

# Parasol Panel Systems

case study     advanced engineering sector

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Colin Taylor, Founder

**INVEST**  
Essex



Essex County Council

# Parasol Panel Systems

driving growth through market development



**Parasol Panel Systems**, based at Harlow in Essex, manufactures modular panels used in the construction of external walls for residential properties, animal kennels and games rooms. The company's innovative panel design has superior thermal insulation characteristics and can significantly reduce heating bills when used to upgrade the exterior walls of "park homes", mobile and static homes with an external surface that is traditionally hard to insulate.

The success of this design is now driving expansion into national and international markets as founder Colin Taylor explains, "The government-funded Fuel



Poverty initiative means that insulation in around a quarter of a million UK homes is being upgraded to make them warmer and improve energy efficiency.

Our panels provide the insulation performance and ease of installation to meet the requirements of that initiative. In trials conducted by the Building Research Establishment and Ofgem, they achieved a 60 percent reduction in heating costs over a four year period."

The company also has a healthy order book supplying modular kennel buildings for working dogs and animal welfare charities.

"We supply kennels for military dogs at most of the UK's airports as well as military bases," says Colin Taylor. "Since the introduction of the Animal Welfare Act, vets and owners have recognised the shortcomings of traditional wooden kennels. Our modular kennel buildings combine exclusive design with modern, low-maintenance materials and have been developed in collaboration with animal and environmental welfare experts to improve

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animal housing and to comply fully with all current licensing standards.”

French animal welfare groups are also showing an interest in Parasol's innovative modular kennels and the company now has orders for a design that is set to be implemented in around 100 French cities and towns over an 8-10 year period.

The company is also sharing knowledge with a US organisation, with a view to further international expansion. "We are now a European company, so good transport links are vital," says Colin Taylor.

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Growth has not been without its challenges, as Colin Taylor recalls. "We had been looking for larger premises and INVEST Essex helped us to find the right site in Harlow, a town that has a pool of skilled labour as well as good transport links. They have also been giving us ongoing advice on expansion and we meet our dedicated adviser every two months.”

Essex has proved a real bonus for this growing business. Parasol has grown dramatically in the last 12 months, quadrupling turnover and expanding into larger premises. Parasol's Essex location plays a vital role in supplying the skilled labour, as well as access to the essential logistics infrastructure an international business needs.

INVEST Essex provides confidential advice and practical support to companies wanting to establish a presence or expand in the UK. We promote Essex as an outstanding business destination and help existing and potential investors make the most of our strategic location, thriving business environment, and quality of life.

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## Key



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