrived under his leadership, increasing revenue and profit, providing opportunity and employment to more and more people and increasing its positive impact on the local communities it serves.

"Wates is on a strong trajectory and we are excited for the years ahead. While we know this will be a period of change for the business, we believe moving Smartspace into the Construction Group and setting up SES Engineering Services as its own business division will stand us in good stead to continue our record-breaking growth.

"I am delighted that Steff and Rob will both be joining our Executive Committee. Their contributions so far

to Wates Construction and SES respectively have been invaluable and I look forward to working more closely with them both.”