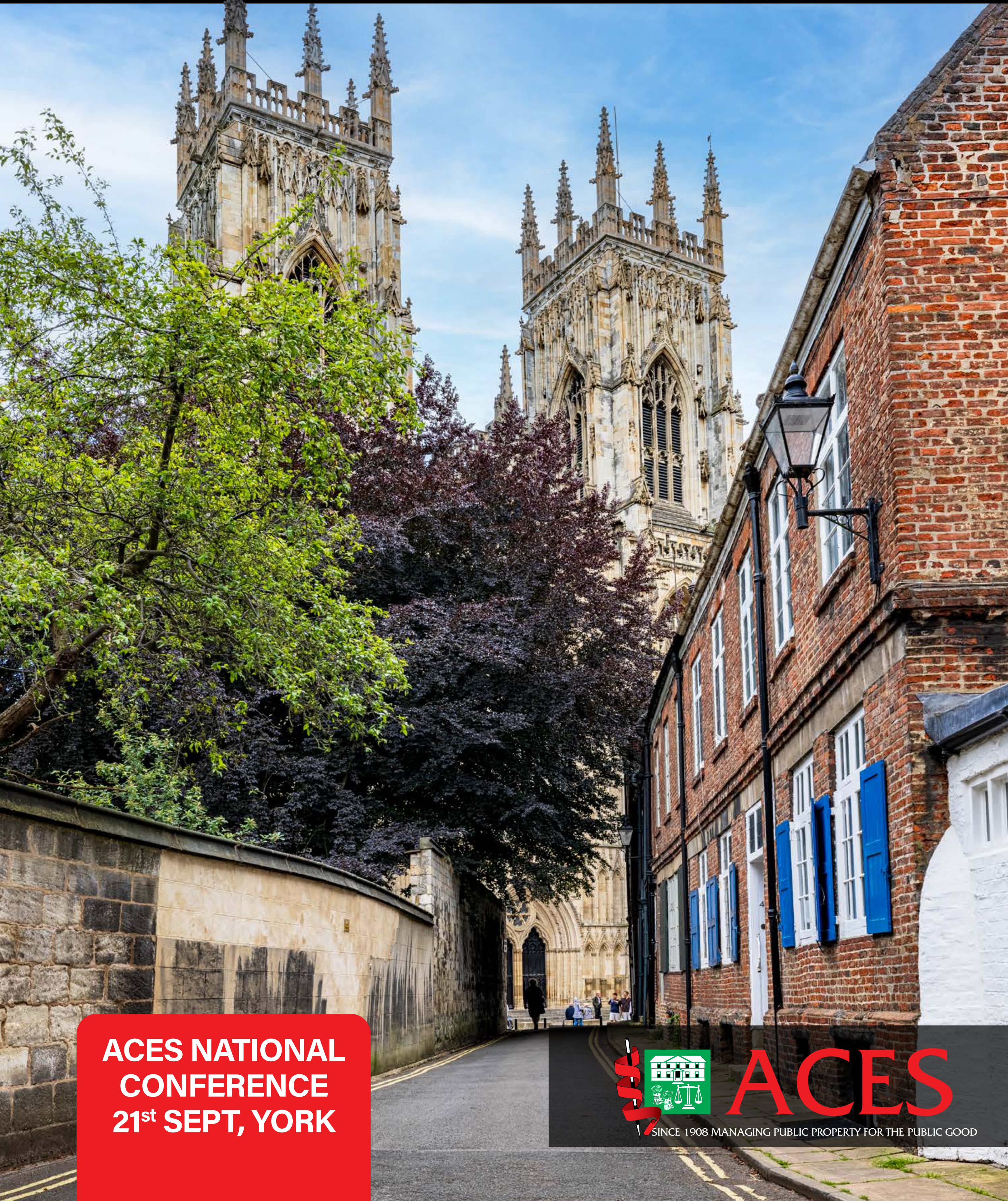
ACES Terrier

The Association of Chief Estates Surveyors & Property Managers in the Public Sector

Volume 28 Issue 2 Summer 2023



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VOLUME 28 - ISSUE 2 - Summer 2023

ACES TERRIER

The Journal of ACES - The Association of Chief Estates Surveyors & Property Managers in the Public Sector

EDITORIAL

Betty Albon

Welcome to the 2023 Summer Terrier

Firstly, can I draw your attention to ACES' National Conference, which this year is a very affordable one-day event in the City of York on 21 September. Helen Stubbs, ACES' President, has pulled together a fascinating range of speakers who will be addressing how surveyors can collaborate to further healthcare and wellbeing. The day will also cover professional and technical updates. Not a day to be missed. Please read the flyer in this issue, and go to https://aces.org.uk/national-presidential-conference-2023/ . Booking is now open.

This issue features housing opportunities, and for those aspiring planners within you, the question of achieving better quality new developments is discussed. There are also a range of articles addressing sustainability in various guises, including a couple of public sector case studies. And several reports on the sectoral state of the property market. Don't miss the set of articles directed at helping our young surveyors further their careers, including ACES' own FACES initiative.

Modesty – almost – prevents me from drawing attention to my lifetime – almost – achievement of visiting the secret bunker with former ACES' President, Jim Ross.

Please share ACES' Terrier with colleagues - in hard copy and online www.aces.org.uk/library/.

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Cover photo: York Minster, courtesy of Marcus Macaulay

NATIONAL COUNCIL

Notes of ACES Council Meeting on 21 April 2023

Trevor Bishop, ACES Secretary secretary@aces.org.uk

This meeting continued the trend of hybrid meetings; the face-to-face element was held at The Exchange, Lancashire County Council, Preston. Twenty six members attended the meeting in person or remotely, making the meeting quorate.

Detailed reports on the majority of these topics are published on the ACES' website www.aces.org.uk .

President's report

The President, Helen Stubbs, reported on her activities since the last meeting. The main focus of activity was attendance at branch meetings with five branches now attended, some in person, some virtual.

The President advised that she had met with Anne Gray, the new RICS President, at her inauguration meeting on 30 January and managed to discuss ACES with her. Future meetings with the RICS President had been arranged and Helen will take this as an opportunity to raise the profile of the public sector in the property profession. The President also confirmed she had attended the RICS round table meeting on the future of APC assessments.

Secretary's report

The Secretary reported on matters arising during the period since the last Council meeting. He provided the latest statistics on membership which showed an increase in membership numbers [Ed – see report in this issue of ACES' Terrier].

The Secretary confirmed that at the time of reporting, over 64% of invoices had been paid. It was noted that while member numbers were stable over the longer period, there had been an overall decline in the last couple of years.

Financial matters

The Treasurer, Chris Hewitt, presented a report on the financial position of the Association.

He talked through his new reporting format which looked at the first quarter of the current year and the last 6 months of the previous year. The last six months of 2022 indicated the overall picture was healthy with good financial reserves.

The Treasurer advised that since putting the single page report together, he had identified some areas for improvement and clarity with regard to financial performance and trends and he will proceed with this. He confirmed that he would be happy to take on board suggestions for improvements and how the information is presented, particularly with regard to the relationship between corporate membership income and conference expenditure.

He raised an issue about major difficulties recently experienced with Barclays Bank which seems to have arisen from the bank's misunderstanding of the Association and its branches. This was creating a financial risk for some branches and, after consulting with the branches, the Treasurer identified a solution which required a number of changes to ACES' Constitution, particularly relating to what branches can do autonomously.

Discussion took place on the consequences of the changes in terms of increased workload on branches, which was considered minimal. It was generally considered that all branches should be financially answerable to the national association and not acting independently, albeit able to run their day to day operations without recourse to the national association. By the same token, it should be clear that the national association would financially support branches if it became necessary.

The Treasurer took on board comments made at the meeting and that further thought was needed on the changes to the constitution which may also need some legal input.

Actions recommended and approved were:

- Progress with changes to the constitution alongside those necessary as a result of the Business Plan proposals with a view to approval at the 2023 AGM, and authorise Core Management Team (CMT) to implement banking changes to protect the Association's money
- Clarify and document the relationship between branches and the national association
- Produce a robust 3-5 year Financial Strategy to take into account the Association's financial responsibility, underlying and forecasted performance, risks, and dependencies, particularly with branches. Establishing a working group on this latter point was suggested with a view to drawing up a policy document for approval.

Report of Head of Engagement

The Head of Engagement, Neil Webster, reported on matters arising during the period since the last meeting.

Substantial progress had been made with the FACES initiative and some good partners brought on board to assist with the work, particularly LocatEd who had delivered a career development event recently attended by HoE and Senior Vice President (SVP), Sara Cameron [Ed – see report in this issue of ACES' Terrier]. The number of FACES members had now reached 85 and the improved numbers were helping to encourage partners such as Carter Jonas to put on tailored events. The numbers were likely to improve, potentially with a link up with VOA, which had 450 candidates on the RICS qualification pathway. Neil's next task was to write a structured plan for approval, which might include a follow up training opportunity in the wake of the SAM Diploma success and include a mentorship programme [Ed – see article by Zamman in this issue of ACES' Terrier].

Mention was made of the recent Public Sector Connect conference in Manchester and the panel of APC candidates from NW authorities brought together by Neil. There was wide agreement that the presentation by the candidates was the highlight of the day, and that the profession and public sector was in very good hands.

Consultations

The SVP reported on responses to recent consultations, which included the changes to the RICS Red Book and the RICS Professional Statement on Compulsory Purchase and Compensation. The SVP thanked Chris Brain and Margaret Wells for assistance with these. It was noted that the consultations on the proposed Infrastructure Levy and proposals for changes to Non-domestic Rates had just gone out to members. Both of these asked for volunteers from ACES members to sit on roundtable discussions and it was hoped that some ACES members would come forward [Ed – see RICS response to the Infrastructure Levy consultation in this issue of ACES' Terrier, including the involvement of ACES' members].

ACES' Terrier

The President thanked the Editor, Betty Albon, for another excellent bumper edition.

The Editor thanked the branches for helping to produce a very comprehensive Spring Terrier and noted that it was the best turn out of branch reports for some time. She also noted that this edition was "heavy" with contributions from Eastern region as she was able to follow up with speakers at branch meetings. In this regard, the Editor requested that branch secretaries in other regions sent through details of speakers at their meetings.

The Editor commented on the position of advertising income for ACES' Terrier following the introduction of Corporate Members where their annual fee included advertising. There was a risk of perception that the advertising income was no longer covering the costs of production. On advertising rates, the Editor noted that that these had not changed for a number of years and asked Council for a view on whether to keep them the same. The President advised that this would be picked up under the Business Plan Review.

The Editor then made reference to the work that Marcus Macaulay, ACES' publisher, had started on creating a new dedicated website for ACES' Terrier which was mobile phone friendly, broke the journal down into articles that could easily be searched, included advertising banners as a potential source of extra income, and contained improved links to relevant resources and social media. Council members were provided with the link to the new test page and the general opinion was that this looked very good and professional, and that Marcus should be requested to develop further into a fully functional product. It was approved that the Editor and Secretary liaise with Marcus to take this further and a decision to proceed with the project subject to a reasonable cost be delegated to CMT. At the same time, the development of an ACES App linked to resourcing a social media champion would be picked up as part of the Business Plan. It was noted that the good work now happening with FACES presented an opportunity to utilise the resources better placed with knowledge of App development and social media.

Junior Vice President

The President referred to Dan Meek of Norse Group recently putting himself forward for the position of Junior Vice President. A survey of all ACES Members had resulted in a clear majority in favour of the appointment, with the decision to be ratified by Council. A poll of Council members at the meeting resulted in a unanimous decision to approve the appointment of Dan Meek as Junior Vice President.

Future vision/Business plan

The President reported on progress with developing the Future Vision for the Association and the Business Plan Review.

The history of consultations on the Business Plan with members was reviewed, culminating in several recommendations approved at July 2022 Council relating to the constitution, officer and supporting roles and the final Business Plan.

In relation to the Future Vision, reference was made to the workshop in December

2022 and the 10 proposals that were put forward to Council in January 2023 and approved, with a number of follow up actions required in respect of the Liaison Groups, social media usage and the FACES initiative.

The President noted that while there was still some further ongoing development work required, a revised Business Plan had been prepared on the back of the above approvals and this was presented to Council for approval.

The President advised that the Business Plan was inevitably an iterative document and liable to further updates over the period of the plan. In this regard, the President noted changes required following discussions at this Council, which she would implement and then recirculate the Plan.

Discussions took place on the Business Plan details including equipping members with "soft skills" particularly for future leadership aspirations (following the RACES initiative), and helping those members, through mentoring, who had just assumed the sometimes daunting "Head of Property" position.

Core Management Team

The Secretary reported that a number of meetings of CMT had taken place covering the day to day running of the Association. A number of key actions and decisions had taken place and Council endorsed and approved the actions taken by CMT.

Annual Conference 2023

The President advised that it will be a one-day event on 21 September and the venue will be the City of York, at the Raddison Hotel. The theme will be Health and Public Sector Working Together and a good range of speakers had been identified. There will be an evening meal. Marcus Perry will be leading on the Social Programme and is liaising closely with the President [Ed – see https://aces.org.uk/aces-national-presidential-conference-2023/ .

As a result of the efforts of Neil Webster, considerable support from Corporate Members and others had been lined up for the Conference including Carter Jonas, Norse Group, Avison Young and Lambert Smith Hampton. Interest in exhibition space had also come from Align Property Partners and High Court Enforcement Group.

The President talked through her initial thoughts on the format for the day which comprised sessions on theory, partnership in practice, and technical matters.

The President presented a high-level financial plan, based on the key elements of income and costs from previous live conferences, but adjusted to take account of the one-day format. On income, for the purpose of the plan, one third of Corporate Membership fees for 2023 was planned for the conference. Proposed figures for delegate rates etc were shown on the basis of a break-even position, resulting in moderate day rates for members. She had eft room for adjustment in the event of costs coming in higher than currently estimated.

AGM 2023

The Secretary advised that, following the CMT decision to look at a Scottish venue, he had had discussions with the Scottish Branch and subsequently the ACES member for Edinburgh offered to make enquiries about holding the AGM at the City Hall. The date will be 17 November; thought is being given to a slightly amended format with greater emphasis on celebrating members achievements during the year.

ACES Award for Excellence

The Senior Vice President confirmed the launch and application forms are planned for the near future. The deadline for submissions will be towards the end of August.

Asset management in the public sector

Malcolm Williams updated members on the SAM diploma course which continued to go very well, with the help of the ACES members carrying out the presentations in a professional manner.

Malcolm advised that as of June this year, we will have had 177 students that had taken the Diploma Course. On top of this, applications are coming in for the next iteration later in the year and interest is still quite strong [Ed – see flyer in this issue of ACES' Terrier]. Neil Webster added that he was in discussion with Future of London on extending our experience into housing matters.

RACES/Homes for older people

Derek Rowell re-affirmed his wish to step back from the iHOPE initiative for personal reasons but kindly presented a briefing note on the current position, particularly with regard to the appointment of a Task Force, and what needs to happen next in terms of ACES' further involvement.

The Task Force is to produce an independent report on Homes for Older People to DLUHC and DHSC. A deadline of 12 months has been given, which is not good in view of the possible clash with a general election in 2024 and the project could become a political football, something for ACES to be aware of.

Derek also referred to emerging developments in the identification of an untapped area of accommodation for the elderly and disabled. Of particular note was the fact that the Right to Buy scheme did not apply to elderly and disabled people and this may present an opportunity for councils to reconsider providing buildings for those with the greatest need.

Derek ran through the options that he considered now available to ACES. The President noted that after the last Council meeting in January, a call went out to members to pick up the baton but no volunteers came forward. In the light of this, the President considered that option 2 (continue to liaise with partners who have an active role in the Task Force) was the route to take. Neil Webster stated that he was happy to be involved but not to lead. It was agreed to put another call out to members for volunteers and then review the options.

Derek's commitment and support in taking these initiatives forward was again recognised and thanked by Council.

Co-ordinators, branches and external working groups

Liaison Officer and branch reports were received, and these have been published on the ACES website for the information of all members. Once again, thanks went to the Liaison Officers for their efforts in producing detailed and topical reports which are appreciated by members, and to the branches for submitting reports on their activities.

Andy Kehoe talked through a couple of the interesting cases he highlighted in his comprehensive report on Commercial Asset Management. Great examples of the variety afforded by working in the public sector! His report also touched on matters taking place quietly in the background with regard to the commercial retail and housing markets that members need to be aware of.

Tony Bamford gave a brief verbal update on his liaison topics, noting in particular that the commercial and retail sectors were increasingly angry about the lack of progress on rating reforms. Another comprehensive report on Housing and Regeneration matters by Gill Boyle was noted. Chris Brain added a comment to his Valuation report with regard to the recent Asset Valuations consultation from HM Treasury, on which he had kindly agreed to take a lead. He cautioned members not to think that these consultations were just about asset valuations, as there was concern about the reduced surveying resources in many authorities; there was a risk of some unintended consequences for the sector if, for example, a reduced requirement to inspect properties for asset valuations also meant reduced inspections for other important asset management purposes. Chris urged members to study the consultation carefully and get comments back to him as soon as possible.

The President thanked the branches for their reports which again gave interesting insights into things going on in the regions.

The Secretary tabled the proposed grouping of Liaison Officer Reports and referred to the recent offer from the VOA to put forward members of its staff to join the liaison groups. The details were referred to members who approved the inclusion of these volunteers, whether formal ACES members or not.

Future meetings

The following future meetings were noted:

ACES Council	28 July 2023	Birmingham
Annual Conference	21 Sept 2023	York
Annual Meeting	17 Nov 2023	Edinburgh

Any other business

Alan Richards noted that he attended, on behalf of ACES, Steve Norris's [Lambert Smith Hampton/Revo] launch of the retail report which was well received and had been a good platform for ACES.

There was no other business raised by members. The President thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.

The Conference

The ACES flagship event of the year will be an in-person event in September 2023 with the usual line up of excellent speakers and great networking opportunities for ACES members and others working in or for the public sector at exceptional value for money.

Hear how the health sector and public sector can work together to achieve common goals, efficiencies & costs savings, deliver new facilities, contribute to regeneration schemes and achieve best practice in the property profession, all with the ultimate aim of improving health and living for the community.

The day will focus on how we can collectively work together to bring forward new health developments and contribute to the wider health, wellbeing and social value agenda. Questions to be answered, among others are: what are the key areas that need to be considered; how should the partnerships work together to ensure an outcome; what does the leadership and governance look like? We will feature sessions on place, strategy, finance including valuation, construction and planning, and landlord and tenant. There will be plenty of case studies showing what does and doesn't work – and the reasons why, along with technical elements. There will also be discussions on broader current property matters.

Cost ACES Members - £70 Non-members - £100

The networking and social elements

Conference Networking Meal

Held in the historical Hospitium in the York Museum Gardens, a 3-course evening meal on Wednesday evening with fellow conference attendees and guests. A chance to socialise and network prior to the main conference event.

Cost - £70

Social Programme and Meal

For those who prefer the social side of the conference, a fantastic social programme has been arranged by Marcus Perry. The main programme will take place on Thursday with an optional informal meal on the Thursday evening. A York Visitor pass can be purchased for anyone staying over and wishing to experience York in more detail on Friday.

Cost - £60 (social programme Thursday;
£40 meal Thursday evening);
York Visitor Pass - £59 (Friday only optional)

For further information and how to book, see https://aces.org.uk/national-presidential-conference-2023-social-programme/

ACES MEMBERSHIP

Trevor Bishop MRICS, ACES Secretary secretary@aces.org.uk

I list below the changes in membership between 1 April 2023 and 30 June 2023.

New members approved

There were 8 new applications approved during the period:

First Name	Surname	Organisation	Branch Ref
Andy	Husband	Birmingham City Council	HoE
Sarah	Wayman	Darlington Borough Council	NE
Victoria	Bendall	Redditch Borough Council	HoE
Tim	Hartley	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	NE
Felicity	Allan	Shropshire Council	HoE
Malcolm	Simister	Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council	NW
Katherine	Paton	Valuation Office Agency	S
Alastair	Watson	Valuation Office Agency	S

Members transferred during the period.

No members transferred during the period.

Resignations

The following 2 members resigned during the period (Resignation includes where members leave an organisation and do not maintain contact with the Association, or where the member is over 12 months in arrears with membership subscription and is not responding to invoice reminders):

First Name	Surname	Organisation	Branch Ref
Malcolm	Hill	Perth & Kinross Council	S
Mike	Paterson	London Borough of Hillingdon	L

Membership

Summary of current membership at 30 June 2023:

Total Membership	
Full	218
Additional	79
Honorary	34
Associate	24
Retired	37
Total	**392**

Helen is Senior Transaction Manager at NHS Property Services and President of ACES.

PRESIDENT'S PIECE

Helen Stubbs, president@aces.org.uk

Art fraud and forgery

I'm fascinated by art fraud and art forgery. Not in the sense that you are likely to see me on the next series of Crimewatch, but the concept that a piece of art can be pronounced as authentic by a series of experts, valued at millions of pounds and then a piece of paper comes along with throws into doubt its provenance - and its suddenly worth zero. The art is still the same, its still presumably considered to be technically/artistically brilliant, but it has minimal or no value.

I was thinking about this valuation issue when considering topics for this article, which led me onto thinking about the art and antiques surveying pathway and a few questions popped up.

Could I retrain when I get bored of dealing with buildings and land? Possibly, but very unlikely without a lot of studying and work experience.

Are there any similarities with what we generally do as public sector surveyors? Yes.

Should we as public sector surveyors have any interest in art and antiques? Most definitely if your organisation has any museum collections or artwork on its walls, or you are selling buildings with their contents included, or you are trying to find out if the Banksy that has suddenly appeared on the wall of the town hall is a fixture or a chattel, and you are thinking about selling it to raise funds.

Ignoring the first question as its extremely hypothetical, I had quick look at the RICS pathway to see what was involved and whether there were any similarities with the more traditional commercial or corporate pathways. The following is an extract from the competency guide:

"The personal property/arts and antiques (PP/AA) market is diverse. At one end are the collections in museums and/or in other private/public ownership, together with art and antiques owned by private individuals. It is an area accessible to everyone regardless of wealth – many items, for example collectables, can be bought for very little money. Professional advice is sought on a wide variety of personal property to include but not limited to fine art, collectibles, heritage assets, antiques and jewellery. RICS members operating in this market are specialised and experienced in a number of fields including the valuation, sale, purchase, management and conservation of PP/AA.

This pathway is ideal for someone wishing to pursue a professional career in PP/AA related services; many candidates may have an art history background. PP/AA Chartered Surveyors may work within a range of settings such as an auction house, valuation consultancy, insurance/loss adjusting, government advisory, or within museums and galleries. You may be asked to advise on a range of objects which occasionally include forgeries, copies or reproductions. Therefore, an enquiring mind and the ability to undertake detailed research, using the resources of specialist libraries and museums is required for this pathway. Candidates choosing this pathway may also seek to become an RICS Registered Valuer by taking Valuation to Level 3." (RICS Pathway Guide, Personal Property/Arts & Antiques August 2018)

The mandatory competencies are the same as usual; the core competencies are L3 Object Identification and Research Methodologies; L2 – Valuation; L1 – Auctioneering, and then the optional competencies, which is a choice from a much smaller list including: Auctioneering, Capital taxation, Conservation and Restoration, Insurance, Purchase and sale. In essence, therefore quite a lot of similarities with the usual route that commercial/public sector candidates progress through, with a few specialisms thrown in – so maybe with a bit of extra studying I could retrain after all….

Why is it relevant to public sector surveyors?

Research by the Taxpayer Alliance in 2019 identified that:

- Local authorities in the UK own at least 1.9 million pieces of art

- This artwork is worth nearly £1.9bn. The average value of collections for each council is around £7m
- On average only 30.2% of the art is on public display
- The highest value art collection was held by Manchester City Council, valued at around £369m. Only 7.6% of its collection is on display.

Source : Wasting Money: Local Authority Artworks. Darwin Friend, December 2019, Taxpayers Alliance

The above information was obtained through FOI requests to all the then local authorities; many of the authorities declined to provide values citing security issues, and many provided values based on insurance values rather than full market value. Which begs the question: what is the market value of the artworks, and are there any undiscovered masterpieces out there? If you are curious, I suggest you have a chat with your museums and finance teams and establish how the art in your authority or organisation has been valued, and perhaps extol to them the virtues of employing an RICS registered valuer to provide some market values.

Can you sell the art to raise funds?

This is a question that will need considerable research for each individual circumstance. The question to answer is "Does the authority own the art outright?" – sounds simple but the art could have been gifted, with conditions attached; could be owned by a trust; could be on loan from another authority (and the records lost); could have become affixed to the land and believed to have been transferred to another party along with the land; or any numerous permutations of these principles.

There have been a couple of recent high-profile examples of this question:

An extremely controversial sale of Egyptian Art in 2014 resulted in the authority paying the previous owners 45% of the sale price (circa £6m). This was a private arrangement with the original owners, but it is believed that the original owners could ascertain a claim that the art had been loaned rather than gifted, as the authority had originally understood.

There is a long-running case between two London Boroughs over a Henry Moore sculpture known as "Old Flo". In this situation, the land on which the sculpture sits had been transferred between various boroughs as a result of local government reorganisation. The argument centred around whether the sculpture was effectively affixed to the land, and thus became "property transferred with the land" or whether it was a chattel and ownership remained with the original owner. It's worth reading the case summaries as it involves a bit of tort law, property law and the intricacies of the local government acts. The outcome was that the sculpture was a chattel [Ed – my previous district council had a similar conundrum with the county council concerning an open air Elizabeth Frink sculpture, following the 1974 local government reorganisation. I don't believe it has ever been resolved].

The good news is that if you are fortunate to have a mural painted on your town hall, then providing you own the building freehold, then the mural becomes yours as well, and you are free to extract it or remove it, and dispose of it as you wish – but the copyright to the mural belongs to the artist. Make sure you haven't leased the building though, as happened in Folkstone – the freeholder leased the building; artwork appeared on the wall (presumed by Banksy) and the tenant removed part of the wall to sell the artwork in the US. The courts became involved and determined that the wall was quite rightly part of the structure and the tenant had no legal right to remove it. As the lease was - not surprisingly - silent on the rights and responsibilities of the parties, should a Bansky appear on the wall, an enterprising tenant could have stated to the freeholder that they intended to paint over the mural (as per their repair and maintenance clauses), unless the freeholder agreed to share in the value of its disposal.

What are the implications of selling the art?

In addition to the knotty problem of whether you own the art in the first place, any disposal consideration will also need to resolve the additional implications of potentially losing your Arts Council or Museum Accreditation, any possible tax implications, and whether trusts or gift conditions will need to be re-written to allow the disposal.

Both the Arts Council and Museums Trust agree that deaccession should only be undertaken in very specific circumstances, ie where there are duplicates or the item is beyond repair. The deaccession and any subsequent sale should not be undertaken for purely financial reasons – even if the sale results in capital for investment in the arts. In the Egyptian Art scenario, the Arts Council strongly objected to the sale and ultimately stripped the authority of its Arts Council accreditation. This resulted in the authority being unable to secure any future arts funding through grants or loans for a number of years, even though the capital from the sale was earmarked for museums investment.

Food for thought

The above is just a snapshot of the myriad of issues surrounding public sector artworks and surveying and I hope has whetted your appetite to do some individual research, or ask a few polite questions of your museums team.

If anyone knows of an arts surveyor/dealer or has an interest in the subject, and would be interested in writing a follow up article (or offering me some work experience!) then please contact the Editor editor@aces.org.uk .

HOUSING PARTNERSHIPS Can public private partnerships help address the shortage of rental homes?

Paul is an Associate Partner and works as a Planner within the Eastern Region Planning and Development Team based in Cambridge. He has over 13 years' experience working in both the public and private sector.

Paul carries a diverse case load, ranging from small scale private residential developments, through to large scale mixed use schemes and the promotion of Strategic Urban Extensions. With experience of residential, leisure and commercial developments, he has a proven track record in project managing consultant teams and securing complex planning approvals. Paul also has experience in promoting sites through the local plan process, contesting planning appeals and processing enforcement action cases.

Paul Belton paul.belton@carterjonas.co.uk

Paul describes a way that councils and the private sector can work in partnership to achieve council housing.

Background

Rents, as a proportion of earnings, are at their highest level for over a decade - equating to 35% of the average income of a single earner in December based on Zoopla's statistics, and rising at a rate of 4.7% annually according to the Office for National Statistics.

This is the result of many factors, but the most significant is undoubtedly a lack of supply. The trade body Propertymark states that in March more than 100 prospective tenants on average registered at each lettings agency, ten times the number of available properties. And the number of new homes being built is woefully low, at 191,801 during 2022 (NHBC figures).

It is no coincidence that England last delivered in excess of the now defunct target of 300,000 homes in 1977, at the height of its council house building programme. Since then, the number of homes delivered by local authorities has dropped from 145,070 in 1977 to 3,800 in 2019. While the proportions delivered by both housing associations and private sector have increased significantly, the deficit of affordable homes looks set to remain.

Cambridge Investment Partnership

However, from Scarborough to West Sussex and Maidenhead to Cambridge, Carter Jonas is involved in partnerships and pioneering developments which are significantly increasing delivery in these areas. For example, we are working with Cambridge Investment Partnership (CIP) to deliver 1,000 new council homes in Cambridge. CIP was established as a partnership between Cambridge City Council and local housebuilder Hill, in response to the ever-growing housing waiting list which, bearing in mind local land prices, clearly wasn't going to be solved by the private sector alone. The initial project completed with CIP was a site purchased through the open market which achieved policy compliant levels of affordable housing, at 40%. Since then, several projects have focused on sites already owned by the council, delivering 100% of the new homes as council homes.

Two further scheme partnerships will not only deliver 100% council housing, but will be constructed to Passivhaus standards. They include wheelchair-adapted, family homes, electric vehicle charging points and generous cycle storage. These schemes also meet ambitious biodiversity goals, Aylesborough Close, north Cambridge

typically achieving a minimum of 20% biodiversity net gain ahead of the legal requirement coming into force.

These schemes exemplify the benefits of the public sector retaining an interest in its land, to the benefit of local residents. Furthermore, Cambridge City Council has an unrivalled insight into its tenants' needs and is uniquely placed to communicate effectively with tenants and help deliver the type of housing most in need.

Complementing this, the private sector provides the skills to navigate the planning system and advise on appraisals, construction schedules and the many technical issues.

Councils must also respond to social and environmental issues and Cambridge, one of the first councils to declare a climate emergency, must be seen to be leading the way in order to make this a requirement of the private sector. CIP has responded very positively to this climate emergency and places significant attention on delivering energy efficient and sustainable developments, consistently exceeding policy standards for energy and water consumption.

The CIP projects have been very successful, all receiving planning permission at the first attempt. The model is proving very successful and combining the knowledge and insight of the council with the expertise of its development partners is resulting in a very timely and positive uplift in the delivery of affordable housing.

With the CIP model now being rolled out in neighbouring South Cambridgeshire, led by the same teams at Hill and Carter Jonas, this success is likely to be replicated more frequently elsewhere.

Case study specifics

In 2022, Carter Jonas secured two planning consents for affordable housing on behalf of Cambridge Investment Partnership. The first was for 70 homes in Aylesborough Close in Arbury, north Cambridge. The second was for 14 homes, seven each nearby in Aragon Close and Sackville Close, Kings Hedges. Both planning applications were given a resolution to approve by Cambridge City Council on 5 October.

The provision of a significant number of affordable homes, which will be rented to those on Cambridge City Council's housing lists, responds to significant demand: according to the council's latest figures, 2,141 applicants are in need of a home in the city. The range of house types to be provided reflects the needs of those on the housing register, with a significant number of the homes and associated facilities designed for families with young children.

All 84 homes will be designed to Passivhaus standards, and as such will be highly sustainable and energy efficient. They will be very well insulated, with high performance windows, ambient underfloor heating, mechanical ventilation and heat recovery.

The new schemes are set within a landscaped setting which is being retained and will deliver a range of new open spaces. These will include residents' gardens, play and food growing areas, and areas landscaped with new trees and planting. The extensive landscaping will deliver a 20% biodiversity net gain – double the 10% mandatory target which is due to be introduced nationally later this year. This has been achieved through a range of measures including biodiverse green roofs and mini meadows. Flower-rich shrubs and perennial mixes will provide colour, interest and ecological value throughout the year. Furthermore, green roofs, rain gardens, permeable paving, and attenuation tanks will support the sustainable management of surface water.

Carter Jonas is working with CIP on an ongoing basis, to help the City Council deliver much needed new council housing.

These two planning consents will deliver homes which are urgently needed in Cambridge, in a highly sustainable location, and in buildings that are highly efficient, comfortable to live in, economic to run and relate well to their surroundings. Given the well documented cost of living crisis, with energy bills soaring, there has never been a greater need for this issue to be central to the design of new homes.

In achieving planning success, Carter Jonas worked alongside BPTW architects (for the homes on Aylesborough Close) and, PTE architects (for the homes on Aragon Close and Sackville Close) and Concillo Communications.

Tom is Chief Executive of the Community Land Trust Network and leads on its strategy, policy and market development work. He has worked in housing and planning for 17 years, formerly in the Greater London Authority and Bioregional.

AFFORDABLE COMMUNITY HOUSING
The 'State of the Community Land Trust sector 2023'

Tom Chance tom@communitylandtrusts.org.uk

Tom outlines a recently published report launched by the Secretary of State, Michael Gove MP. The 'State of the Community Land Trust sector 2023' finds that industry partnerships could help communities to build at least 278,000 homes through replicable project types. "..active involvement and ownership generates significant social and environmental impact. Greater priority is giving to affordability, quality and sustainability; social cohesion is strengthened; and opposition to housebuilding is reduced."

We are used to assuming that a majority of the British public opposes housebuilding. Worse, opposition is concentrated in the most unhelpful places. Ben Ansell, an Oxford academic, used detailed modelling to estimate that while opponents and supporters are roughly equal-sized camps, marginal Parliamentary seats tend to be less supportive.

Challenges

For some, the answer to this is to enable planners and developers to bulldoze over public opinion in the pursuit of a social good. But in a new report 'State of the Community Land Trust sector 2023' - launched with Michael Gove in March, we set out the case that significant numbers of homes could be built with communities by mobilising and empowering the pro-development constituency within each community.

Across England and Wales there are people who want to see more homes built, green spaces better managed, derelict buildings converted into new workspace. People who recognise that 4 in 10 people are struggling to meet their housing costs, that poorly insulated homes cost us £6bn a year in wasted energy, and that left behind areas are only getting a third of their fair share of charitable funding. People who are willing to volunteer their time and energy, over a period of years, to do something about this. To make their communities more sustainable.

But aside from the 1% of people who engage in the local plan process, the only power the planning system grants communities is to object when something is proposed. To the supporters, wary of being caught in a social media firestorm, the only option is to keep your head down.

Except it isn't the only option. Increasing numbers of these people have rolled up their sleeves and formed Community Land Trusts (CLTs) to try and develop the homes and other assets their community needs. But they have found the land market, planning system and development industry a hostile environment for new entrants. They have plenty of local support, but lack risk capital, expertise and willing partners.

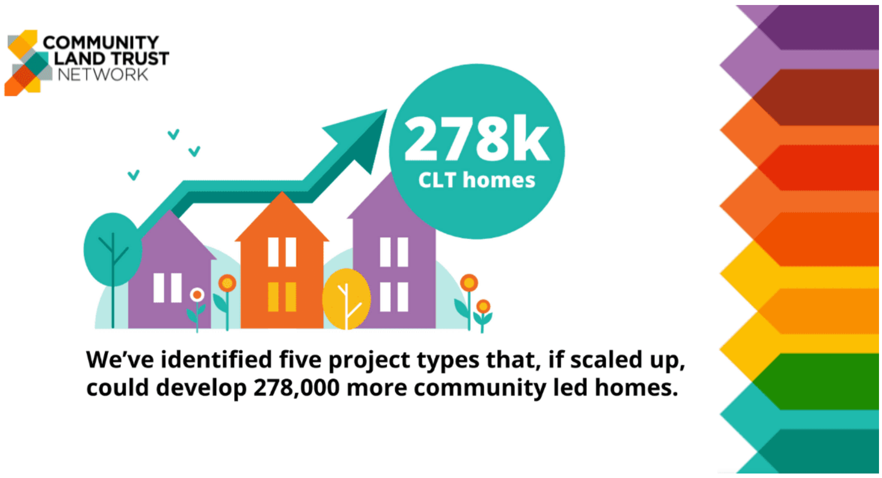
The image of CLTs – and cohousing, and other forms of community-led development – has long been closely associated with a certain sort of self-build. Scrappy projects that suck up council time and struggle to access finance to eventually self-build small, hard sites nobody else wants – projects that are widely celebrated but rarely replicated.

Councils have been enjoined to support communities to overcome this struggle with funding, land and enabling capacity. In the main this has led to communities being sold sites councils can't develop themselves which inevitably prove a hard task; being offered funding while it was available from a short-lived central government scheme that gets you a little way down the road of a 5-6 year project and then you're stuck again; and being frustrated as over-stretched council departments struggle to put in place the complex bidding and disposal arrangements.

Successes

But when we set out to write our new report on the state of the Community Land Trust sector, we found something striking.

These projects get a lot of limelight, but they are a small segment of the sector. CLTs now own some 1,711 affordable homes and over 100 other sorts of asset (green spaces, workspace, community centres, shops, energy systems, farmland and more). Three quarters of these completed projects have followed a different path, working in partnership with private developers or housing associations on types of projects that look a lot more mainstream: rural exception sites, urban extensions, garden villages.



These projects paint another image of the CLT: as a means by which local communities can have agency in development, and generate community wealth through ownership of the outputs. Communities become clients for architects, not consultees; partners to developers, not opponents; campaigners with, rather than against, councils.

We set out five 'products' based on a pattern book of proven solutions and market opportunities. Each involve different forms of partnership with the private and public sector. If taken to scale, they could see communities being actively involved in the construction of 278,000 homes.

For example, there's a striking lack of affordable housebuilding in smaller rural communities. The planning risk and expense puts even the rural specialists off from developing many of them. But CLTs, supported by enablers like Middlemarch CLH, have been able to bring these forward and attract larger housing associations to then help finance and build them, increasing supply in high-pressure areas struggling with airbnb lets and second homes.

Our thesis, supported by a growing body of robust evidence, is that this active involvement and ownership generates significant social and environmental impact. Greater priority is giving to affordability, quality and sustainability; social cohesion is strengthened; and opposition to housebuilding is reduced.

Once a first project is completed, most CLTs then go on to undertake further development – more homes, a new enterprise centre, an energy retrofit scheme. Creating, or enabling, a CLT as a 'byproduct' of development creates a new development capability in that community.

What is standing in the way of this growing to a greater scale? In one analysis, just culture.

What can councils do?

Councils can already use procurement and planning powers to specify that stewardship bodies for large new sites are constituted as Community Land Trusts; use self and custom build requirements to create opportunities for cohousing and housing co-operatives; follow East Cambridgeshire in introducing an 'exceptions site' policy for community-led development on the edge of settlements, encouraging landowners with unallocated sites to sell to communities; employ council-owned housing companies to develop out community-led projects; and encourage local registered providers to partner with community groups on projects they bring forward, taking a lease on the land

and building and managing the homes in partnership with the local community.

There will always be space for innovative DIY community projects. But the real potential for scale of activity and impact lies in these partnership products.

We need industry to join us in this task of finding the right forms of partnership, the best ways to facilitate and enable them.

As Gove asked in his speech launching the report, "What could be a better example than a neighbourhood taking control, then being in charge of its destiny and making sure that the homes in which people live have the heart and soul of that community embedded in the bricks and mortar?"

Ed – the launch and report can be found at:

https://www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk/news-and-events/new-research-shows-potential-for-278000-more-community-led-homes/

https://www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/State-of-the-Sector-2023-PRESS-1.pdf

KEY WORKER HOUSING The cost of living crisis and affordable housing for key workers

Tim Lowe tim@thelowegroupltd.com

I first featured Tim in 2017, not long after he had started on his mission of providing innovative housing solutions through guardianship. The housing situation for key workers continues to worsen: "Those whose earnings have become outpaced by London rental prices have been forced to move to cheaper outer boroughs or commuter towns… With a key worker starting salary at around £22,000, living in central London has become nothing short of impossible."

While the cost of living crisis may have slipped from headline news, there is no denying that many households across the UK continue to experience fuel poverty and are struggling due to the ongoing cost of living crisis. According to Statista, 92% of UK households reported an increase in their cost of living in January this year, mainly attributed to spending more on food, electricity, and fuel.

The 2022 Autumn Budget predicted that real household disposable income in the UK would likely drop 4.3% during the 2022/23 financial year. This is the most significant decline in living standards since records began.

Why has the cost of living crisis happened, and what action has been taken so far?

With the overall economy growing during 2021, one might have expected living standards to improve. However, the real problem lies in inflation, which has reached its highest point in several decades. The Bank of England's target of 2% will remain firmly on the horizon, with the rate of inflation currently sitting well above that, at 8.7% (as of May 2023) [Source: Statista: Inflation rate for the consumer price index in the UK from January 1989 to May 2023].

Tim is the Founder and Director of The LOWE Group. He is an entrepreneur who is passionate about delivering cost-effective, innovative solutions to managing vacant properties which create social impact and support local communities.

The property guardian industry is a proven route for managing vacant buildings, and it is recognised that allowing socially responsible individuals to occupy the properties deters anti-social behaviour and prevents dilapidation more reliably and cost-effectively than any other security solution. Not all vacant properties are suitable for property guardianship, and Tim has diversified LOWE's services to include charitable occupation, affordable workspace and traditional security services.

Tim has worked with developers, investors, funds and public services on numerous vacant sites to provide property owners with an efficient and secure service for their vacant properties. At the same time providing key workers, young professionals and creatives with affordable spaces to live, work and create. www.thelowegroupltd.com

With wage increases having no real hope of keeping up with price increases, and the impact of Brexit and the war in Ukraine only compounding inflation challenges, not to mention the recent rise in energy price cap (and an additional increase set for October), UK households are buckling under an ever-increasing strain to make ends meet.

The government response to the cost of living crisis has been in the form of support packages, including a £400 energy bill grant and a £650 cost of living payment to be distributed to around 8 million low-income households. Additional steps include a winter fuel payment totalling £350, a disability benefit payment of £150, and an extra £150 rebate on council tax, announced in February 2022 [Source: Statista: Value of government support packages per person/household announced for the cost of living crisis in the UK in 2022].

The government's response has been widely criticised as falling far short of what is necessary to support the UK's most vulnerable people. According to Statista, nearly half of UK adults stated that the government's response was highly dissatisfactory, with many families claiming they now have to make choices about whether to eat or stay warm.

The ever-increasing cost of living in London

While the cost of living crisis has affected people up and down the country, those residing in the capital also have to contend with astronomical increases in rent on top of high commuting expenses. In fact, in a recent survey by Hitachi Rail [Source: mynewsdesk.com], one in three Londoners said they avoid public transport due to the high costs. With soaring rents meaning that only the highest earners can afford them, many people are leaving the city in search of more affordable accommodation. The competition for London homes has also been a factor, with those with a more significant income being able to secure the properties when competition is high. Those whose earnings have become outpaced by London rental prices have been forced to move to cheaper outer boroughs or commuter towns. Unfortunately, those on lower incomes typically include key workers, such as those in health and social care, education, and vital public services.

While there has been an outcry for something to be done about the impact of housing costs on London residents [Source: standard.co.uk], the data still shows that

Photo courtesy of David Jenson

many of those on lower than average salaries are continuing to be priced out of the city. In fact, it appears that record numbers of tenants are leaving the capital, and with the average monthly rental price for a home in London topping £3,000 per month, it's no wonder [Source: standard.co.uk].

At The LOWE Group, we have seen first-hand how rising rents affect key workers, young professionals, and creatives: approximately 40% of our guardians are key workers, 25% are creatives, and the remaining 35% is a diverse group of entrepreneurs, young professionals, and business owners. With a key worker starting salary at around £22,000, living in central London has become nothing short of impossible. Should this continue to be the case, a key worker exodus will have a devastating impact on the city, creating a shortage of those working in essential services and damaging the broader economic impact of the city's growth.

Is a solution possible?

It seems a grave disservice that those who worked so tirelessly to keep the capital moving forward during the COVID pandemic are now being forced to leave their homes. But what is the solution? By bringing rents under control, key workers can continue to live in the city, thus alleviating the pressure on the essential services they work for. By implementing rent regulations, greater housing affordability is possible – but these need to be devised and deployed from the top. The government must commit to delivering discounted rental housing across London before it is too late.

As an intermediate solution, many young people, creatives, and key workers are looking for alternatives that allow them

Photo courtesy of Jean-Francois C. Lemay

to stay in the city and continue to work. Property guardianship is one such proven solution for living affordably in central locations. At LOWE, we now have in excess of 1,000 applications a month, around three times more than the previous six months. This reflects just how much demand there is for affordable living in London.

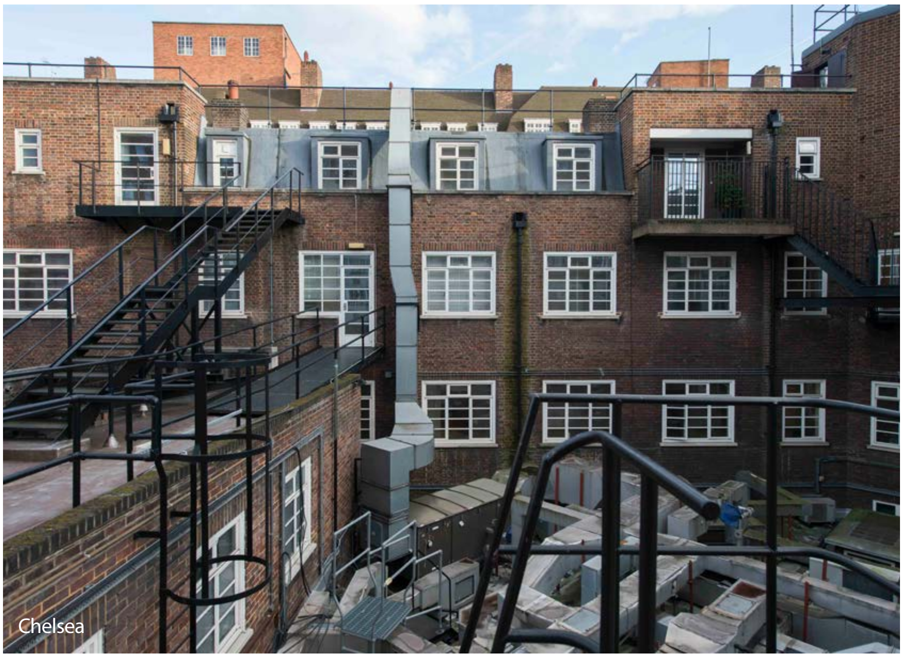
Our key worker prioritisation programme prioritises accommodation to key workers, and we ensure that our properties are allocated to socially responsible and reliable guardians, with many working as nurses, doctors, teachers, entrepreneurs, and creatives. We have vacant rooms available across London and the South East, roughly 20-30% cheaper than market rent, usually with bills and utilities included – it's a small impact, but an opportunity for key workers to work and live within close proximity to each other.

While LOWE cannot hope to be the long-term solution to the housing crisis, we are committed to doing our bit to help those struggling to make ends meet, offering safe, flexible spaces in prime locations at affordable prices. Guardianship acts as a springboard into other housing options; by choosing to become a property guardian, financial pressure is lifted. Instead of living pay cheque to pay cheque, many of our property guardians are able to save each month, eventually having enough to put down a deposit on a home of their own.

If you have a vacant property and you'd like to discuss with us how we could help you, you can contact us (info@thelowegroupltd.com or +44 (0) 207 856 0171) for a free consultation report with our recommendations on how best to protect your building.

Some of The LOWE Group schemes

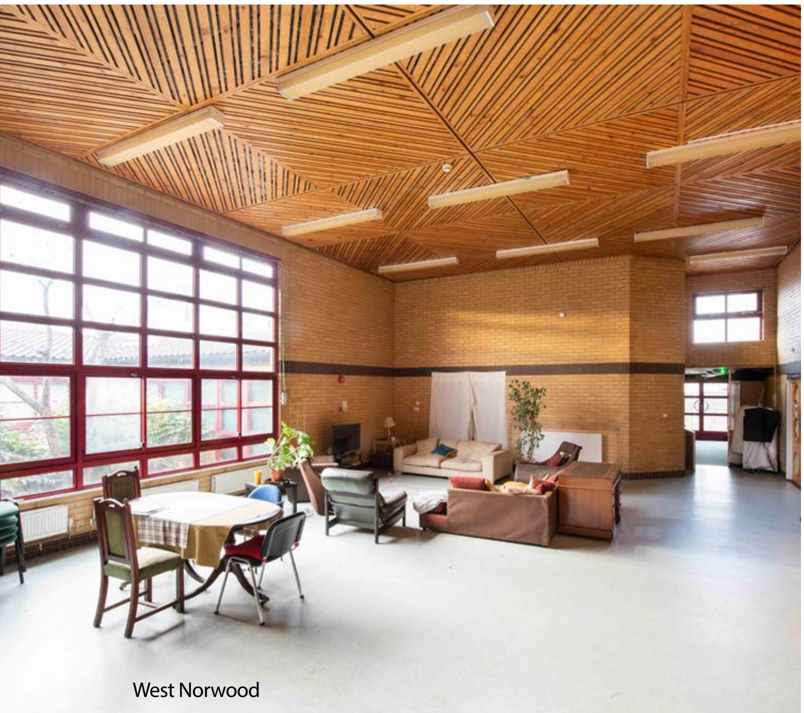
Tim has provided me with images of some of the London schemes. All photos are featured by courtesy of David Jenson, a LOWE guardian.


Chelsea


Earls Court

Lee Gate


Oval


West Norwood


Stratford

Nigel is a chartered architect and director based in Boyer's Wokingham office. He leads the architectural portfolio of Boyer's Design service. His experience spans over 20 years of design and delivery of commercial and high-end residential schemes for private developers and housing associations across the UK, both as a consultant, contractor and a developer. He is currently leading a wide variety of projects from one off houses to new communities.

BEAUTY IN DESIGN The increasing demand for 'beauty' in design: can it realistically be applied in the planning process?

Nigel Booen NigelBooen@boyerplanning.co.uk

Nigel presents a thoughtful piece on the issues with applying the concept of beauty to planning design: "In its almost 200 pages, Living With Beauty' [report] uses the word 'beauty' 336 times and 'beautiful' 63 times, but doesn't define what is meant by either." There is the risk that undefined, 'beauty' becomes a weapon for any planning committee which wishes to oppose a planning application on NIMBY, or other grounds.

Rightly or wrongly, the concept of 'beauty' has become central to planning decisions. But what is 'beauty' in the context of planning, who should determine what is beautiful, and how?

Refusal on the grounds of 'beauty'

The issue came to the fore in April when Secretary of State Michael Gove called in and subsequently refused planning permission for a 165-home development by Berkeley Homes in Cranbrook, Kent. The decision was based on Gove's view that the design was too 'generic'. Consequently, Berkeley is taking Michael Gove to court on the basis that his decision, which involved overruling planning inspectors, was 'irrational'.

The council's planning committee had voted to back the scheme in 2021, but it was called in on Natural England's request. Following an inquiry, the planning inspector had recommended approval. However, Minister for Housing and Planning Rachel Maclean, decided on behalf of Michael Gove to refuse permission on the basis that Gove, 'Does not find that the scheme is sensitively designed having regard to its setting. He finds that the design of the proposal does not reflect the expectations of the High Weald Housing Design Guide, being of a generic suburban nature which does not reproduce the constituent elements of local settlements.'

The case has attracted considerable attention in the property press and follows the controversy of Gove scrapping mandatory local housing targets, at the behest of backbenchers. Unsurprisingly given the timing, critics claim that much needed homes were being sacrificed for political expediency.

A further instance has added to concerns about the basis on which the Secretary of State's decisions are being made. AC Lloyd Homes was told in May that its reserved matters application for 200 homes on land outside Whitnash, near Leamington Spa, was being called in on the basis of design, and consequently has withdrawn its application.

A letter from Gove stated the specific reason being whether it 'is consistent with government policies for achieving well designed places as set out in the NPPF (Chapter 12)' and secondly, whether it is 'consistent with the guidance on design set out the National Design Guide (2021) and the National Model Design Code (2021)'.

The origins and implementation of the 'beauty' policy

The emphasis on design as a determining factor is the result of the 2020 publication Living with Beauty the report of the government's Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission [Ed – see articles in 2020 Spring Terrier]. The report states that 'Beautiful placemaking should be a legally enshrined aim of the planning system. Great weight should be placed on securing these qualities in the urban and natural environments. This should be embedded prominently as a part of sustainable development in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and associated guidance, as well as being encouraged via ministerial statement.'

Accordingly, the government did just that. Its revised NPPF, published in December 2022, states that 'beauty' will now be, 'part of the social objectives of the planning system as a whole'; 'One of the key objectives for large new housing schemes', and 'Fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve'.

Absence of a definition

But what does the addition of the word 'beauty' add? It is immediately problematic because of absence of clarity over what 'beauty' actually is. In its almost 200 pages, 'Living With Beauty' uses the word 'beauty' 336 times and 'beautiful' 63 times, but doesn't define what is meant by either.

On its most basic level, I would suggest that 'beauty' means 'well designed'. But the NPPF also changes the requirement for new developments to be 'well designed', to being 'well designed and beautiful' – so 'beauty' must mean something more.

It may be understood that 'well designed' relates more to function – internal layout and positioning within the wide development – while 'beauty' is more about the aesthetic. But as an architect, I believe aesthetics to be central to good design. So the problem remains.

And without a definition of beauty, how can it be measured? Can the 'beauty' of a proposed new development be quantified, or reduced to a single word ('outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' or inadequate', like an Ofsted report)? I don't believe that 'beauty' can be graded; even less so without any criteria.

The failure to define beauty opens up the potential widespread refusal of new developments on this very subjective basis. It risks planning decisions being misguided, unexamined and open to subconscious prejudice; whereas planning should be the opposite: informed, scrutinised and objective.

Beauty, because it of its undefined and unqualifiable nature, risks becoming the greatest single threat to the planning system: a weapon for any planning committee which wishes to oppose a planning application on NIMBY, or other grounds.

Much as I would like to say that Michael Gove's judgement on the ground of 'beauty' should have awaited a definition of 'beauty', my sense is that there is unlikely to be any further clarity, which rather suggests that this won't be the last time a housing scheme is refused on these potentially spurious and wide arranging grounds.

In whose view?

Another concern is that planning decisions could be predicated on Michael Gove's view of 'beauty', or that of any successor. I would question whether Gove is a better arbiter of taste than the developer, architect, local authority or planning inspector. Furthermore, not only is the understanding of beauty highly subjective, but it is contextual.

The reason why the Berkeley case has shocked the industry is that planning decisions are otherwise made by professionals with specific expertise, understanding and impartiality. Even within the Planning Inspectorate itself, decision-makers are chosen for their specific areas of practice which gives those on the receiving end of decisions some reassurance that the decision was logical and justifiable. It is hard to see Gove's decision on the Kent scheme as either.

A back-tracking towards pastiche?

Another outcome of the work of Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission is the requirement for design codes. Introducing the concept in 2020, then Secretary of State Robert Jenrick said that the planning system would place a 'higher regard' on quality and design and draw on 'the idea of design codes and pattern books that built Bath, Belgravia and Bournville'.

The suggestion that we should aspire to the 18th and 19th centuries as an inspiration for 'quality and design' set alarm bells ringing among the architectural profession: fears of a 'Disneyworld-esque disaster', inspired by 'idealised, misremembered and over-simplified pasts' in place of creativity and bold answers to new questions.

Building More, Building Beautiful: How design and style can unlock the housing crisis, a fore-runner to the work of the Commission, carried out polling, which found that support for traditional building design was preferred over contemporary architecture when it comes to design of new homes. Across all demographics, a large majority agreed that newly built properties should fit in with their surroundings. Support was used to substantiate the claim that NIMBYism can be overcome if better design reflects people's desire leaning towards (traditional) building design.

This was a significant disappointment to the architecture profession, seen by some as unfairly influenced by traditionalist groups. Nevertheless, it was widely recognised that the solution to the housing crisis could come to an end and people's perception towards new developments changed if high quality traditional design and craftsmanship was delivered across the country, in place of identikit poorly delivered housing estates.

The National Model Design Code

The National Model Design Code (NMDC), the main policy output of the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission, states as its objective increasing 'beauty' in the built environment. The report argues that ugliness of new developments has significant social impact, whereas beautiful surroundings and buildings make people happier. It proposed a framework with three key goals – to create beauty, refuse ugliness and promote stewardship. The National Design Guide and NMDC which followed, provided a toolkit for the production of local design codes, to be shaped by local authorities through engagement with the local community.

The NMDC is now a template whereby local authorities, parish councils and neighbourhood forums can put in place their own design codes through consultation with local residents. As such, design codes now play a central role in planning policy.

As the pilot local authorities have found, a first hurdle was ensuring that residents had a full understanding of what a design code was. As an intangible document – one which does not relate to a specific development or location – the concept can be difficult to communicate, let alone consult on. Accordingly, many local authorities have opted to begin the process by consulting upon how to consult – giving local residents the opportunity to determine whether they prefer to communicate through workshops, exhibitions, online or through other means. The local authorities also struggled to find a way of engaging people on the more esoteric, conceptual questions that concern place-making, ensuring that it's a positive and progressive dialogue.

Invariably many have found resourcing to be one of the most significant challenges. Not only do planning teams at local authorities lack the time, but they also lack design skills and knowledge and accordingly much of the work is being outsourced.

A second round of pilot projects included not only local planning authorities, but also designated neighbourhood planning groups such as neighbourhood forums and parish councils. This introduces a further dichotomy: the design aspirations of a rural parish council can conflict with the intentions of a largely urban local authority, and yet when working with approved design codes, development teams are expected to take both views into account.

Ironically the simplest solution that is emerging is to create a 'one size fits all' document: one which addresses universal concerns such as climate change and biodiversity, but refrains from being too specific about variation in character or building design. But will this homogeneity-led approach deliver good design? Prior to design codes, supplementary design guides for specific areas within a borough or district would provide design guidance for planning applications. However, with the rush for every planning authority to write a universally malleable design code for its entire administrative area, one may think that distinctiveness in our villages, towns, and suburbs may get eroded and eventually lost.

'Say no to ugliness', was the message to local authorities in the Commission's interim report Creating Space for Beauty. But inspiring beautiful developments does not rest with local authority officers alone, rather on the many thousands of people involved in developing the design codes. With good intentions, the results could be transformational. But good intentions must prevail – this process cannot be used to stop progression, innovation and used as a poison pill to stop new developments. A local design code must not become a NIMBY charter.

Looking ahead

So we now have 'beauty' embedded in planning policy, in name at least; through design codes, we have the structure to deliver beauty, and through case law, we have the threat that any new developments not judged 'beautiful' may be refused. This will undoubtedly focus minds on (varying definitions of) beauty, from masterplanning through to decision-making and appeals, but with considerable precariousness.

We still lack anything constructive to prevent other housebuilders from failing on 'beauty' grounds: the outcome of the Berkeley case was 'no' but not 'no, because beauty is…'. This potential test case is crying out for a clear definition of beauty, a clear selection of criteria. What may have been more instructive would have been whether the Whipnash decision had gone the distance.

In practice it makes the whole process of designing new developments more fraught with uncertainty. And uncertainty is the last thing we need at the moment, with so many other uncertainties with the planning system. This decision fails to give any indication of what is acceptable; all we know is what was not considered acceptable. But we don't know why.

Unfortunately this provides ammunition for planning committees to refuse schemes on similar grounds. Without anyone knowing what the benchmark is, design could be an easy target to justify refusal.

Conclusion

Beauty matters, but in planning, certainty matters even more, because without certainty, planning frequently comes to a halt.

Our planning system is built on guidance, codes, policies and legislation. There is no place for subjectivity and personal interpretation.

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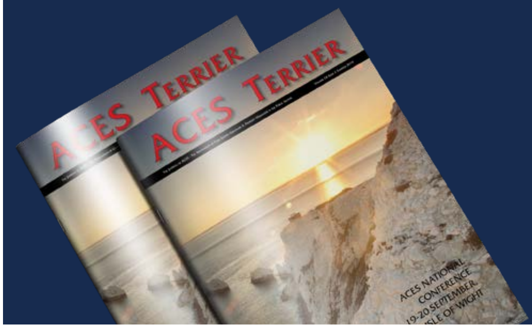

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THE DENSITY DEBATE

Grant Leggett grantleggett@boyerplanning.co.uk

In the second of two articles from Boyer, Grant writes a thought-provoking piece about why and how the concepts of 'beauty' and 'gentle density' "are terms open to such subjective interpretation that they will tie decision-makers in knots even more than they already are."

The NPPF, 'beauty' and 'gentle density'

'Beauty' is a central theme of the revised NPPF, published in December 2022, but so too is density – or more specifically, 'gentle density'. The notes which accompany the new NPPF state that the government will deliver 'enough of the right homes in the right places with the right infrastructure, ensuring the environment is protected and giving local people a greater say on where and where not to place new, beautiful development…specifically, this includes changes to…promote more beautiful homes, including through gentle density'.

The changes to the NPPF were in large part a response to a rebellious group of anti-development backbench Tory MPs who threatened to torpedo the progress of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill. And so some big-ticket changes (such as removing mandatory housing targets and tightening up on Green Belt development) were made. It would seem, with the inevitable consequence if not explicit, the intention of reducing housebuilding.

On this basis, many practitioners are already questioning whether the rather vague and unquantifiable concepts of 'beauty' and 'gentle density' were thrown in as a means of stalling proposed new developments for political purposes. For stall them they will; they are terms open to such subjective interpretation that they will tie decision makers in knots even more than they already are.

To understand whether 'beauty' and 'gentle density' can help, rather than hinder, the quality and quantity of new developments requires a definition of both – as neither have had a place in the planning lexicon until now. That's where the problems start. 'Density' is relatively straightforward as it can be measured in quantifiable terms; a relatively simple function of homes and site area. 'Gentle' means very little in a planning context but its function, on any plain reading, is clearly to limit density rather than increase it. The deceit in the wording is it purports to enable a higher volume of housebuilding, while also giving leeway to appease the 'beauty brigade' as necessary.

'Beauty' however, is even more problematic in planning terms: it is subjective, unquantifiable and very much in the eye of each beholder.

The notes which accompany the NPPF make some attempt to quantify 'gentle density': it states that, 'Small sites play an important role in delivering gentle density in urban areas, creating much needed affordable housing, and supporting small and medium size builders'. It goes on to be more specific about density, 'Local planning authorities should identify land to accommodate at least 10% of their housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare; unless it can be shown, through the preparation of relevant plan policies, that there are strong reasons why this 10% target cannot be achieved.'

It also places renewed importance on upwards extensions: 'Building upwards in managed ways can help deliver new homes and extend existing ones in forms that are consistent with the existing street design, contributing to gentle increases in density… local planning policies and decisions should consider airspace development above existing residential and commercial premises for new homes. This includes allowing upwards extensions where the development would be consistent with criteria relating to neighbouring properties and the overall street scene, as well as being well-designed and maintaining safe access and egress for occupiers.'

More specifically, it encourages the introduction of mansard roof windows: 'In some locations, local planning authorities have been reluctant to approve mansard roof development, as it has been considered harmful to the character of neighbourhoods. As a general approach, this is wrong - all local planning authorities should take a positive approach towards well designed upward extension schemes, particularly mansard roofs. It is proposed that a reference to mansard roofs as an appropriate form of upward extension would recognise their value in securing gentle densification where appropriate.' In my view, this continued idea that building mansard roofs, or indeed the fascination with 'airspace' development can make any significant dent in the housing shortage is a wishful/fanciful case of burying heads in the sand and a means of avoiding the tough conversation about proper development on the ground. There is scant evidence that airspace development is actually working.

The role of 'beauty' and 'gentle density' in national planning policy

It seems a step too far for planning policy to identify specific architectural features such as mansard roofs as 'well designed', and to state that considering them harmful to the character of neighbourhoods is 'wrong', as it is commonly accepted that whether any architectural feature is 'right' or 'beautiful' depends upon the context.

My own view is that good design is closely linked to good land use. In most situations, and especially in urban areas, density has many advantages. We have an indisputable shortage of homes which is best addressed by providing an optimal number of homes on all available land. That's Chapter 11 of the Framework which seeks to make efficient use of land. Doing so helps create a mixed and balanced community, increases the potential for a range of facilities in close proximity, is economically advantageous (allowing resources to be spent on services and amenities) and can facilitate greater variety of uses, such as live/work and co-living. Denser schemes also have the potential to be more sustainable, not least in terms of sustainable transport, if located close to public transport or withing easy reach of local services. Developable land, especially in cities such as London where I am based, is a scarce resource and it is essential that potential development capacity is not wasted.

The London Plan, 'beauty' and 'gentle density'

The London Plan captures this well, and through a design-led approach already encourages density, specifically through Policy D3 *(Optimising site capacity through the design-led approach)*, D6 *(Housing quality and standards)* which is closely linked to the Plan's design polices D1 *(London's form, character and capacity for growth)* and D2 *(Infrastructure requirements for sustainable densities)*. Policy D1, specifically, includes principles relating sustainable, well-designed places that optimise development opportunities through good growth; Policy D2 concerns 'appropriate' scale, height, density, layout and land uses, in order to ensure that the most efficient use of land is made.

The criticisms levelled against greater density are largely irrelevant in London and other cities. Unit sizes are rarely impacted by density requirements, since policies (D6 again) set out minimum floor space requirements (50 sq m for a one-bedroom unit).

'Beauty' and 'gentle density' in practice

Other criticisms levelled at higher density include the visibility of tall buildings, specifically from protected locations such as historic parks and AONBs. There can also be a perception that high density leads to overcrowding and slums. On these two points, the argument returns to meeting policy requirements. Firstly, tall buildings have a role to play in cities, helping people navigate through the streets by providing reference points and emphasising the hierarchy of a place, such as its main centres of activity, important street junctions, and transport interchanges. Tall buildings which are of exemplary architectural quality can make a positive contribution to skylines, and are valued as a part of a city's identity. Of course, they can also have detrimental visual, functional and environmental impacts, but this too can be controlled by processes set out in planning policy, as it is in the London Plan.

Regarding the suggestion of overcrowding, the densification of town centres is encouraged in policy because it brings much needed vitality and footfall to areas such as high streets, which may be suffering from under-investment and reduced use as a result of social and economic change. In such cases, higher density can enliven and enrich a neighbourhood.

Lessons from London

There is much that local authorities across the country, specifically urban councils, can learn from the London Plan. The document takes a rounded approach to the way neighbourhoods operate, putting in place policies which ensure that they work not only more space-efficiently, but also better for the people who use them. This often means creating places of higher density in appropriate locations to achieve maximum benefit from limited land, encouraging a mix of land uses, and co-locating different uses, to provide communities with a wider range of services and amenities.

The London Plan describes how high-density, mixed-use places support the clustering effect of businesses known as 'agglomeration', which maximises job opportunities. High density can provide a critical mass of people to support the investment required to build the schools, health services, public transport and other infrastructure that neighbourhoods require. It can place local amenities within walking and cycling distance and make public transport options easily accessible [Ed – see articles on the 15-minute city in recent issues of ACES' Terrier].

For residential development, it is particularly important to scrutinise the qualitative aspects of the development design described in Policy D6. The higher the density of a development, the policy says, the greater this scrutiny should be of the proposed built form, massing, site layout, external spaces, internal design, and ongoing management. This is important because such elements come under more pressure as density increases.

High density and high buildings are not necessarily synonymous. That said, the more airspace is utilised, the more land remains available at ground level as an amenity. Policies which create an obligation for developers to provide high quality open spaces include the London Plan's Urban Greening Factor (UGF). This guidance requires every local authority to create its own greening strategy and all major developments to include urban greening as a fundamental element of site and building design. It introduces the UGF calculator, a means of evaluating the quantity and quality of urban greening in a development proposal.

Is there a link between 'beauty' and gentle density?

Both beauty and density are dependent on context, but the similarities end there.

In fact, context is one of the many features which demonstrates why the two cannot be considered synonymous. Poundbury, the Duchy of Cornwall's experimental development on the outskirts of Dorchester exemplifies this. At Poundbury, Georgian architecture predominates. Georgian architecture may represent the very best in design to some; to others the repurposing of a centuries-old style is regarded defeatist, retrograde, even 'Disneyesque'. Similarly, Georgian architecture divides opinion on density grounds. To me as a Londoner, homes of just three storeys, with generous gardens both front and back, represent low density. To a resident of a 1970s bungalow on a generous suburban plot it would represent high density.

Perhaps schemes such as Poundbury will be effective not only in encouraging NIMBYs to accept development, but also to encourage them to accept higher density. But this only works in those areas where the average density is lower than a typical neo-Georgian development. Take that approach in London and the perfectly acceptable densities currently achieved will be lost, homes will become increasingly scarce, house prices will sky-rocket and local centres will become desolate and unviable.

'Beauty' and 'gentle density' in a regional context

Every local authority must judge density within its own context, just as the London Plan has inspired London boroughs to do: another argument, were one needed, for regionally-led planning policy.

But a national document such as the NPPF has no role in prescribing either beauty or maximum density across all contexts, were it even possible to do so. My preference is to avoid tinkering with policy when the likely outcome is at best uncertain and at worst, politically motivated. We have enough uncertainty in the planning process at present. Constant change will only intensify uncertainty and slow down the much needed provision of new homes, amenities and infrastructure.

I would like to think that these changes would have little bearing on my work because, working with my colleagues in Boyer's Design team, we already produce schemes which are well designed and make good use of available land. But I fear that tenuous terms such as 'beauty' and 'gentle density' despite meaning very little in planning terms, have the potential (as has already been seen with the now infamous Berkeley scheme in Kent) [Ed – see previous article in this issue of ACES' Terrier] to result in major schemes being called in and refused permission, exacerbating our current housing crisis.

Chris spent nearly 25 years working in local government, involved in estate management and strategic asset management. Having moved on to CIPFA in 2003, Chris has been delivering property consultancy and training across the public sector. In 2019, he established his own consultancy, Chris Brain Associates, and he continues to support the public sector with property consultancy and training throughout the UK, in strategic asset management, organisational efficiency, and asset valuation.

Chris is a member of ACES and is ACES' Valuation Liaison Officer.

PROPERTY STRATEGY HANDBOOK The 6 Ps of property strategy

Chris Brain FRICS chris@chrisbrainassociates.com

Chris says "the big challenge to developing a property strategy – getting everyone to own it, live it and deliver it." Here he describes the evolution and central methodology of 'The Property Strategy Handbook', focusing around the 6 Ps.

Why a property strategy?

Property strategy is important. It's important because of the sheer scale of property assets owned and used by the local government sector.

The value of the local government property estate has been valued at over £382bn. And that is simply the book value, which takes no account of the economic or social value the estate delivers to local communities and business.

It's simply not right, that a property estate of that magnitude has no strategy for its management. And so, it falls to each local authority to develop its strategy for its part of that estate.

Sadly however, many local authorities have no strategy at all, and not all those that do can, hand on heart, say it is a strategy which has buy-in across the organisation. And therein lies the big challenge to developing a property strategy – getting everyone to own it, live it and deliver it.

Having worked in and around local authority property estates for over 44 years, including over two decades directly in strategic asset management, I suppose it's inevitable to pick up some learning along the way – often, I have to say, from the experience of making mistakes. As the saying goes, one can learn a great deal more from when things go wrong, than when they go right.

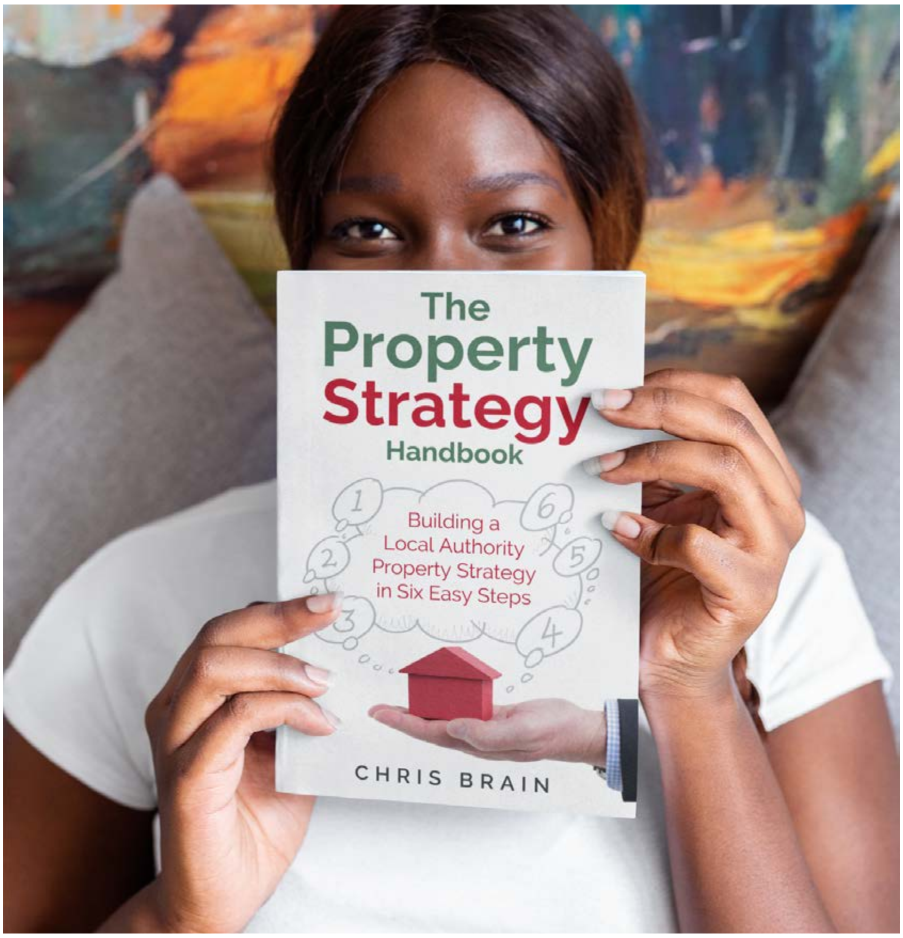
It was that learning experience which led me to publish 'The Property Strategy Handbook' last year. The methodology and messages within the book directly link to many years of seeing things going wrong. It creates a pathway for others to follow, helping them hopefully to avoid the mistakes that I and others have made or witnessed. Forewarned is forearmed, as they say.

An emerging picture

If you are old enough, you may remember the craze of the 1990s that was Magic Eye. Magic Eye was developed in 1991 by engineer Tom Baccei, 3D artist Cheri Smith and programmer Bob Salitsy, and they very quickly took off. It is still possible to buy them today.

The Magic Eye books work by manipulating a repeating pattern to control the perceived depth and hide a three-dimensional image in a two-dimensional pattern. Those images often followed a theme, such as New York, or dinosaurs. In fact, almost anything and everything ended up in a Magic Eye book.

What makes these books different is that on first look, it was not possible to see through the 2D pattern to see what each image was, other than maybe the clue from the title on the front cover. If you bought a Magic Eye book of dinosaurs, you



knew each pattern represented a dinosaur, but beyond that you had to work to see the 3D image.

Some stared at the patterns for hours and days and could not see what was on the page, other than a repetitive series of coloured lines and shapes. But some – the lucky few - learned how to train their brain so they could see almost any Magic Eye image within seconds. It requires the viewer to relax their brain and relax their vision. That relaxation reveals the Magic Eye image. And once you can see the intended image, you cannot 'unsee' it.

As it was with the 6 Ps methodology in 'The Property Strategy Handbook'. I was away on holiday and it was one of those quiet days when I was doing very little, when my brain was relaxed. I started to muse over why so many organisations get property strategy so wrong. I reflected on some of the mistakes I myself had also made over the years of working in property strategy.

Before I knew it, I had a pen in my hand, and was feverishly hunting for a scrap of paper, to scribble down my thoughts. As I scribbled away what at first appeared to be random ideas, patterns started to emerge. Just like those Magic Eye images, a picture began to form. And once I saw that picture, it could not be 'unseen'.

It was not quite the 'The Property Strategy Handbook' at that stage. That alliterative labelling followed later. But the 6 Ps it was. I had found a methodology, which not only described what goes wrong when people attempt to develop a property strategy, it had the potential to provide a clear pathway to get it right.

I recounted to myself all of the personal property strategy failures I had either seen or experienced, systematically testing each one against my newly emerging methodology. Each project I went through in my head, I was able to associate failure to one of more of my 6 Ps.

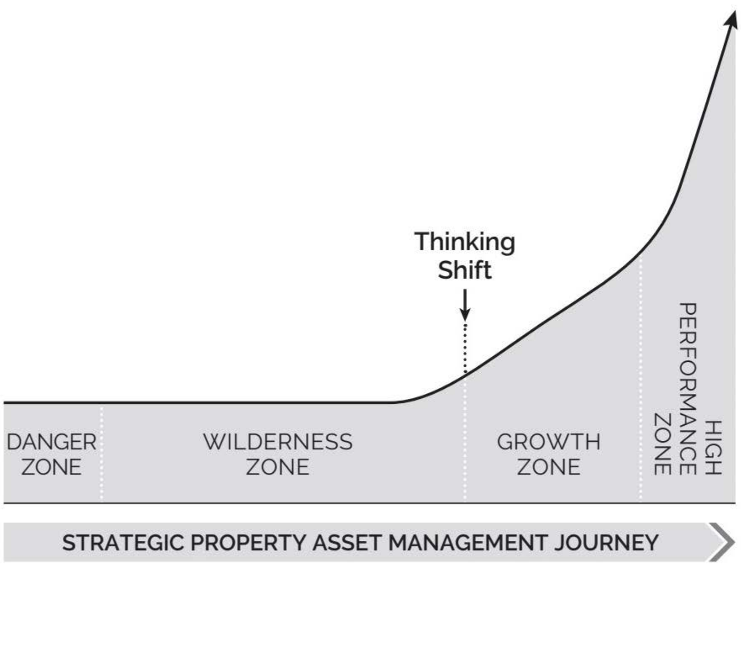
It was a genuine 'lightbulb moment'. I had hit upon a methodological framework, which I immediately realised I had to put into a book. It needed to be shared. And that is where the inspiration came for 'The Property Strategy Handbook'.

It is of course impossible to condense the whole book and its methodology into this single article, so I am not going to attempt to do that. What I can do, is briefly outline the central methodology of the book. That might be enough to prompt you to decide whether you think the book could be of some help to you.

Because that's why I wrote it. I certainly never intended sales to outstrip the Harry Potter books, or even to make any money. During its launch week 'The Property Strategy Handbook' did spend a few days at No.1 in the Amazon real estate category, and even flirted for a while above the latest book release from Jeremy Clarkson.

Of course, it was never going to stay there. It's a niche book, and a very narrow niche at that. But niche books can deliver real value, and my hope is for this to be its legacy, providing practical help in developing your property strategy. The sort of help you won't get from more general asset management guidance previously available, because it is experience based, with plenty of case studies.

When it comes to strategic asset management, there are some local authorities which are in what I call the 'danger zone'. This is where there is virtually a complete absence of any kind of strategic property activity. Thankfully, such local



authorities are few in number. Far more common are those local authorities in what I term 'the wilderness zone'. That is characterised by attempts to be strategic, pockets of good decision making which is inconsistent, weak governance and low levels of buy-in across the organisation.

From my experience most local authorities are in the wilderness zone. They are the ones that need 'The Property Strategy Handbook' the most, for without a shift in thinking, they will forever remain in the wilderness and will not truly grasp the growth opportunities of strategic asset management and will never be high performing when it comes to the property estate.

I have found those in the wilderness zone will have weaknesses in at least one of the six areas within my methodology – one of the 6 Ps, which are:

<u>Portfolio</u>

You cannot possibly develop a strategy for something you do not understand. Too few local authorities truly understand their property portfolio. Segmenting the property portfolio is a critical step. And to do that you need to look beyond (and perhaps ignore or replace) unhelpful property descriptors in your asset database.

<u>Purpose</u>

It is vital to understand what each segment of the portfolio is there to do. If you cannot understand the segment purpose, you will be incapable of recognising outcomes or defining good performance. Purpose confirms a reason to retain or dispose of an asset, of course. But it does much more than that. It establishes a basis for both its strategic and operational management.

<u>Performance</u>

Too often performance measurement starts and finishes with what is already being measured, or what is easy to measure. Performance frameworks should be structured around segment purpose. That way performance reporting centres on the intended outcomes from owning or operating the asset, and tells you when meaningful intervention should be taking place.

<u>Policies</u>

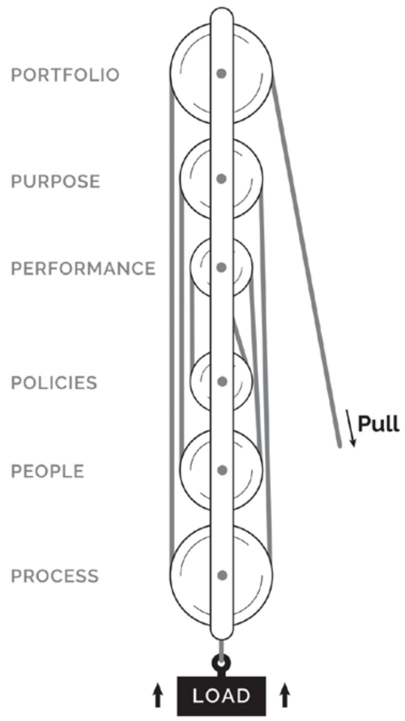
Property strategy often fails because it lacks a clear policy framework. Your suite of policies are the 'rules of the game' and as such support your governance arrangements and decision making – both strategically and operationally. It shapes decision making, both strategic and operational.

<u>People</u>

Nothing happens in property strategy without people. Too often stakeholders are kept out of the property strategy process out of concern that they will slow things down and that they know nothing about property strategy. This is a short-term view. You need to get everyone thinking strategically and owning the strategy. If you don't, there will be no ownership of the strategy, and people will not have a stake in successful delivery.

<u>Process</u>

Bad habits and behaviours become established over time. They hold the organisation back. A new property strategy will crumble, if you fail to adapt processes and challenge established behaviour. It's not easy, which is why many never tackle it, but tackle it you must. Because ingrained processes act as a breaking mechanism on your strategic direction.



Reflections and empowerment

You may find it useful to reflect on where things have not gone as well as you had hoped with your property strategy, and which of my 6 Ps might have been responsible.

All six of the 6 Ps are important. To embrace some but not all of them will result in failure to exit the wilderness zone. They are interdependent, like a set of pullies used to raise sails on a tall ship. Together they share the weight.

One thing I have found over the years, is that strategy development can be more important than the strategy itself. When everyone involved in strategy development feels empowered, it creates momentum. Changing the environment changes performance, and the strategy development process does this. Its is a group activity.

When it comes to property strategy, consistency beats intensity every time. Attempts to rush at creating a property strategy will flounder. It is a journey, not a race.

One thing to keep in mind, is you may not get everything right all of the time. Don't worry, nobody does.

'The Property Strategy Handbook' (ReThink Press, December 2022, ISBN 978-1-78133-716-5) is available to buy from Amazon in both paperback and Kindle version, and in paperback from other major booksellers. The 'The Property Strategy Handbook' methodology set out in 'The Property Strategy Handbook' is protected by copyright and cannot be published without express written permission.

JOURNEY TOWARDS NET ZERO

Cornwall's carbon neutral programme

Councillor Martyn Alvey

I'm thrilled to include a first for ACES' Terrier – an article submitted by a councillor. This follows a presentation made by Nick Hayden, Carbon Neutral Council Programme Manager at Cornwall Council, to the spring meeting of ACES SW Branch on Cornwall's initiatives towards achieving net zero.

Martyn was born and brought up in Falmouth, leaving Cornwall in 1985 to join the Royal Air Force, where he served as an Administration Officer on bases throughout the UK and on Operations overseas, including the Persian Gulf and Kosovo. He retired from the Royal Air Force as a Squadron Leader in 2004 and returned to Cornwall, when he first became involved in local politics as a parish councillor. Having made his home in a small hamlet prone to flooding, this is where he first became interested in the environment and aware of the impacts locally of climate change.

Between 2004 and 2013 Martyn worked in various management roles within Cornwall's voluntary and community sector, primarily supporting the long-term unemployed to prepare for and find work. In 2013 he saw a job advertised by Cornwall Council which was seeking an individual to project manage a DEFRA funded Flood Resilience Pathfinder Project across the Duchy. The project ended in 2015 but saw the creation of the Cornwall Community Flood Forum (CCFF) as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. As Chairman of the CCFF, he oversaw the development of a modular syllabus to support the training of community emergency volunteers that has now been rolled out nationally as 'Communities Prepared.' He was first elected to Cornwall Council in 2017, and in 2019 seconded the Council's motion to declare a Climate Emergency and the setting of a 'Net Zero by 2030' target. In May 2021, Martyn was appointed to the Council's Cabinet as the Environment and Climate Change Portfolio holder.

Early declaration

From launching an ambitious plan to cut Cornwall's emissions, to winning a national award for leadership in responding to the climate emergency, Cornwall Council is recognised as a leading local authority in the journey towards net zero.

We have had many firsts since declaring a climate emergency in 2019 – one of the earliest councils to do so – and we continue to build on our goal to become an exemplar for what regional leadership can do in combatting climate change.

In the weeks following our declaration, we published a detailed climate change action plan which received unanimous council cabinet backing, and was the culmination of conversations with thousands of residents, businesses, community groups and partners.

Our nationally recognised action plan, built on our legacy of climate action, outlines our multi-dimensional leadership role within a complex systems landscape. While we are a unitary authority and the country's largest rural council serving

Children, staff and parents from St Wenn School who helped plant 200 trees in nearby Enigma Wood


Tree planting at Lanchard Woods

560,000 residents, we have direct control over a relatively small proportion of Cornwall's total emissions. Our influence, the level of public scrutiny, and our wider leadership role, all dictate that we as a council must ensure we reach net carbon neutral by 2030 at the latest. As an authority, we need to hold the spotlight up to ourselves and lead by example. Our influence is more potent through our role as a local systems leader, working across boundaries to guide and influence a collective journey towards a carbon neutral Cornwall.

Carbon Neutral Cornwall

Among the first projects we announced under our Carbon Neutral Cornwall programme were the 8,000-hectare Forest for Cornwall, energy efficiency improvements to council-owned homes, transforming our fleet to ultra-low emission vehicles, changing our planning policies to encourage the switch to more renewable energy generation, and considering climate change and social justice in all our decisions. Since then, we have introduced a range of initiatives to give our residents more choices on sustainable travel, started a pilot project with several of our dairy farms to produce biomethane that is being used to power some council vehicles, and invested in clean energy such as geothermal, Cornwall's first wind turbine since 2016, and championed the region's floating offshore wind ambitions.

Our commitment to climate change will always go hand in hand with the needs of our residents. For example, the Forest for Cornwall is aimed at increasing tree cover in multiple locations in forests, parks, towns and farmland, providing better access to nature for all. With 500,000 trees planted over the last four years, many residents, community groups, businesses and schools have been getting involved in putting trees in the ground. Making our homes more energy-efficient is crucial to tackling fuel poverty and giving residents active travel options has obvious health and cost-saving benefits.

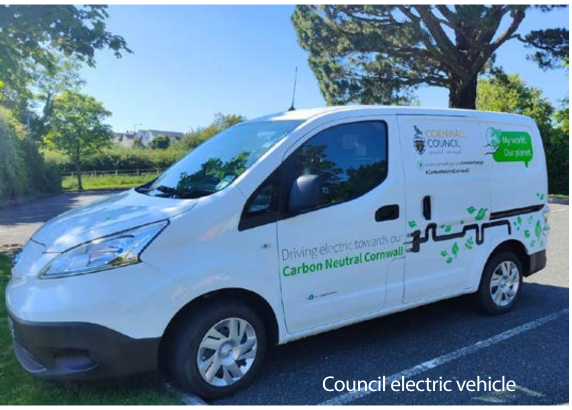
In 2019 we became the first local authority in the country to adopt an innovative decision-making framework where we put tackling climate change and benefits for our residents at the heart of our council decisions. Based on acclaimed economist Kate Raworth's theory of 'doughnut economics' for a sustainable economy, we use our Decision-Making Wheel to weigh up environmental factors such as greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution, renewable energy, with social needs such as health, education and connectivity, so we can work to ensure better outcomes for our residents and the environment. We use this tool in planning all major projects across the council and more than 100 other local authorities have now asked us to share our expertise with them in producing their climate change plans.

We have been recognised nationally for working with our residents, businesses and communities, to reduce our carbon emissions. In 2021 we were named the country's leading local authority in our efforts to work towards becoming carbon neutral and won a MJ award for Leadership in Responding to the Climate Emergency. Judges commented that: *"It is clear that Cornwall Council have taken seriously the threat posed by climate change and used that momentum to galvanise action across the county. From secure governance structures to innovation and community engagement, the council is forging ahead in the race to net-zero, nature-based solutions and climate adaptation."*

Leading by example to become a carbon neutral council

By 2030, Cornwall Council aims to reduce by 70% the emissions generated from the way we deliver our services. The remaining emissions we cannot reduce in this timeframe will be offset by tree planting that will contribute to the Forest for Cornwall. This is an ambitious yet realistic target that requires us to challenge the status quo and be innovative in the way


Solar installation on council homes



Council electric vehicle

that we operate in the future. We are doing this by re-defining our concept of modern working, reversing multiple decades of centralisation, embracing new technology-enabled flexible working practices. High emitting services such as those that have traditionally necessitated high levels of travel are being supported to find low carbon alternatives. We are embedding carbon neutral aims into our strategies and policies, our governance and decision making, what we buy and how we work.

The impact of Covid has resulted in an unprecedented change to the way we work, live and travel. The pandemic has accelerated the transformational shift in the council's working practices which has set us well on course to achieve our aims.

Working across boundaries to facilitate a carbon neutral Cornwall

Getting to a carbon neutral Cornwall is a highly complex issue and will not be achieved through council action alone. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions requires systems leadership across multiple sectors, communications and behavioural change that will result in adapted lifestyles, and potentially fundamentally different patterns of development and travel over a longer time horizon. Our programmes are related to the degree of control and influence the council directly has and our overt acknowledgement that partnership working across Cornwall and the UK will be essential for us to address this challenge.

e-bike scheme, Falmouth

Since the emergency declaration in 2019, the council has been re-shaping its key policies and strategies to align to our carbon neutral commitment. A new 'modal hierarchy' within our revised Local Transport Plan has been adopted, placing the greatest policy and funding emphasis on walking and cycling and public transport. This has been linked to a major behavioural change campaign, the launch of the £23.5m bus subsidy programme, the introduction of a public e-bike scheme across 5 towns, and the roll-out of a further 300 EV (electric vehicle) charge points.

In a first of its kind, local planning policy has been reformed providing spatial allocations for nature recovery, renewable energy generation, driving far higher building energy efficiency standards, and new approaches to adapting to a changing climate. This planning approach is being seen nationally as the blueprint for a revitalised and fit for purpose planning regime that will help accelerate Cornwall's ambitions and hopefully those of other areas, and form the basis of the approach to a future local plan revision.

The investment plan facilitating Cornwall's Shared Prosperity Fund has been shaped around the requirement to deliver on Cornwall's net zero and nature recovery commitments. An overarching 'Good Growth' policy, which all projects must contribute towards, has been established. Specific carbon neutral, nature recovery and adaptation and resilience funding opportunities have also been created and include net zero business support and small grants, resilience infrastructure and nature-based solutions, community energy efficiency including green retrofit, and the creation/improvement of local green/blue spaces.

Later this summer we are launching the next stage of our plan to help Cornwall reach net zero, by working to decarbonise our energy systems. This will be a significant engagement programme involving communities, business and energy users across the region. It builds on our track record and ambitions on renewable energy innovation, including geothermal energy and floating offshore wind.

Our carbon neutral programme is underpinned by research conducted by scientists working at the forefront of climate change science. Last year we published the country's first climate change risk assessment for a region, which shows in detail the effects of rising sea levels and more extreme weather in Cornwall. The Cornwall Climate Change Risk Assessment report says our region will see among the highest potential sea level rises around the UK by the end of the century, in the range of 0.2m to 1m. Key potential changes for Cornwall include the possibility of more high impact flooding; stronger storms and higher wind speeds; faster coastal erosion; and more heatwaves and severe droughts.

Installing the wind turbine

All of this underlines the need to act now to reduce emissions and tackle climate risks. Despite the economic challenges facing us, I have seen first-hand many positive changes made by businesses and other organisations in Cornwall to reduce their impact on the planet. Whether it's introducing electric vehicles to their fleet, or installing solar panels to their buildings, or making their supply chain more sustainable, all these steps are helping to reduce our collective environmental footprint.

We cannot fight climate change alone and we all need to pull together in cutting our carbon footprint and reducing the impacts of climate change. Please join us in our journey to net zero and demonstrate your commitment to a greener future.

COMMUNITY HUB IN SUFFOLK

Mildenhall Hub – One Public Estate Programme exemplar

Alex Wilson and Quentin Cass MRICS

Alex is the Strategic Director, West Suffolk Council.

Quentin is the Property Transformation Manager, Suffolk County Council, and a member of ACES.

Alex and Quentin last wrote about the Mildenhall Hub project in 2016 Autumn Terrier. West Suffolk and Suffolk County Councils hosted an ACES Eastern meeting earlier in the year, where we were able to experience the palpable buzz if this multi-agency and multi-use facility.

Aims of the Hub project

Opened from May 2021 onwards and part of a network of community hubs in West Suffolk, the Mildenhall Hub is a One Public Estate (OPE) Programme exemplar serving a market town and its rural catchment. The Hub brings together on one site an extensive new leisure centre including swimming pools, secondary school, health services, library, job centre, family hub, pre-school, citizens' advice bureau, and other community facilities, alongside offices for councils, police, NHS, ACAS and the UK Health Security Agency. The Hub was recognised as Project of the Year in the Government Property Awards for 2022.

The desired outcome was for a single site hub to accommodate as many of the public services in the town as possible. As well as radically improved strategic outcomes through better integration and accessibility, the project delivers reduced construction and running costs, and has released six sites for new housing and employment. Efficiency is achieved by sharing services such as meeting rooms, facilities management, and building and site infrastructure.

To support carbon reduction objectives, the project also has extensive and varied renewable energy generation and storage. 741 solar panels generated approximately 270,000 kWh during 2022 and the battery energy storage system discharged just under 100,000 kWh. A ground source heat pump has also been operating with an average efficiency of over 400%.

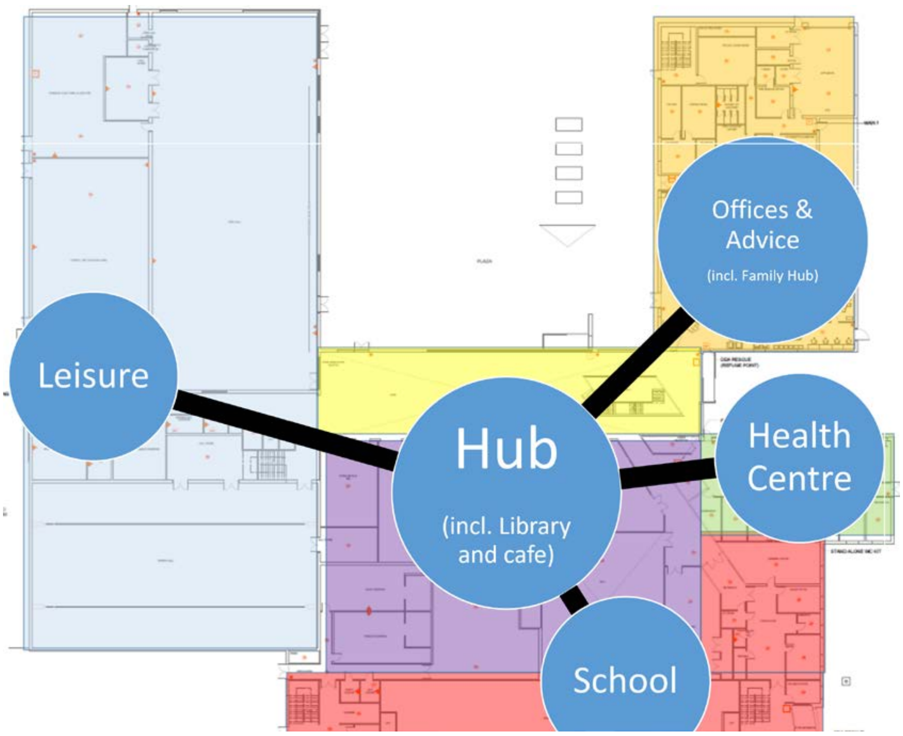
Opening ceremony

Background and partners

The first business case for the partnership was approved in 2014, following extensive stakeholder engagement, mapping of the public estate, and an analysis of the current and future demand for services, including leisure facilities. This led to a design which provides for future expansion of the school, sports hall and health centre in the Hub itself, and the addition of a new primary school on the site, which can share infrastructure if desired.

Built on land already owned by Suffolk County Council, the project was funded by West Suffolk Council, the Education and Skills Funding Agency, Suffolk County

Hub concept



Another feature of the design is to allow certain facilities, such as the academic hall, sports hall and third generation synthetic surface pitches, to be used exclusively by the Academy during the day, but by the community out of school hours. The Academy also has its own separate student entrance to ensure safeguarding.

The project was clear in its ambition to make it accessible to as many people as possible, and create a destination that encourages the community to improve their health and wellbeing, both in terms of the facility itself and the broad range of opportunities created by partner collaboration and community co-production. To support this ambition, extensive accessibility features were included within the internal design, including the first "Changing Places" facility in the area.

Partner interaction includes multi-agency discussions about vulnerable people, an exercise referral scheme for rehabilitating patients, and links between speech therapy and the library. The community has also adopted the building wholeheartedly: use of the new leisure and library facilities is around 60% and 50% higher than pre-pandemic levels respectively. Similarly, memberships of the leisure centre and enrolments in the Swimming Academy have both doubled, and library membership has increased by 80%. The Academy has reported an increase in attainment which it partially attributes to the impact of the new facilities.

Council, Academy Transformation Trust, Sport England and Suffolk's Police and Crime Commissioner/Suffolk Constabulary.

Additional support for the cost of the project was received from Abbeycroft Leisure, the West Suffolk Alliance of health and care partners (now the Integrated Care Board) and the Cabinet Office/Local Government Association (through the national OPE programme). Funding itself came from a mixture of existing capital budgets, external grants, capital receipts, and borrowing funded through savings or new income. In terms of the partners working together, OPE principles of open-book cost-recovery have always applied, and no partner in the scheme is subsidising another.

Design and accessibility

The Hub's design coordinates a range of bespoke operational areas around central shared facilities, including an atrium which also serves as a library, meeting space, café and information hub. All of the other public facilities and services provided at the Hub are accessed from the atrium.

Key objectives

In more formal terms, there were some key objectives for the project set by the OPE partners, and a recent scrutiny review by West Suffolk Council has concluded these have been fully or partially met after the first two years. Namely:

- Radically improve the quality of facilities for post-11 education
- Reduce the equivalent built elements of the existing public estate by around 5,000 sq m or 20%, even allowing for an increase in the current range of leisure facilities
- Include over 3,000 sq m of shared internal space and shared meeting spaces
- Reduce the cost of the equivalent public estate by over 50% (or £20m) over 25 years
- Relocate services from several sites down to one accessible location, close to the town centre (the only town centre facility being relocated is the swimming pool)
- Provide scope for some of the public services to expand in the future, if demand for them grows
- Release several existing public sector sites for housing, retail, employment or other community uses
- Provide a flexible environment for virtually any model of service delivery in the future, with strong community ownership
- Create a single and shared point of entry for visitors
- Integrate building ICT systems.

Although there was other good practice to draw on locally and nationally, there was no blueprint for designing a complex hub in this specific format. Nor were there any readily available templates for how to develop tenure arrangements or apply schemes such as BREEAM. Some of these challenges are still being worked through, for instance how to share the costs of shared areas and services between all the partners. As such, a lot has been learned in the first two years, which is now being carried forward into future projects.

West Suffolk Council had also included in its original capital budget a small fund to allow it to make adaptations to the scheme after it became operational and we could see how the community was actually using it. These will include adaptations to drop-offs and disabled parking, re-arranging the layout of the furniture and reception desks in the central atrium, additional sub-metering, and increasing the flexibility of some multi-purpose spaces.

The project has so far taken over 10 years to deliver and is a testament to the determination and commitment of multiple partners and hundreds of individuals. In a lot of ways, the work to realise the potential of the Hub is also only just beginning. This is because the integration of existing services and identifying new opportunities has to be worked on separately to the physical co-location of facilities. This is therefore now the main focus for the Hub partners going forward.

<u>Editor note:</u> What was most interesting in our visit was the social success of the project, backed by the impressive statistics outlined above. Some ideas have worked extremely well and add to the buzz of the facility, especially having the library and café located in the central atrium and adjacent to a swimming pool viewing area. The councils also seem to have cracked the challenges of working with health and police (more on this at ACES' National Conference on 21 September at York). Attention to future-proofing, both in design terms to be able to expand, or if the partners need to let parts off commercially, shows just how much detailed attention has been given to the Hub project.

Tara is Savills associate director, Environmental & Infrastructure Planning team and started her career in 2016 with a mainstream environmental and planning consultancy, before joining Savills in 2021. Tara has played a part in the transition from standalone health impact assessments to assessing health in environmental statements. Specifically, she has helped define and develop best practice through her involvement on the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) Health in Environmental Impact Assessment Working Group and contribution to the IEMA Outlook Journal regarding the benefits and added value of quantifying health impacts.

Miles is a member of Savills Environmental & Infrastructure Planning team. He joined Savills in September 2022 as an Environment and Infrastructure Graduate Consultant. Since joining, Miles has both assisted on and delivered a range of projects spanning carbon footprinting, whole lifecycle carbon assessments, air quality assessments, water neutrality statements, sustainability statements, and local plan health and equalities appraisals.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

How environmental impact is shaping the agenda for planners, developers and communities alike

Tara Barratt tara.barratt@savills.com and Miles Ryan-Cummings miles.ryancummings@savills.com

Tara and Miles outline some of the stark realities of challenges to the UK environment, and some of the regulatory responses now necessary when processing planning applications. "Overall, the shared aspiration to live in a healthier, more sustainable and socially conscious society has been recognised by both regulators and investors."

The need to assess and manage environmental impact in the context of planning and development has never been more important.

We are at a pivotal moment in human history. In March 2023, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change declared a final warning on the climate crisis, stating that rapid action must be taken now to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. The UK is already experiencing widespread changes to its climate; since 1900, UK sea levels have risen by 16cm and average UK land temperatures are roughly 1.2°C higher than pre-industrial levels. Estimates also suggest that there has been a 13% decline in the average abundance of wildlife in the UK since 1970.

Adding to this, the Covid pandemic, combined with increased media attention on the potential impacts of environmental pollution on health and wellbeing, has moved health protection up the agenda.

Recent changes to legislation reflect the shift to a more socially conscious and environmentally sustainable world. These include updates to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations (2017), which explicitly list 'population and human health' and 'climate change' as new topics to be considered when undertaking an EIA.

Other regulatory responses have resulted in:

- the need for all planning permissions granted in England (with a few exemptions) to achieve at least 10% biodiversity net gain
- the need for development to achieve nutrient neutrality in some local authorities
- the need for developers to demonstrate water neutrality in some areas experiencing water stress.

Increasingly, environmental and social issues are taking precedence in the granting of planning permission. Development that showcases high social and environmental value, while creating minimal negative environmental impacts, is increasingly favoured and can provide developers with a competitive advantage and higher value premiums.

Communities, meanwhile, are becoming more engaged in how development can impact health and wellbeing, with increasing interest in the Health Impact Assessment process.

Other hot environmental topics include air quality and noise, both of which often

require assessment as a bare minimum to support planning applications.

Air quality has long been considered a determinant of health and has been recognised as such within national and international legislation and guidance.

Similarly, noise is also an important element of environmental design and planning that can have significant implications if not taken into sufficient consideration. Living in noisy areas increases the risk of adverse physical and mental health effects, ranging from simple annoyance through to increased risk of cardiovascular conditions. Consequently, good acoustic design is critical to ensuring that new residential development can provide a good and healthy level of residential amenity.

Overall, the shared aspiration to live in a healthier, more sustainable and socially conscious society has been recognised by both regulators and investors. Research by Deloitte suggests that ESG-mandated assets are likely to represent half of all professionally managed assets globally by 2024. This ever-evolving landscape presents new challenges and opportunities for the real estate sector, which is currently responsible for 42% of the UK's carbon emissions and is legally required to achieve net zero by 2050.

RICS

THE INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY RICS response to the technical consultation on the Infrastructure Levy

Robbie Toomey rtoomey@rics.org

Below is the summary, taken from the RICS website, of its consultation response to the proposed Infrastructure Levy. The pdf of the full response can be downloaded from RICS response to the technical consultation on the Infrastructure Levy

The RICS has responded to the Department of Levelling Up Communities and Housing's (DLUCH) technical consultation on the Infrastructure Levy (IL) [Ed – closed 9 June 2023]. Our response to the consultation was informed by the insight and expertise of RICS members from the Planning & Development group, who gave their time, ensuring a plurality of views have been considered.

Overall, we welcome the government's intention to simplify the development levy system applying to new development. We also recognise that the current proposal moves from an existing measure intended to capture a proportion of the uplift in land value to fund infrastructure and affordable housing, to a measure which is explicitly intended to maximise land value capture subject to maintaining development viability. As such, it seeks to address an area of planning policy unresolved since the introduction of the Town and Country Planning Act 1947 ie. capturing unearned uplift in land values associated with planning measures.

Nevertheless, the proposed IL represents significant change, which will be implemented over an extended period. We regard this measure, which is a form of development land tax, with extreme caution, conscious of previous experiences. We are keen to find more equitable and administratively efficient ways of funding necessary infrastructure and affordable housing, while maintaining the business case to develop. At the same time, we are concerned about serious unintended consequences the IL proposals may have on land markets and the planning and development process.

Key themes from the IL consultation and our response to them are set out below:

- The long timeframe for implementation of the IL – although beneficial in easing the measures into the system, it also leaves the proposal exposed to short and long-term political risk. Given this timeframe, there is a strong case to reconsider how improving s106 agreements in the short term, or as an alternative, to how the IL can help improve the planning gain process
- A confusing picture – the potential distortion of land markets with three different land value capture measures in operation, namely Community Infrastructure Levy, s106, and IL (Test and Learn; Transition period)
- Unequal cost and benefit – a mandatory IL will result in an implementation cost and resource burden for low value locations,

with many of these areas not having adequate land value uplift to capture. Therefore, it is currently unclear what the current cost/ benefit is for these locations

- A lack of local plans – as highlighted in our response to the National Planning Policy Framework Reform (NPPF) consultation, many local authorities have suspended work on replacement local plans, increasing the number of expired plans unsuited for the piloting and implementation of the IL proposal
- Skills and capacity – there are concerns as to whether there are the skills and sufficient capacity in the private sector to service both public and private sector clients when it comes to continual viability assessments and rate setting scrutiny through the charging schedule process. This capacity concern extends to local planning authorities, and there are questions around the ability to deliver existing planning services, without implementing new measures, potentially stalling current plan making and investment decisions
- A localised approach needed – proposed housing thresholds to determine the IL routeway are too high as set out in the consultation document and should only be prescribed at a local level.

The IL and NPPF consultations highlight the government's focus on reform of the planning system, and we will continue to work alongside our members to provide expertise to the government as this develops.

We will also continue to work closely with the IL team at DLUHC and we have held a series of workshops to address aspects of technical detail of the levy [Ed – ACES members attended one of these workshops]. These workshops will continue following our consultation submission.

The download pdf can be accessed direct at:

https://www.rics.org/content/dam/ricsglobal/documents/latest-news/RICS%20Response%20-%20Infastructure%20Levy%2009.06.2023.pdf

Simon is a Partner and Head of Geospatial at Carter Jonas. He has over 25 years of experience in providing geospatial solutions across both the defence and property sectors. Simon leads a team of 20 surveyors, GIS analysts, and developers, providing GIS property management solutions to their clients. These range from traditional land and measured building surveying projects, to aerial drone surveys, complex 3D modelling and data integrations, supporting digital asset management and the development of the property Digital Twin.

MAKING DATA USEFUL Extracting value from the nation's vast digital property estate

Simon Nigh Simon.Nigh@carterjonas.co.uk

The Land Registry is undertaking initiatives to make useful commercial property data available. HMLR wants to get to a stage where people can quickly build up a picture of a specific area, rather than trawling through a variety of England and Wales datasets and filtering them. There is a lot of new technology and a lot of new capability which will transform the current situation of only having pdfs available for individual properties.

Hero

When it comes to property data, HM Land Registry (HMLR) certainly has plenty. 'Infrastructure View' spoke to Lynne Nicholson, Head of Data and Lead Product Manager at HMLR, about the ongoing work to digitise this data and make it more accessible.

It is something of a mind-boggling fact that there are around 28m individual land titles in England and Wales, each setting out the ownership, tenure, easements and covenants relating to all the residential and commercial properties across the nation.

Perhaps even more staggering is the reality that this vast property estate translates into literally billions of individual paper documents, which detail information such as maps and plans, titles and restrictive covenants. While these documents are all now stored digitally, the originals are also kept and available for inspection in a vast, secure, highly fire and flood proof government warehouse.

Managing this huge set of records is the responsibility of HMLR, a non-ministerial government department, created in 1862. Times and technology have, of course, changed quite a bit since it was first established. Today, these records are stored within the biggest property database in Europe and provided electronically, usually as the scanned PDF that will be familiar to anyone who has purchased a property or carried out a Land Registry search recently.

But, with the acceleration of data management tools and the drive by government to open and create value from its data, HMLR is now busy taking the next step towards maximising the usability of its data through greater use of application programming interfaces, Unique Property Reference Numbers and machine readability. This means moving away from a register of raster images - essentially pictures of paper documents which are accessible online but are not particularly interoperable.

As Lynne Nicholson puts it, the "new strategy builds upon the strong foundations established under our previous one. However, rather than continuing to focus on the sharing of additional datasets from the register, we will focus on increasing the usefulness of the data that we already make available.

"Over the next 3 years, we want to expand the opportunities for using our data in new ways. Alongside this, we aim to increase the quality of our data so it's more valuable to a larger number of users. We hold a critical national asset and are responsible for allowing the nation to access and use it as effectively as possible.

"At the moment, most of our statutory products are provided as PDFs, which makes them very hard to deal with – this will all change in the not-too-distant future."

Making data useful

Nicholson is the Senior Responsible Owner for many of HMLR's ambitious data projects which are designed to transform the way HMLR manages, updates and shares its vast amount of data.

The driving force is the government's initiative to use data to drive the economy. Whereas 20 years ago government departments were encouraged to create commercial, revenue-generating services, today the emphasis is to make data available to enable the private sector to invest, innovate and drive national economic growth.

This saw, for example, HMLR join forces with Ordnance Survey to create the hugely successful Geovation Accelerator Programme to encourage start-up companies to examine and play with data and build businesses based on it.

HMLR's data projects include a series of specific projects. One is to restructure the textual data to make it machine readable; another will revamp the spatial data; a third will build a new cloud-based platform that will provide the capability to analyse and share the data more effectively; and a fourth looks at how best to publish the data and make it more accessible for people and businesses to use and improve.

"We are trying to structure the data and our services in a different way so that we can do all sorts of 21st century things with it," Nicholson explains. "At the moment, we are working through the first stages of these projects, doing all the investigative and foundational work to ensure we meet the strategic aims of HMLR and become the best in the world in terms of sharing the data that drives economic growth."

Digital Street pilot

The data projects dovetail with the so-called Q-FAIR initiative being spearheaded by the Geospatial Commission, which is trying to ensure that public data is Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable and of the right Quality - fit for purpose.

"We fully support that initiative," says Nicholson, who is on the Geospatial Commission's Strategy Team and Working Party. "We need to make our data far more findable and accessible – and clearly a PDF is certainly not interoperable. For us to support the Geospatial Commission strategy, we need to invest in the basics, the foundations, and the necessary capabilities."

HMLR has already tested the water in terms of embracing this new world of accessible data, having completed a pilot research and development project called Digital Street. This created a virtual street and was designed to see if the HMLR's data could be pulled together and made more accessible and interoperable.

It was successful but was parked while the concept for the wider data transformation ambitions were assessed and agreed. Fundamentally, the Digital Street project showed what was possible and identified, perhaps more importantly, where value could be created.

Snow Hill demonstrator

Two years ago, Carter Jonas ran a similar pilot project to digitise information relating to property around the proposed Snow Hill Station development for Birmingham City Council.

Carter Jonas' 3D land referencing model of Snow Hill Station, Birmingham

This project created a fully-fledged 3D digital model of the commercial buildings and attached available HMLR information such as ownership, tenure and air rights, to create a searchable and visual representation of the area, for potential developers to access and to try to better understand the impact of the development.

At the time, there was no real requirement for a live model. This meant any changes to the data had to be monitored and then manually adjusted to ensure that the model stayed true to reality.

Without investment to make this happen, the model was simply a snapshot in time rather than a useful on-going tool.

The digital data future has already started

HMLR's data projects are ploughing ahead making useful property data available, particularly for commercial property which is not limited by such stringent data protection regulations preventing the bulk release of private individuals' data.

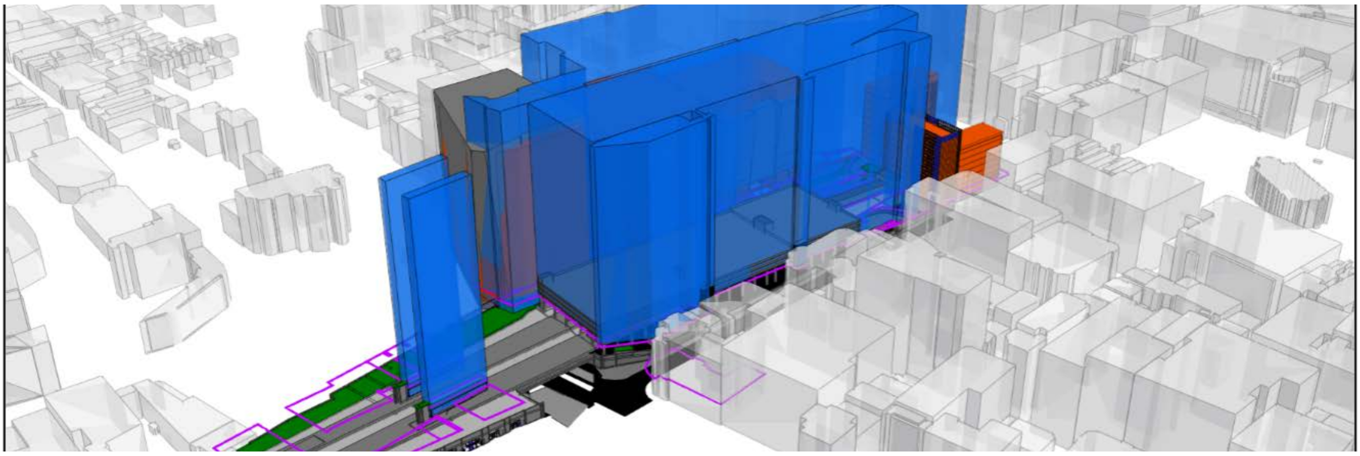
Already it is possible to visit the HMLR online portal and download property information from 13 different datasets, 10 of which are free under the Open Government Licence agreement.

This means that data consumers can create a digital map of England and Wales onto which they can download HMLR's spatial data. And since this data has title numbers embedded, it is then possible to download and attach any of the other datasets to create a searchable and useful database.

"Visually this looks fantastic, enabling users to zoom in, see the title number of properties, see if it is freehold or, if leasehold, what the term of the lease is," explains Nicholson. "You can see who owns the property, whether it's an overseas company or a UK company and how much they paid for it. And, depending on use and need, other information can be overlaid onto these datasets as commercially required."

Making data live and useful

However, just like the Carter Jonas' Snow Hill model, she points out that this data is still limited as it is not live, instead



relying on the user to update new data by downloading new CVS files each month. While there is a service available to update changes each month, it is a cumbersome process and not particularly user friendly or interoperable.

Nicholson points out that to meet the goals of Q-FAIR, this has to change. Hence the focus of the data projects is to build the infrastructure capable of accelerating the move towards a truly live model environment.

"We need to be able to create more useful offerings," she says, pointing out that for a project of this scale, change will inevitably have to evolve in stages.

"For example, a lot of organisations have asked for on-demand access to the data so they can get the right amount of data at the right time, rather than having to download the whole dataset for England and Wales every single month," she explains. "We need to have the necessary infrastructure and database architecture at our disposal to enable that service transformation."

Currently, the data is stored in a digital enterprise warehouse which, says Nicholson, is "not really the way to go in the 21st century." Moving data into the cloud is the key to making it more accessible and developing the right environment needed to offer a much better service. The new platform will mean that, in around 18 months' time, HMLR can start to look seriously at offering a range of new interoperable services that will eventually transform the way the market can use and exploit its data.

"We want to get to a stage where people can quickly build up a picture of a specific area, rather than trawling through a variety of England and Wales datasets and filtering them," she explains. "This is such a new area for us; there is a lot of new technology and a lot of new capability. We know how big a task this is, so we're going to take it slice by slice. Exciting times."

OFFICE OCCUPIER SURVEY
Survey on attitudes to the office

Oliver du Sautoy odusautoy@lsh.co.uk

Oliver has twenty years of experience as a commercial property analyst and joined Lambert Smith Hampton in 2014 as Head of Research. He leads the strategy of the Research team's output and is responsible for LSH's market-leading publications on the UK business space markets. In addition to producing published material, he has undertaken a wide range of bespoke projects for both private and public sector clients, frequently comprising market demand assessments in the industrial and offices sector.

LSH's second annual office occupier survey has found that UK businesses are witnessing improving levels of staff attendance, while a trend towards the occupation of less, but higher quality space is most prevalent among larger firms. "The ability to offer a greater range of office amenities could be a key advantage that larger firms have when competing for staff."

About the survey

Conducted in May 2023, LSH's office occupier survey provides a snapshot of attendance levels, attitudes to hybrid working, and the ongoing impact of shifting work patterns on companies' space requirements.

This year's survey builds on a similar exercise performed last year to assess how much has changed, now that more than a year has passed since the final removal of Covid restrictions.

The survey received responses from key occupier clients of LSH, representing businesses with a total of more than 100,000 UK staff. Organisations included in the survey range from small companies with fewer than 50 staff,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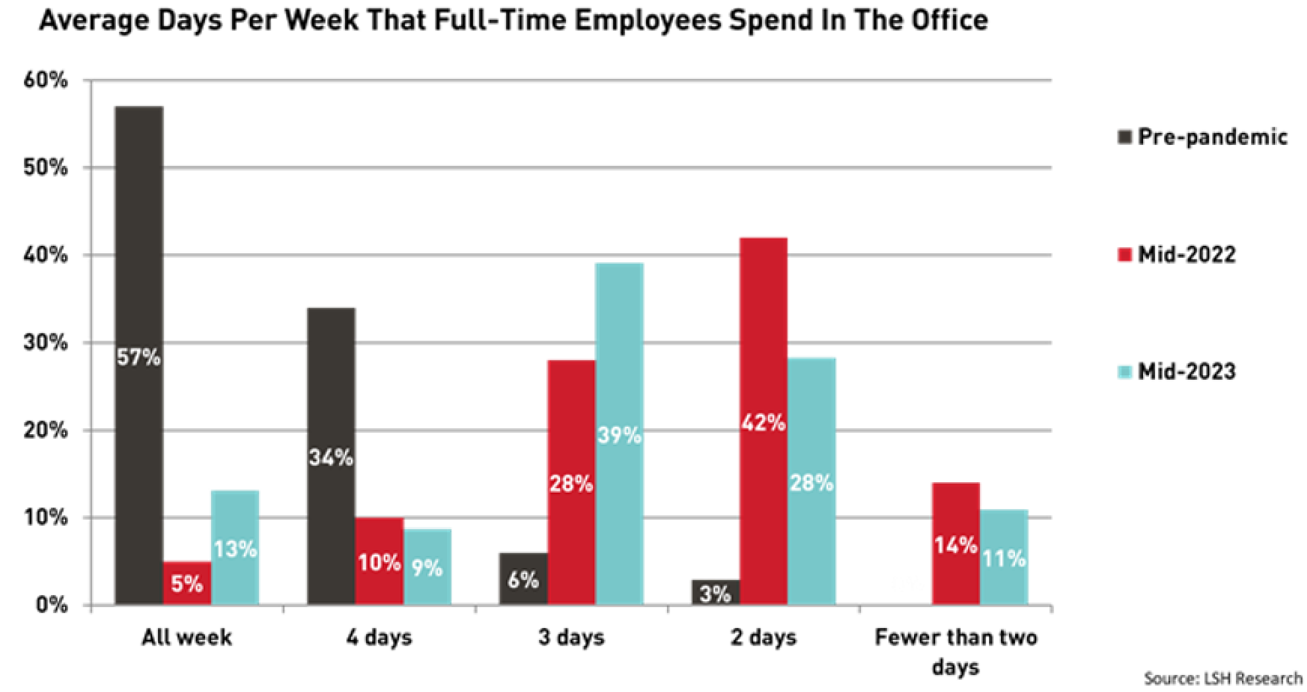
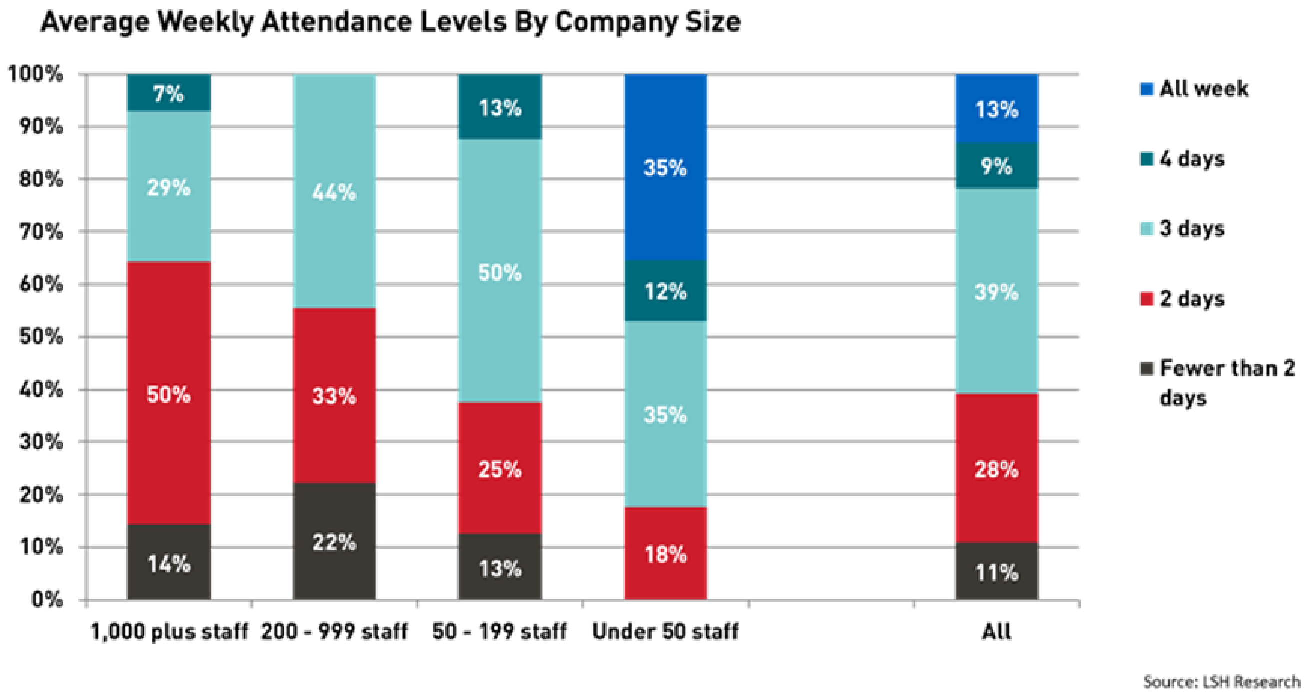




to global corporate occupiers with thousands of employees spread across multiple sites nationwide.

A wide range of sectors are represented in the survey, including professional services, technology, media and telecom, banking and insurance, and the public sector. The biggest single occupier group was professional services, which accounted for 37% of the responses.

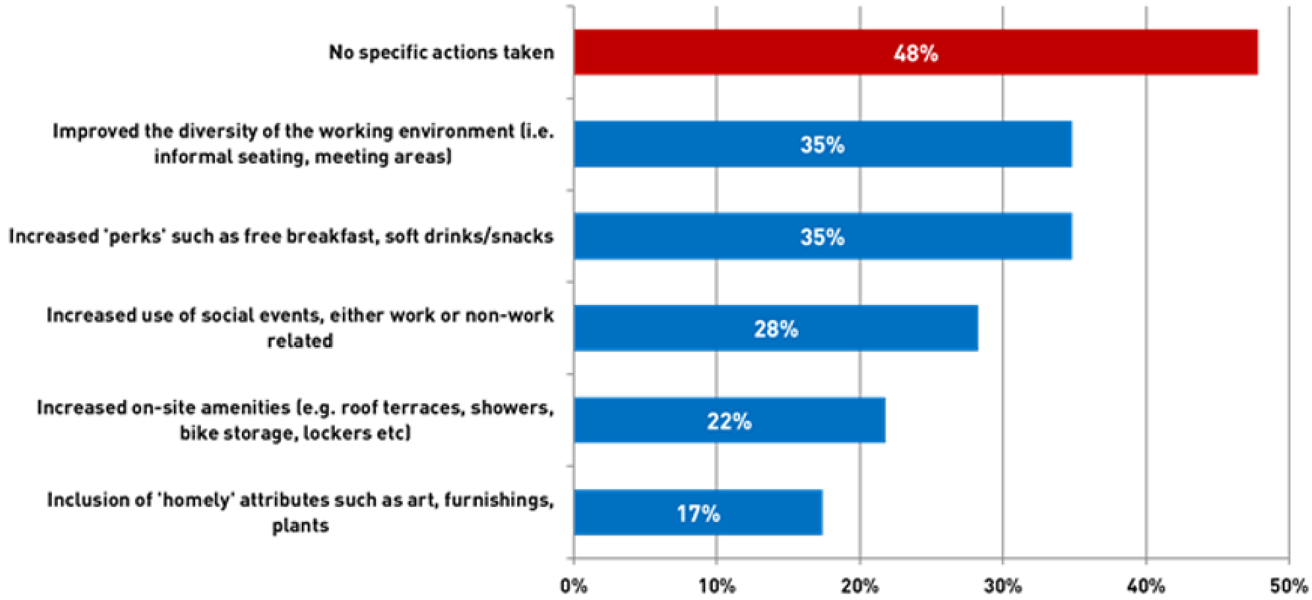
Occupancy on the up

The survey results show a tangible increase in office attendance over the past year. When asked to estimate the average number of days per week that staff in their organisations spent in the office, the most common response was three days a week (39%), reflecting an improvement on our 2022 survey, when two days a week (42%) was the most popular answer.

Most respondents in this year's survey (73%) also said that current attendance levels were up on 12 months ago, albeit a large majority of these described the improvement as 'slight'. Just 4% of all respondents reported seeing a return to pre-pandemic attendance.

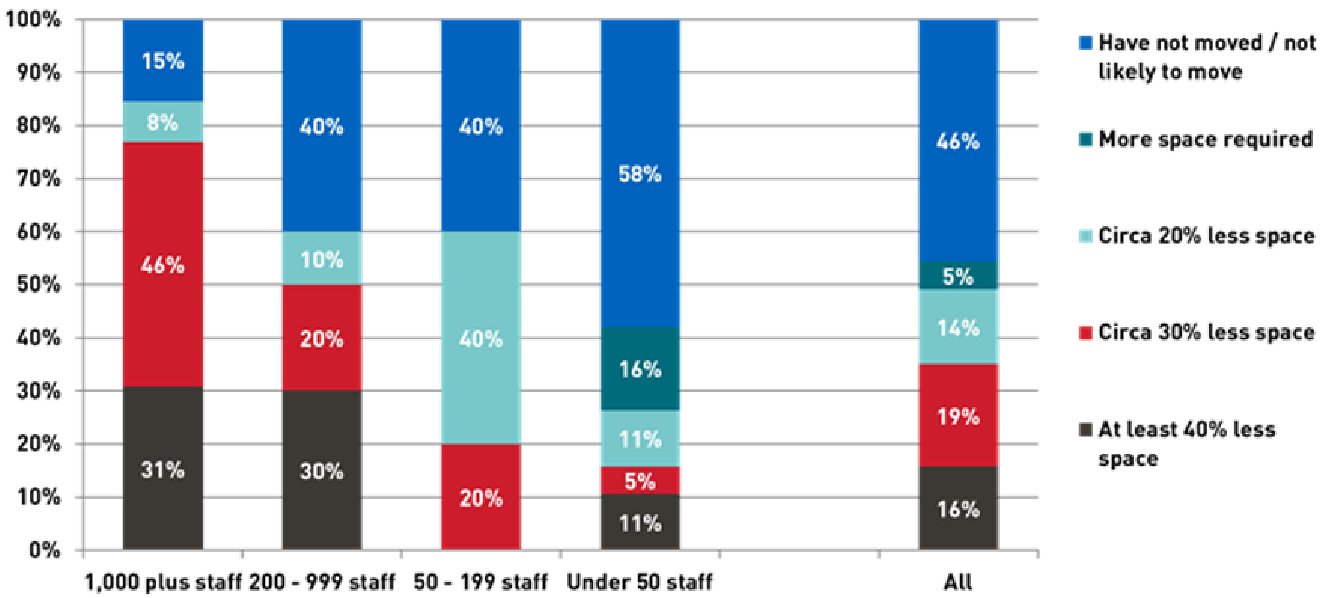
While the general direction of office attendance is upwards, hybrid working patterns appear to be entrenched. Two or three office days a week is the norm for more than two-thirds of survey respondents; and even if attendance does improve further in the future, a full return to pre-pandemic levels appears highly unlikely.

Actions Taken By Businesses To Encourage Staff To Attend The Office



Source: LSH Research

Change In Space Requirements Following The Pandemic And Energy Price Shock



Source: LSH Research

Size matters

One of the clearest trends found by the survey is a divergence between attendance levels in firms of differing size, with smaller companies' employees spending significantly more time in the office than those working for large organisations. Among companies with fewer than 50 employees, 47% reported office attendance of at least four days a week; and the only firms with full attendance were all in this size category.

In contrast, two days a week remains the most common level of office attendance in firms with more than 1,000 staff, with this reported by 50% of respondents working for these businesses. Attendance levels of four days a week or more are still a rarity across all of the larger size bands in the survey.

This reflects fundamental differences between the needs of smaller and larger firms, with offices seen as essential to the day-to-day operations of many small businesses. Larger companies are more likely to have office space and infrastructure that supports hybrid working, while also employing staff who live across wider geographic areas and benefit from not having to commute daily.

The Monday and Friday blues

A well-publicised feature of current hybrid working patterns is lower levels of office attendance on Mondays and Fridays.

Positively, most survey respondents appear relatively relaxed about this, with 65% saying that it is not deemed to be a 'problem' that needs to be addressed in their businesses.

However, respondents were again split depending on the size of their organisations, with 61% of those working for firms with over 200 staff saying that this is a problem; compared with just 9% of those with fewer than 200 staff.

Among those deeming this to be an issue, there was a 50/50 split between those whose companies had initiatives in place to drive attendance on these days, and those who remained unsure how to address this. While lower levels of attendance on certain days appear to be accepted by a significant number of businesses, deciding whether and how to tackle this remains a 'work in progress' for plenty of others.

Carrots and sticks

Broader policies stipulating or guiding office attendance levels are becoming more commonplace, with 50% of survey respondents saying that these were in place in their businesses. Another 11% said they had plans to introduce such policies in the next 12 months, which suggests that a further rise in overall attendance levels is likely.

In addition, just over half of the respondents (52%) said their businesses had taken positive actions to encourage staff into the office via enhancements to working conditions and amenities. Among businesses where such actions have been taken, the most common initiatives were perks such as free breakfasts, soft drinks and snacks; and the creation of more diverse office environments by adding features such as informal seating areas and meeting areas.

Larger firms were significantly more likely to have taken these types of actions; 71% of those working for firms with more than 50 staff said this was the case, but this dropped to just 18% among those with fewer than 50 staff. The ability to offer a greater range of office amenities could be a key advantage that larger firms have when competing for staff. Meanwhile, amenity-rich multi-tenant buildings will be in a strong position to attract occupiers seeking space that meets employees' increased expectations for high quality facilities.

Future space requirements

Hybrid working is continuing to impact both the quantity and quality of companies' space requirements, while sharp rises in energy costs and ESG considerations have also added to some firms' motivations to move. Among survey respondents, 35% said that they had already relocated or consolidated space since the pandemic, while a further 20% indicated that such a decision was now more likely to be made upon a lease event.

Notably, however, close to half (46%) of respondents said that they were no more likely to move premises now than had previously been the case, with this rising to an outright majority among firms with fewer than 200 staff. Evidently, there is a substantial cohort of occupiers, particularly at the smaller end, for whom the pandemic has actually had little impact on their thinking around office space.

Among those indicating that they had either moved or were more likely to, a large majority said they required less space than they previously occupied. The most common reduction in space requirements was c.30%, cited by just under a fifth of all respondents.

Taken together, the answers provided imply an overall reduction in space requirements of 15-20% among our survey respondents. If this were repeated nationwide, it would necessitate a contraction in the size of UK office markets, but on a scale that could be achieved relatively organically via the gradual loss of poorer quality buildings from the office stock [Ed – see Rad Radev's article about office sustainability in this issue of ACES' Terrier].

Weighing up the costs

While the need to find space suited to hybrid working is a major motivating factor behind occupiers' current space decisions, potential cost savings are not being ignored. A total of 78% of survey respondents said that they expected to benefit from cost efficiencies when relocating, albeit 48% said that cost was a secondary consideration to space and location.

Just over half of survey respondents (52%) said that their businesses had also taken specific actions to manage efficiencies and operating costs associated with lower office attendance. Most commonly, this involved collecting occupancy data for per capita metrics; or optimising plant and building management settings for low occupancy days or areas. However, with 48% saying that no specific actions had been taken, there would appear to be significant room for further actions and improvements in many companies.

Finding an optimal balance between the cost, quality and size of offices will be an ongoing challenge for occupiers as hybrid working practices continue to evolve. The exchange of quantity for quality is likely to continue, allowing many to upgrade to better space at a lower cost, or at least a cost neutral position, compared with their current workspace.

Download the Thames Valley and South East report in full here.

Rad is an Associate Researcher at Carter Jonas focused on commercial research. He is responsible for analysing trends across the UK markets, with the main focus on offices and life sciences.

OFFICES: PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE
The sustainability of office stock in the UK

Rad Radev Rad.Radev@carterjonas.co.uk

Backed up by survey work in 12 major centres, Rad asks how sustainable and energy efficient is the UK's office stock, and to what extent does it meet the requirements of today and going forward?

Introduction

Sustainable office buildings are crucial for achieving the UK's climate goals and promoting environmental sustainability. Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) are becoming an increasingly important tool in support of the UK government's commitment to achieve net-zero by 2050, through driving improvements in energy efficiency across the building stock, thereby helping to mitigate energy use, cost and associated carbon emissions.

Office occupiers are also driving change. Many are trading up into more environmentally friendly accommodation that also promotes health and well-being, in order to demonstrate that they are observing their corporate environmental and social policies. Footloose occupiers are increasingly placing environmental considerations towards the top of their checklist of property selection criteria.

This trend away from low-quality properties with poor environmental credentials is being further reinforced by the need for employers to provide a vibrant, attractive, sustainable work environment to underpin a return to the office, as well as recruitment, retention, productivity and wellness strategies. This is particularly important in the current tight labour market where available talent is scarce and at a premium.

Therefore, a combination of occupier preferences, corporate social responsibility goals and tightening environmental regulation is combining to reinforce the structural shift in demand towards new and refitted, sustainable, energy-efficient buildings.

Given all this, a key question is how sustainable and energy efficient is the UK's office stock, and to what extent does it meet the requirements of today and going forward?

Stock by age

We have assessed the average age of the UK's office stock, from the original date of construction (not taking into account any refurbishment or upgrading work). Around 55% of existing UK office inventory by floorspace is more than 30 years old, and nearly a quarter was originally constructed before 1950. However, 11% of the total floorspace has been constructed since 2010 and is therefore likely to meet relatively high sustainability standards (Figure 1).

It should be noted that age in itself does not necessarily determine quality, as an

Figure 1 Source: Carter Jonas, CoStar

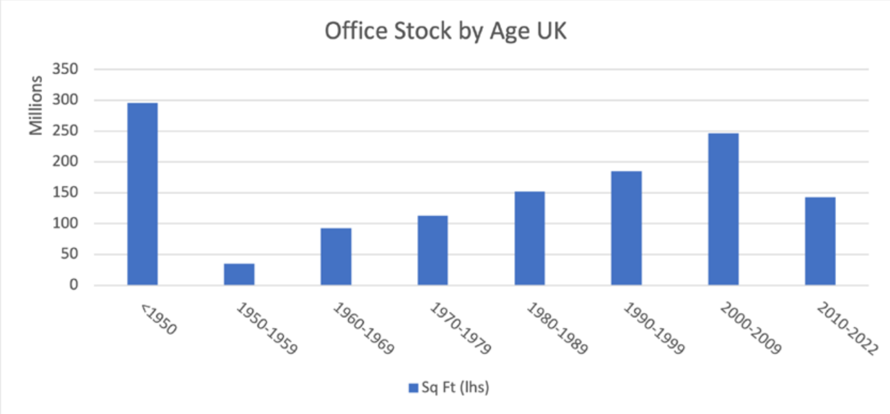


Figure 2 Source: Carter Jonas, CoStar

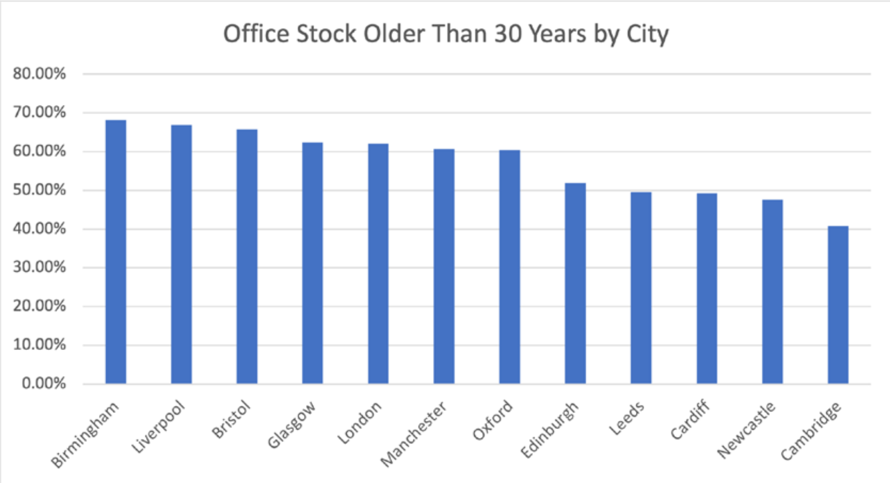
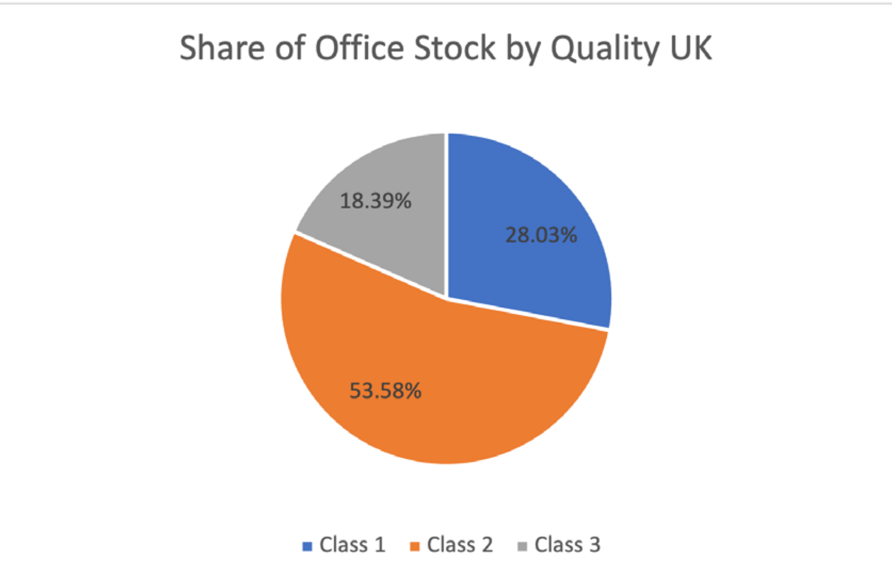


Figure 3 Source: Carter Jonas, CoStar



older building can be refurbished to a high standard (albeit within limits).

62% of London's office stock is at least 30 years old, above the UK average. Of the key regional cities in our analysis, Birmingham, Liverpool and Bristol have the largest proportion of stock over 30 years old, at over 65%. Cambridge has the lowest proportion of stock over 30-year-old at just 41% (Figure 2).

Stock by quality

We have classified the UK's office buildings into classes 1-3, with 1 being the highest quality offices and 3 being the poorest. These are used to differentiate buildings by quality, based on key factors such as location, age, building quality, amenities, and rental value. Class 1, 2 and 3 are equivalent to CoStar's 1-2, 3 and 4-5 Star ratings and similar to grades C, B and A (Figure 3).

As of the beginning of 2023, the lowest quality class 3 office space accounts for 18.4% of the total UK office stock by floorspace. When combined with class 2 stock, the two together account for 72% of the total UK office stock. Prime class 1 office assets account for 28% of total UK office stock.

Across the 12 cities, Oxford, Cardiff and Edinburgh have the largest volume of low-quality office space (class 3) as a percentage of the total office stock, at 28%, 20% and 19%, respectively (Edinburgh also has a higher number of listed buildings than others).

In contrast, the cities with the lowest volume of class 3 office inventory were London, Manchester, Cambridge and Newcastle. London is an outlier, with only 2% of its floorspace in class 3 stock.

When we look at the share of high-quality class 1 office stock by floorspace across the 12 cities, London stands out with 70% of its office stock being this class. The second and the third highest share is in Manchester and Birmingham, with 36% and 35% respectively. The top three cities have been assisted by a notable increase in office development and renovation of older office stock in the past decade compared to other cities (Figures 4 and 5).

Stock by EPC rating

The new Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards legislation for commercial tenancies is an increasing challenge for

Figure 4 Source: Carter Jonas, CoStar

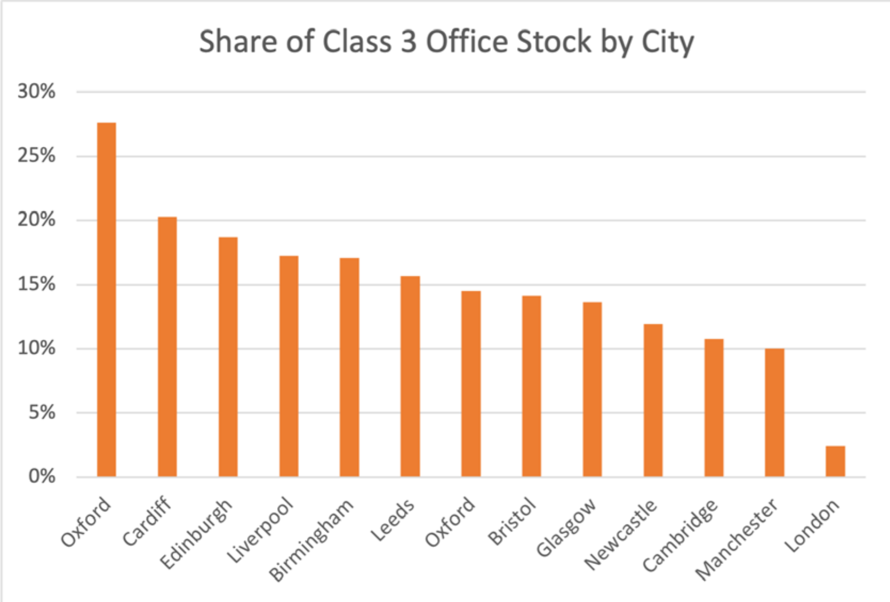


Figure 5 Source: Carter Jonas, CoStar

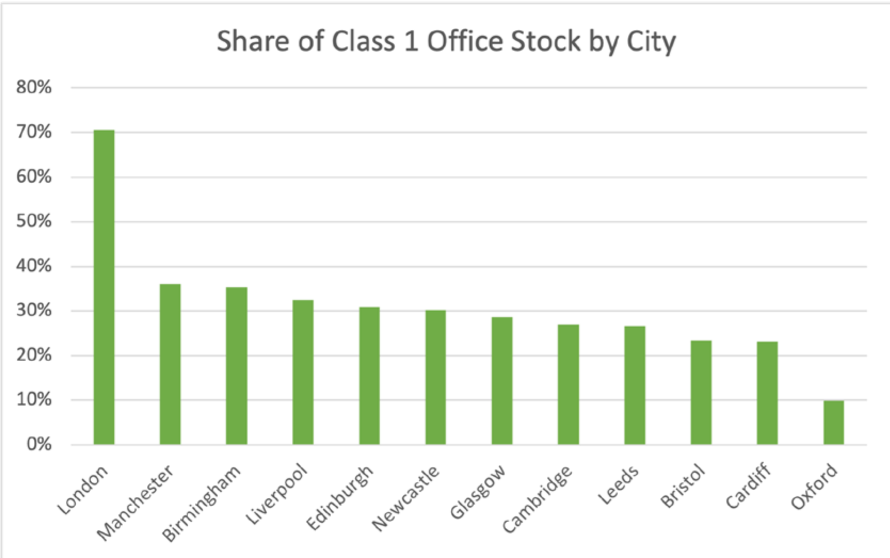
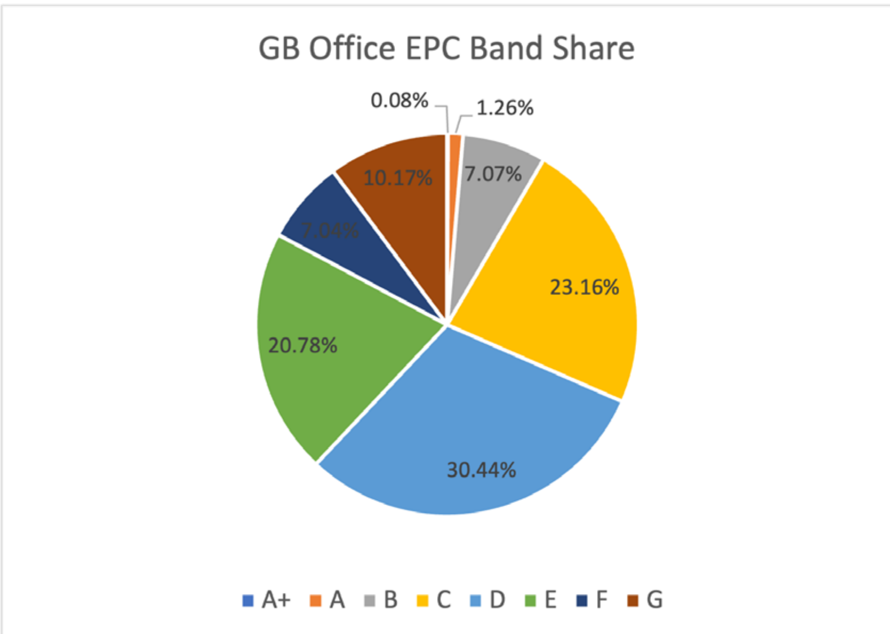


Figure 6 Source: EPC Register



both landlords and occupiers. The MEES legislation was introduced in 2018 to improve the energy efficiency of all rented properties. From 1 April 2023, a minimum rating requirement of EPC Band E applies to both new and existing leases, putting many buildings at risk of not meeting the new regulations. Buildings with an EPC rating lower than E cannot be leased unless an exemption applies.

Office properties within EPC bands F and G account for 17.2% of all offices in Great Britain. This means that nearly a fifth of all office buildings became unlettable from 1 April 2023, unless remedial action has been taken. A proportion of these offices will already be vacant, awaiting redevelopment and/or possibly unlettable anyway (Figure 6).

Although office landlords owning properties with EPC bands E and D will not be restricted by current legislation (which applies to bands F and G), the government currently proposes a further tightening of MEES for commercial properties to a minimum of Band C by 1 April 2027, and Band B by 2030.

This, coupled with a shift of occupier preferences towards better quality space, is already focusing demand on properties within EPC bands C and above.

Across the 12 cities in our analysis, there is a notable difference between locations. For example, the number of buildings within band G, as a percentage of the total, is highest in Edinburgh and Glasgow with 14.8% and 14.3% respectively. In contrast, the lowest proportion of stock within Band G is in Cardiff and Manchester, at 5.5% and 6.3% respectively.

When we group some of the lowest bands, Glasgow and Edinburgh still have the highest amount of offices in bands G to D, followed by Bristol and Birmingham, between 71%-74% of the total office inventory. When we group some of the higher bands, Cardiff and Manchester have the highest amount of office bands C to A, with 40% and 38%, respectively.

Cities including Glasgow, Edinburgh, Birmingham and Bristol will have more than 70% of their office buildings unlettable by 2027, with the share of properties below the minimum standard increasing to 90% and above in 2030. Given the proposed tightening of the MEES regulation, a substantial proportion of office buildings will be unlettable by 2027/2030 if no work is carried out (Figures 7, 8, and 9).

Figure 7 Source: EPC Register

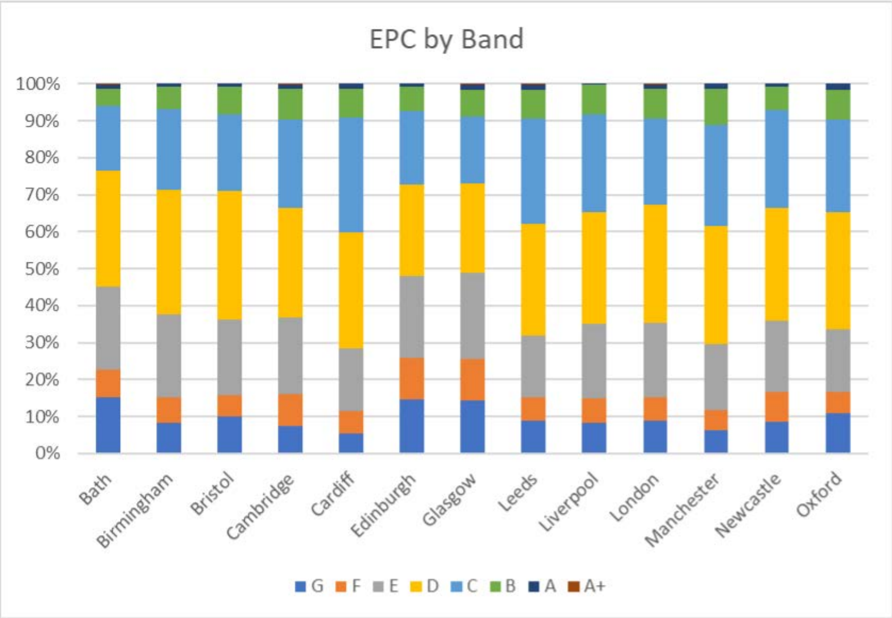


Figure 8 Source: EPC Register

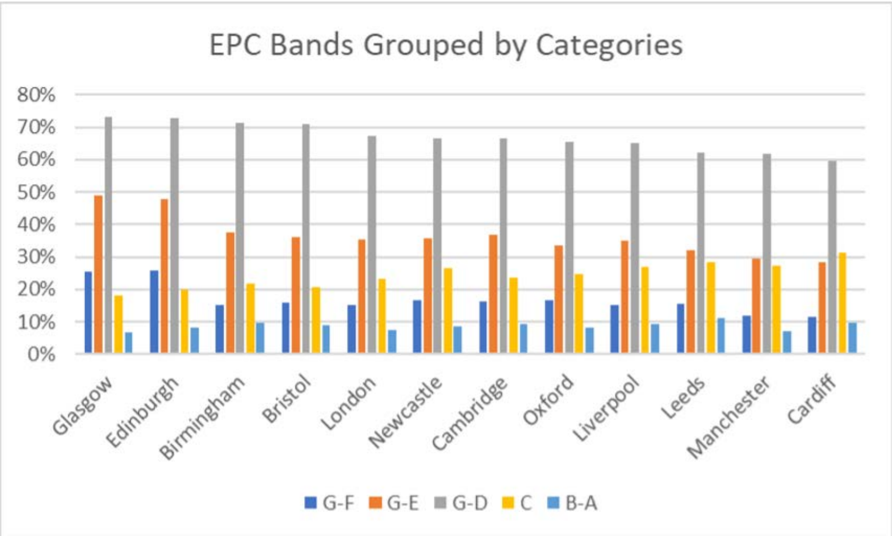
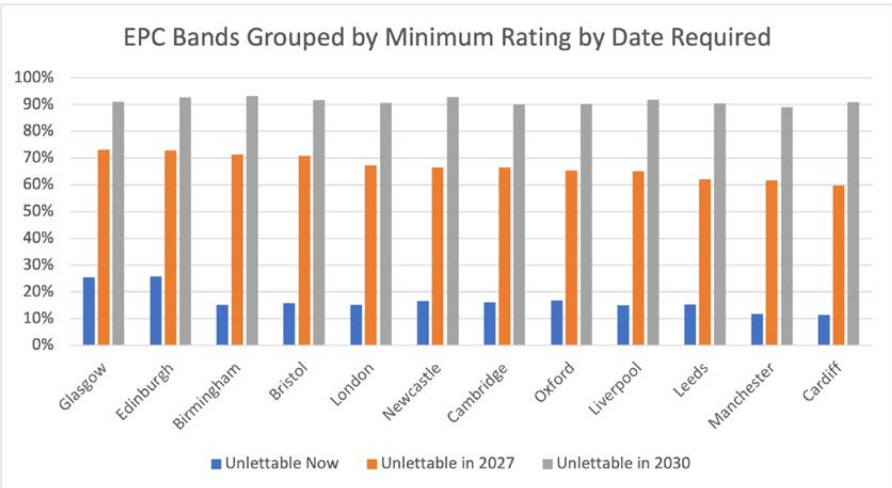


Figure 9



<u>Stock by BREEAM rating</u>

We have used the BREEAM rating to help understand the number of sustainable buildings across the 12 cities in our analysis. This is the world's longest-established method of assessing, rating, and certifying the sustainability of buildings, with nearly 5,000 office buildings now certified in the UK.

Unsurprisingly, given the scale of the market, London is the city with the most BREEAM-rated office buildings in the UK, accounting for around 60% of the total. In contrast, BREEAM-rated office properties in each of the other cities in this research account for less than 5% of the total UK stock.

However, in London only 32.7% of BREEAM-rated buildings are rated as Excellent or Outstanding, ranking the city eight out of the 12 cities. The top three cities on this measure are Cambridge (51.9%), Bristol (46.7%) and Cardiff (46.5%) (Figure 10).

Carter Jonas Office Market Sustainability Index

We have developed the Carter Jonas Office Market Sustainability Index to compare the average sustainability level of the office stock across 12 key UK office markets. We have used three different metrics to create an overall ranking (Table 1).

- Age of stock – The office stock older than 30 years by floorspace as a % of the total stock in each city
- EPC ratings – The count of EPC ratings C, B, A, A+ and bands G-F, G-E and G-D as a % of the total stock in each city
- Quality of space – The floorspace by class (1 to 3), calculated as a % of the total stock in each city.

London is at the forefront of sustainability initiatives and regulations, and it is ranked first among the 12 cities we have analysed. The city has implemented several measures to promote office sustainability, including environmental regulations, building codes, and initiatives to reduce carbon emissions and promote sustainable practices. For example, the city's spatial development strategy, the London Plan, sets targets for reducing carbon emissions in new buildings, improving energy efficiency, and promoting sustainable construction practices.

154

LOCAL AUTHORITIES

WE HAVE ACTED FOR 154 LOCAL AUTHORITIES

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To discuss your current requirements, please contact:

Alexandra Houghton, Head of Public Sector
alexandra.houghton@carterjonas.co.uk | 07880 004520

OUR LOCAL AUTHORITY EXPERIENCE:

3,500 assets assessed using our Location & Asset Strategy Review methodology

4 joint venture partner procurement exercises undertaken in the past 24 months

2,691 tenancies under management

8 estate regeneration CPOs currently being advised on across 5 local authorities

12 local authorities we provide annual asset valuations for

Figure 10 Source: BREEAM

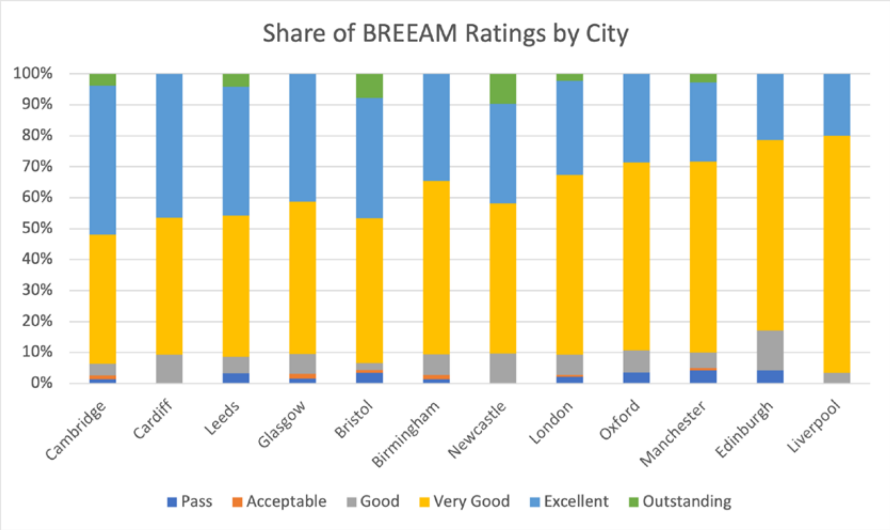


Table 1 – City score and ranking

Cities	EPC	Quality	Age	Overall Score	Overall Rank
London	26	15	2	43	1
Leeds	30	5	5	41	2
Manchester	28	8	2	38	3
Cardiff	27	4	5	36	4
Cambridge	22	6	8	36	5
Oxford	23	2	5	29	6
Newcastle	15	7	6	28	7
Glasgow	17	6	2	25	8
Liverpool	16	7	1	24	9
Bristol	13	5	1	19	10
Birmingham	11	8	1	19	11
Edinburgh	7	6	5	17	12

Leeds and Manchester also ranked highly, taking second and third places. Both cities share similar characteristics, including a younger office stock with a high proportion of EPC bands A and B.

At the other end of the spectrum, Edinburgh and Birmingham are ranked 12 and 11. The former is characterised by a large share of listed and older buildings, while both have a high proportion of poor EPC ratings and ageing stock.

Summary and conclusions

Improving the sustainability of the office stock is a critical factor in achieving the UK's climate goals and promoting environmental sustainability. Our analysis of four key office quality metrics (EPC ratings, BREEAM assessment, office-grade classification, and age of office stock) reveals some important characteristics of the current UK stock. Our findings also highlight significant variations in quality and sustainability characteristics between the key UK office markets.

Occupiers are demanding office space that meets increasingly high sustainability criteria. This is partly being driven by legislation such as MEES legislation. More and more, however, the drive towards sustainable space is being driven by occupier preferences, with many corporates placing this high on their list of property selection criteria.

In the current competitive labour market, providing a vibrant, attractive, and sustainable work environment is increasingly important for the recruitment and retention of talent, encouraging working from the office, and promoting the well-being of employees. In addition, high energy prices have made the benefits of an energy-efficient building all the more apparent.

The scale of stock that is unlikely to be fit for purpose, in terms of meeting the needs of occupiers and complying with MEES legislation, means many property owners will need to decide whether to invest significant sums in upgrading, or to consider a change of use. Given the long-term reduction in office occupier demand, the repurposing of low-quality office space into more modern and versatile buildings that meet the needs of local communities in areas such as housing will need to accelerate.

Repurposing older office space can help reduce the need for new construction, and promote sustainable urban development. It can also help to regenerate underutilised or derelict areas and create a more diverse and vibrant urban landscape.

A key question will be the extent to which market forces alone will drive this transformation without the need for government intervention. Government initiatives such as Levelling Up and The Town Deal Fund could accelerate the process of change in some places.

Donna is a Property Advisor at CIPFA, chartered surveyor and registered valuer. She has over 25 years' experience in the property industry, including local government, where she headed property teams and was responsible for overseeing the preparation of annual capital accounting valuations. Donna is a member of the South West Branch of ACES.

ASSET VALUATION OF OFFICES

Empty office space and implications for asset valuations: Why are we talking about this?

Donna Best Donna.Best@cipfa.org

Following member polls of offices occupation post-pandemic, Donna proposes a course to follow in assessing value for capital accounting purposes.

Operational offices occupation

CIPFA held its 6th 'Big Discussion' event in May where we ran a series of polls relating to topics our members told us they wanted to discuss with their peers. One of the topics was around remote working and what this might mean for office space strategies.

We asked: *Following the pandemic, has your organisation moved to a remote way of working?*

The results (Figure 1) indicated that over 50% of local authorities have moved to a remote way of working.

We asked: *On average, what proportion of your working week do you spend in the office?*

68% indicated that as a proportion of their working week, they now only go into the office for meetings or for 1 or 2 days. (Figure 2).

We then asked: *Has your organisation reduced office space post pandemic?*

This trend is a pattern we've seen in local authorities across the country and many of you I'm sure will be aware that our owner occupied offices now include a lot of unused and underused accommodation.

What does this have to do with asset valuations?

For the purposes of capital accounting, owner occupied offices will be categorised as operational property, plant and equipment (PPE), and valued on the basis of Existing Use Value (EUV).

Here, the valuer is required to assess what it would cost to replace the service potential (i.e., what would be needed to deliver the service if deprived of the asset) at least cost. Part of the consideration will be whether there are parts of the building currently unused and whether the authority has any intention of re-using the vacant parts. If on inspection, there is clearly a good deal of underused accommodation, a discussion with the client will be required to determine the intention for that space, if not already clarified in your instructions.

If the local authority has no intention of re-using the vacant part, the next question is whether the vacant part could be sold or leased off for separate occupation, without impeding the use of other parts of the building. If the answer is yes, then that part will be re-categorised as either Surplus PPE or as Investment Property and the basis of value applied will be Fair Value.

You still have 100% of the property

Figure 1, Big Discussion poll results 24 May 2023, 60 responses

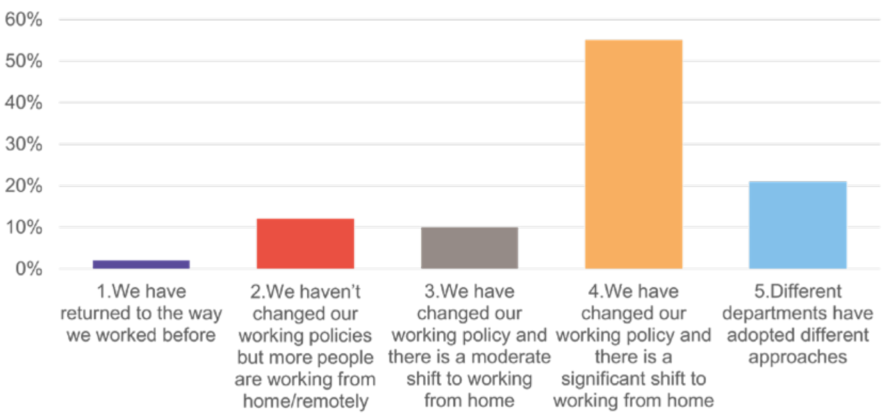


Figure 2, Big Discussion poll results 24 May 2023, 63 responses

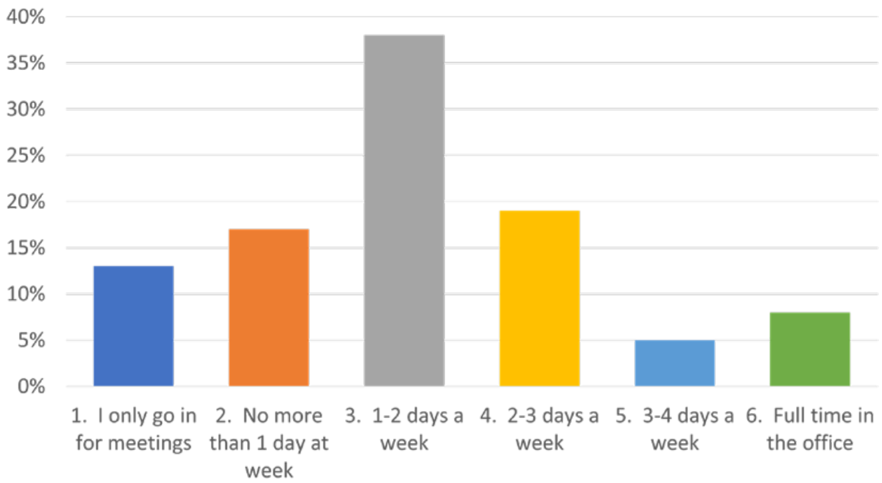
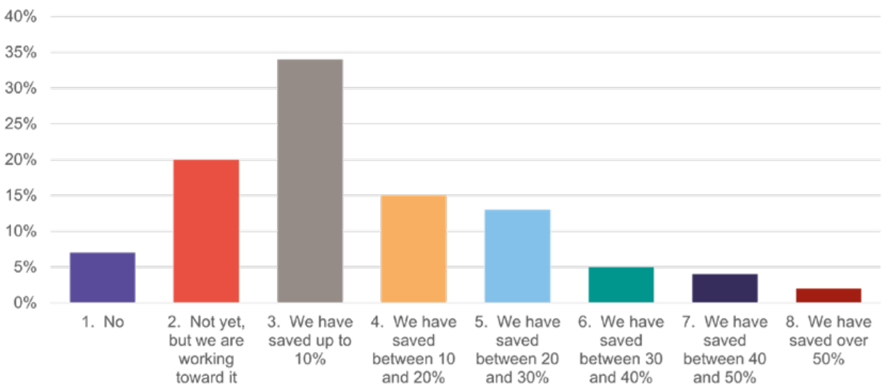
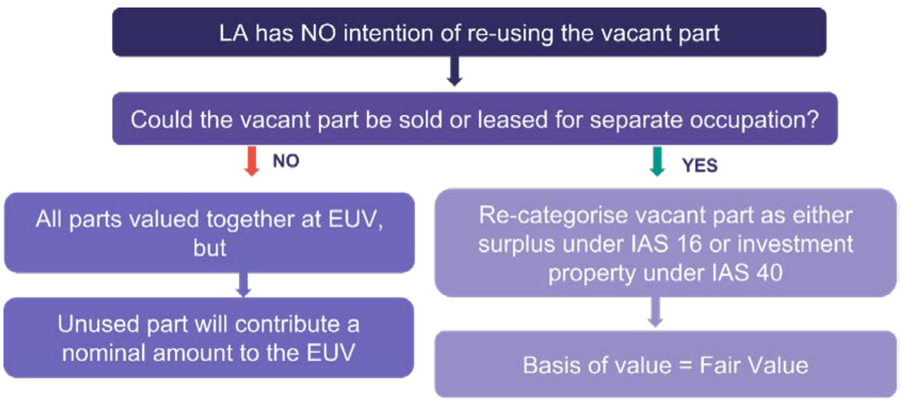


Figure 3, Big Discussion poll results 24 May 2023, 55 responses





valued for balance sheet purposes, but you'd have separate valuations, stated separately in the report, for the operational in-use and the vacant part. The parts in operational use would be valued on an EUV basis and the vacant part on the basis of Fair Value.

There will be instances where the vacant space can't be released for separate occupation – say, for example, the building configuration might not allow it, or there might be security concerns. In these circumstances, then all parts of the building will be valued together on the basis of EUV, but the vacant part will only contribute a nominal amount to the value.

For example, if you have a building with 4 floors, one floor isn't being used but it can't be released for separate occupation, then the unused floor will contribute only a nominal amount to the property's EUV. This is because the service potential of the vacant floor would not be required for continued service delivery.

The flowchart illustrates the concept.

Given current trends in the use of office space, this is one for the preparers of accounts and valuers to watch out for this year. For further information on EUV, see RICS Valuation – Global Standards 2017: UK national supplement UK VPGA 6. Later in the year, the RICS is due to publish a revised edition of the Red Book UK supplement with updated guidance on EUV, along with a new dedicated Professional Standard titled 'Existing use valuations for UK public sector financial statements.

In the meantime, please feel free to contact the property team at CIPFA to discuss any asset valuation queries you might have at property@cipfa.org.

Sophie is a Senior Analyst in the Research team at Carter Jonas, reporting on market trends and themes across both the rural and commercial divisions.

THE MODEL ESTATE 2023 Model Estate performance

Sophie Davidson Sophie.Davidson@carterjonas.co.uk

The Model Estate report has been featured for many years, lastly in Summer 2022. It provides useful short and long-term trends and comparisons for asset classes typically managed by local authority surveyors.

About the Model Estate

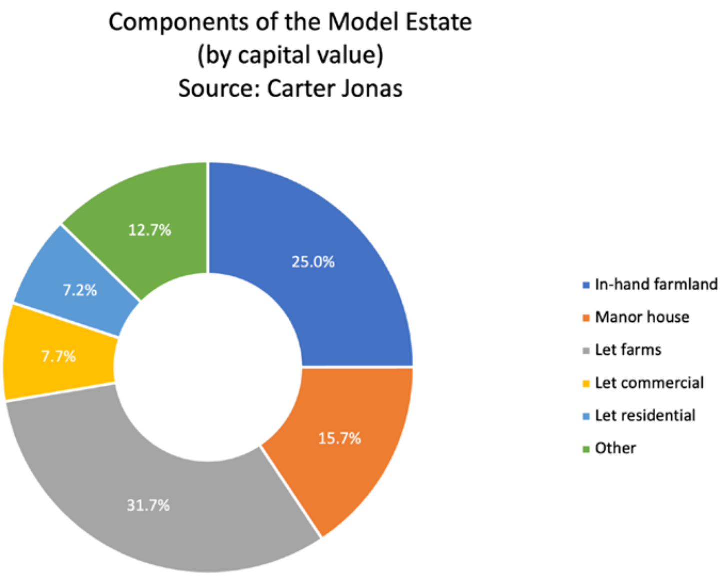
The 'Model Estate' is a hypothetical agricultural estate created by Carter Jonas in 2010. The estate has evolved over the years and currently comprises 3,203 acres which includes a combination of let and in-hand farms, a commercial and residential portfolio, a telecoms mast, fishing rights, a syndicate shoot, a solar farm, and a quarry. It is located within the geographical triangle bounded by the M4, M40 and M5 motorways.

Component performance

The model estate was valued at £50.12m in December 2022, representing an annual increase of 6.9% against a value of £46.88m in 2021. Capital values have increased steadily over the last 10 years, with 10-year annualised growth at a healthy 5.1%, or 64.2% cumulatively.

A significant uplift in the farmland market, reflected in both in-hand and let farmland, has bolstered the total capital value of the estate. Combined, these assets account for 56.7% of the total value of the estate. The 'other' assets on the estate, namely the solar farm and quarry, also saw impressive growth. This sub-section also includes a telecoms mast, syndicate shoot and fishing rights. The value of the residential assets increased too, although to a lesser extent. However, the value of the manor house has remained the same and the commercial element saw a moderate decline in value.

In a year defined by rocketing inflation, faltering economic growth and political turmoil, rural estate owners have been presented with numerous headwinds. Although the UK narrowly avoided a technical recession in 2022, some property markets have been more adversely affected than others, reflected in the varying performance of the different elements of the estate. Despite this, the overall value of the estate increased.



In-hand farmland: 7.1%

The in-hand agricultural land element increased by 7.1% over the last year, with the arable land valued at £9,900/acre and pasture at £8,500/acre. This represents an uplift of 7.6% and 9.7% respectively.

Meanwhile, woodland values have been stagnant, ranging from £5,250/acre to £5,500/acre.

Change in land values varies depending on local market dynamics, the type of land, and the quality. Yet, across the board, sustained high demand from an increasing diverse selection of buyers continues to outstrip supply and has served to maintain upward pressure on values. Values reported on the estate are ahead of averages across England and Wales, but reflect the regional picture where some notable large farm sales have achieved in excess of £10,000/acre.

Threats to the agricultural industry were plentiful in 2022 and had the potential to derail farmland values. The Russian invasion of Ukraine, coupled with the complexities of Brexit, has resulted in unstable supply chains and rocketing inflation. Agricultural output prices have not kept pace with spiralling input prices, putting sustained pressure on profit margins. However, increases slowed considerably in the final quarter of the year. Most significantly, fertiliser prices (imported ammonium nitrate) fell by 19.5% in the three months to December, averaging £700/tonne. Still, the longer-term price trends show a substantial shift, driving sustained cost inflation for farmers. Compared to the same period two years ago, fertiliser prices have seen 222.2% growth.

Structural changes in the market have also created uncertainties. Dwindling direct payments and the vagueness of the incoming environmental schemes has forced many to question their confidence in the industry. However, historical trends of the performance of agricultural land show that it outperforms inflation in the medium to long-term, offering wealth preservation benefits. Particularly, the market is still sustained by rollover funds and so capital values are likely to be less exposed to the increasingly expensive debt market, in the way that many other property markets are.

<u>Let farms: 7.4%</u>

The let farmland has seen little change over the last year, with most tenant farmers sitting tight while the effects of dwindling direct government support payments on the rental market unfold. Concurrently, and like the in-hand farms, tenant farmers are assessing the opportunities arising through the emerging Environmental Land Management schemes. Local rent reviews have resulted in unchanged rents.

In the longer-term, the decline in 1986 Act tenancies can be expected to accelerate as the second-generation successions expire. As this takes hold, we can expect more movement in let farms. However, some third successions could run to the end of the century and company tenancies can endure indefinitely.

Regionally, in southern England, Carter Jonas data shows that openly marketed farm business tenancy (FBT) rents usually exceed national averages, with a five-year rolling average holding firm at £140/acre across both equipped and land-only holdings. Average FBT tenancies have reduced to 4.67 years from 2021 (Central Association of Agricultural Valuers in their Land Occupancy Surveys 2021).

<u>Residential: 3.6%</u>

There has been a moderate increase in the capital value of the estate's residential portfolio. The one in-hand residential dwelling increased in value by 2.8% during the year, and the let assets rose by 3.8% year-on-year, reflecting a buoyant private rental market.

While the residential element of the estate was an undeniable winner in the previous year, 2022 looked very different. A record number of house moves occurred following the pandemic and up to early 2022, resulting in immense house price growth. However, against a backdrop of falling real incomes and a near tripling of mortgage rates, demand eased later in the year. The total number of mortgage approvals in 2022 was 19.2% lower than 2021, with the greatest falls occurring in the last couple of months (Bank of England). According to Nationwide, annual house price growth peaked at 14.3% in March 2022, before slowing to 2.8% by December. Meanwhile, Halifax reported a peak of 12.5% annual growth in June, falling to 2.1% in December.

Growth in private rental prices, in contrast, accelerated throughout the year, reflecting buoyant demand and dwindling supply, with some private landlords now exiting the market. In the 12 months to December 2022, rental prices for the UK (excluding London) increased by 4.3% (Office for National Statistics). RICS reports that demand continues to rise, while new supply coming to the market is dwindling, forcing prices upwards. The two rent reviews that took place on the estate resulted in an uplift of 10%, to move rents in line with local comparables.

<u>Other: 23.8 %</u>
<u>Solar farm</u>

The estate's solar farm has seen the greatest increase in value of all assets on the estate, with a significant year-on-year uplift of 29.7%. This is predominantly a result of the sharp fall in global fossil fuel supply following the Russian invasion of Ukraine and, subsequently, Russia being almost wholly removed from the supply chain. The ensuing energy crisis caused a spike in demand for domestic, commercially produced renewable energy. It also impacted the availability of some materials needed in solar farm construction (particularly steel), resulting in an increase in the value of operational sites. Coupled with the acceleration of environmental and sustainability targets set by corporates, there is mounting pressure on the renewables market to future-proof the energy sector, pushing prices up accordingly.

<u>Quarry</u>

Activity levels at the quarry have remained consistent throughout 2022 and annual sales have risen to 300,000 tonnes of saleable sand and gravel. Quarry Co.'s modest increase in production is attributed to the closure of a competing quarry site and success in securing a share of the latent market demand for the sales volumes previously controlled by that competitor. Consistently elevated sales are putting pressure on permitted mineral reserves at the quarry, and so Quarry Co. is now considering a further planning application supporting a lateral extension to permitted working arrangements.

Planning permission was secured during 2022 for a revision to permitted restoration arrangements at the quarry that will serve to utilise imported inert waste materials to partially infill the quarry void, and deliver a mixed-use restoration comprising leisure and amenity usage, and land dedicated to the creation of habitats for biodiversity. Inert waste tipping will commence within the next 24 months (dependant on being granted the required Environmental Permit). Once such operations commence, additional royalty revenues will be due to the estate under the terms of Quarry Co.'s lease.

The combination of an increase in

minerals sales during the year, and an index-linked rent review due at the outset, have served to support a notable increase in revenue payable to the estate. A year-on-year increase in income of 29.5% was recorded.

Sporting rights

The sporting rights on the estate are let to a local syndicate at a rent equivalent to £6.73/acre across almost 2,000 acres. The tenancy expires in 2023, and early discussions with the syndicate suggest they will be seeking to reduce the rent due to sharp rises in the costs of running a shoot. Avian Influenza led to movement bans on poultry products and a subsequent lack of availability which, coupled with spiralling input costs (namely energy and feed) and staff shortages, has driven up prices exponentially. Data from the 2022 Game Shooting Census (GunsOnPegs) shows that, over the year, the average cost of pheasant on a game card has risen by 31%, and partridge by 19%.

Telecoms mast and fishing rights

The values of the telecoms mast and fishing rights have held firm over the last year.

Manor House: 0.0%

Over the year, the value of the manor house stood firm at £7.5m. The country house market has settled down from the frenetic activity seen in 2020 and 2021, where rocketing demand for prime country houses in a typically stagnant market rebased prices in most regions to a new level. Like the wider residential market, this growth was sustained through much of 2022. Most significantly, the increasing cost of finance has introduced more caution to the market. Coupled with inflated seller expectations, transactions have slowed.

Commercial: -0.8%

Reflecting challenges in the commercial sector, the value of the estate's commercial assets fell by 0.8% year-on-year. High-quality city centre offices have led the post-pandemic office market recovery, while out-of-town and secondary stock (such as on the estate) has underperformed. A harsh economic backdrop, together with the ongoing long-term structural shifts in demand accelerated by the pandemic, has generated uncertainties in future levels of occupation and constrained growth in asset values.

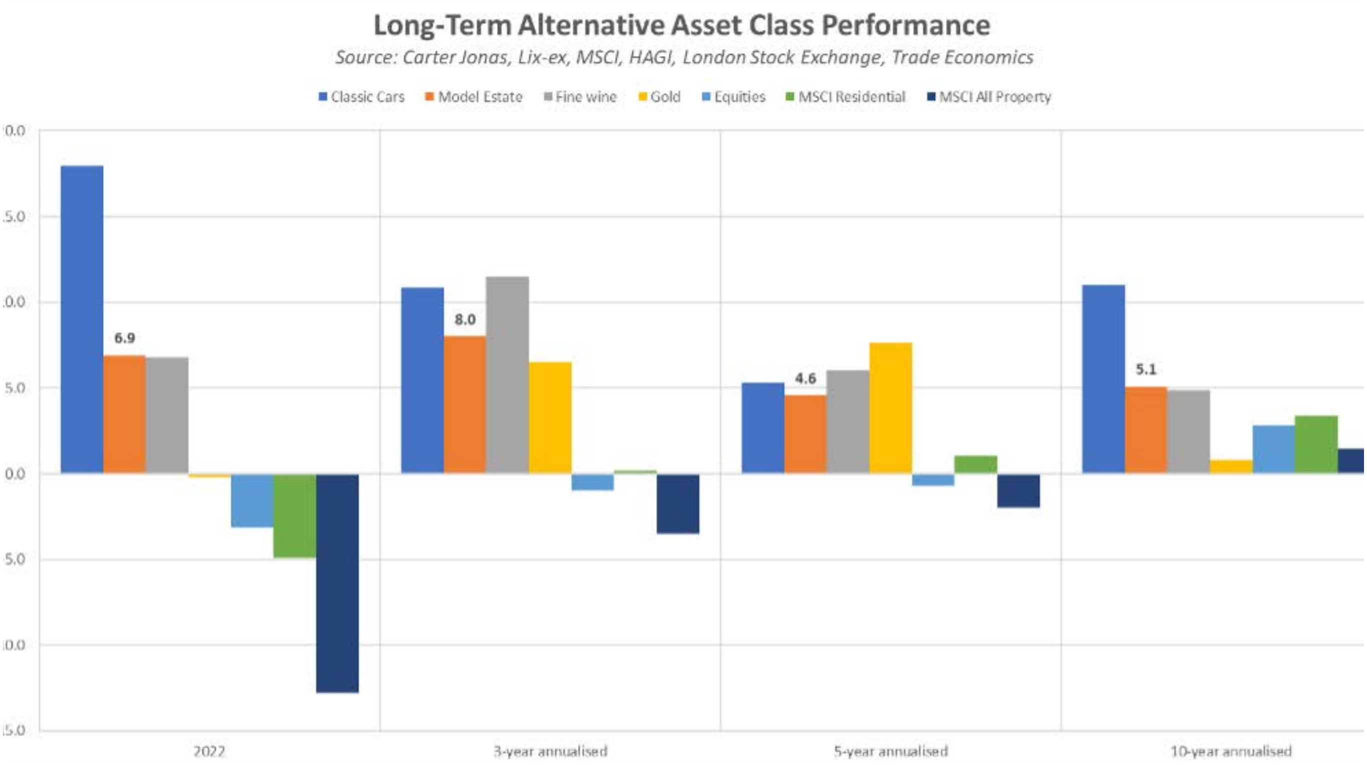
The industrial rental market, which saw remarkable performance in 2021, has eased over the last year. Rising operating costs, labour shortages and supply-chain concerns have impacted the rental market, and annual rent growth has decelerated from record highs. Further, activity in the investment market has fallen away sharply and capital values have plummeted. However, a shortage of development and growing lack of stock will continue to act as a constraint on take-up and support yields in the near-term.

Rent reviews on the estate in 2022 have resulted in unchanged rents for the office units, all of which remain occupied. Tenants cited ample parking and access to open spaces as valuable features which have had a positive influence on employee sentiment. Conversely, the industrial spaces have been more problematic with two tenants leaving and one unit remaining vacant. The other unit (8,073 sq ft) has been relet at a reduced rate of £3.90/sq ft, representing a decrease of 8.2% from the previous tenancy.

Model estate against alternative asset class rankings

When ranked against a range of alternative investments for growth in value in 2022, the model estate outperformed almost all assets and ranked second. The bank of assets includes fine wine, gold, classic cars, equities, residential property and commercial property.

The only asset class to see stronger growth than the estate was classic cars,



where the HAGI Top Index reported a 18.0% annual increase, the fastest rate in nine years. Although many challenges existed for the classic cars market in 2022, such as rocketing fuel prices and disrupted supply chains for parts, there were still record sales and significant, high-ticket transactions.

The fine wine market was also bullish in 2022. The Liv-ex Fine Wine 100 index increased by 6.8% year-on-year, after reaching a record high in September, just below the Model Estate's 6.9%. The market's strong performance from late 2020 onwards has brought an influx of new players, typically high-net-worth individuals, who have been looking to fine wine to diversify their investment portfolios. Over the longer term, both classic cars and fine wine have witnessed impressive growth, with 10-year annualised growth rates of 11.0% and 4.9% respectively.

In the face of political and economic headwinds, many assets had a volatile year and saw an overall decrease in value. Despite falling steeply throughout most of the year, the gold market rebounded in Q4 and ended the year down just -0.2%. An increase in demand from central banks and institutions is a key reason for this bounce back. The equities market, measured using the FTSE All-Share index, also had a turbulent year and decreased in value overall by 3.2%. Prices plummeted by 15.1% from its peak in February to its low in October, then jumped 11.5% in the last quarter.

2022 represented a year of price corrections for the commercial and housing markets, reflected in the MSCI Quarterly Index (Morgan Stanley) for residential and all (mainly commercial) property. While MSCI reports capital values for the residential investment sector to have dropped by 4.9% over the year, the MSCI all property index decreased by a substantial 12.8%. Industrial assets saw the greatest fall in value (-17.4%), and no property sub-group (retail, office, industrial, residential, hotel and 'other') recorded an annual increase.

NET ZERO CONSTRUCTION Building green on net zero construction projects

Harry Dyson harry.dyson@uk.zurich.com

Harry is an Associate in the Construction Professionals group, with experience in the defence of construction professional indemnity claims and related insurance disputes. He is also a Solicitor (secondee at Zurich Professional Indemnity Team) – Professional Indemnity and Legal Indemnities.

Before joining Clyde & Co, Harry worked at another city law firm during which period he was an active member of the Contractors Legal Group (the leading umbrella association for main contractors) and the JCT Council (producer of a comprehensive range of standard forms of contract for construction, guidance notes and other standard documentation for use in the construction industry in the United Kingdom).

Clyde & Co's professional practice lawyers have intimate understanding of the commercial, reputation and regulatory pressures faced by their clients. This enables the firm to provide targeted risk management advice to suit each situation.

Harry kindly agreed to prepare this article after presenting to an online Eastern branch meeting. The construction industry is responsible both for substantial energy consumption and emissions. To achieve net zero, innovations in materials, construction and design will be required, but Harry explains that this comes with a health warning of potential litigation. However: "If innovation is stifled, that may paradoxically risk the industry falling behind the curve on achieving its net zero goals."

The risks posed by climate change represent the defining crisis of our generation. As a result, it is no surprise that the environment and the need for sustainability are increasingly infiltrating commercial industries.

Construction and the built environment are huge contributors to the climate crisis, which makes the sector a prime target for reform. Active measures are already being taken to make the UK building industry less harmful to the environment – however, these steps are in their nascence.

In October 2021, the UK government published its Net Zero Strategy with the intention of reaching net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. As part of those endeavours, we can expect to see greener construction methodologies, materials and designs become the usual course of business. To help plot how those aims may be achieved, towards the end of 2022, a group of leading construction organisations (including RIBA, RICS, Building Research Establishment and UK Green Building Council) collaborated to create the UK's first 'Net Zero Carbon Buildings Standard'.

The intention behind the Standard is to provide companies with a set of neutral criteria against which they can demonstrate that their built assets meet net zero carbon demands. While the Standard still only exists in draft form, its metrics are likely to include energy use, embodied carbon, space heating/cooling demand and peak load, carbon accounting, procuring renewable energy, and the treatment of residual emissions (carbon offsetting). There is a great focus on the energy efficiency of buildings following their completion. Accordingly, it will become more important how something is built as well as what is ultimately built.

This article will explore the impacts on projects that these heightened demands will have, as well as the potential exposure for construction professionals from a claims/litigation perspective.

How are projects built with net zero in mind?

Construction practices can be adapted to manufacture and build in ways which produce less harmful emissions. Four aspects of note which will impact how buildings are constructed in the future are: air pollution, materials used during construction, off-site manufacturing and 'smart' technology.

Air pollution

Most regulation concerning construction processes focuses on the immediate environment around a development. For example, failure to control levels of pollution from machinery may result in statutory liability (including fines and claims for statutory nuisance), as well as claims for common law nuisance.

At the end of 2022, however, the UK Government published its first set of legally binding environment targets – an aim of which is to clean up the air. Companies competing for government contracts worth more than £5m must now provide a carbon reduction plan outlining how they plan to achieve zero emissions by 2050. Developers therefore need to put air quality and carbon emissions at the heart of their projects from the outset.

Materials

Responsible sourcing of materials is required under certain British Standards and BREEAM certification, which takes the form of contractual requirements imposed on designers and contractors.

However, those requirements are otherwise not mandatory. At present there is little regulation in the UK addressing the environmental impact of construction materials, although this is likely to change. Legislation relating to construction products has focused on waste, resource efficiency and more recently, on seeking to ensure that construction products comply with appropriate safety standards. As focus shifts towards climate change issues, construction companies may be compelled to consider new technologies to meet their targets (such as green concrete and dynamic glass).

These developments are likely to be ushered through by the introduction of voluntary standards which may then gradually become industry norms. An example of this more generally in relation to climate change is the revised Publicly Available Specification 2080 (PAS 2080: 2023), published by the BSI. PAS 2080 specifies the standards for managing whole-life carbon in building and infrastructure, with the aim to reduce carbon and cost through intelligent design, construction and use of materials. PAS 2080 is named in the government's Construction Playbook (which applies to all public works projects and programmes) and is promoted by industry bodies such as the Construction Leadership Council. While only optional in principle, it is becoming increasingly common for PAS 2080 to be cited in specifications and construction contracts.

Broadly speaking, however, regulation has traditionally lagged behind market best-practice. As such, with the accelerated influx of new technologies, it is to be seen whether and how regulation will be able to keep pace – and from a legal perspective, how the benchmark for reasonable skill and care may be determined.

Off-site manufacturing

One of the emerging trends for 2023 is the shift from the traditional on-site skilled labour to automated, off-site

How are projects built with Net Zero in mind?

Off-site manufacturing

- Laing O'Rourke's off-site manufacturing facility in Nottingham:
  - Reduce waste materials
  - Reduce on-site labour and CO_2 emissions associated with transport
  - Increase precision manufacturing (minimise scale and variety of defects)
- BUT:
  - expensive to build off site
  - concerns over relevant experience
  - possible issues over risk allocation

How are projects built with Net Zero in mind?

Smart Technology

Sara Kulturhus Centre, Sweden

- World's second-tallest wooden tower
- Carbon negative over its lifetime
- Heated by a geothermal pump and powered by solar panels

UK GREEN BUILDING COUNCIL

modular builds. One of the leading contractors in this space operates an off-site manufacturing facility in Nottingham. The facility is the largest of its kind in Europe and has already been involved in more than 350 UK building and infrastructure projects.

Off-site manufacturing involves fabricating elements of a building in factories away from site and then assembling them on site. Among other things, it aims to: (i) reduce waste materials; (ii) reduce on-site labour and CO2 emissions associated with transporting goods to site; and (iii) increase precision manufacturing, which should reduce the scale and variety of defects which arise and therefore reduce the remedial works required.

Despite its many benefits, off-site construction also presents challenges to the sector. For example, it can be more expensive to build off-site; as designs are embedded, errors can be replicated on a wide scale before being realised; and there are issues over the allocation of risk (a tension between a consultant's design and the product as-built).

Smart technology

The use of smart technology can help the drive to 'build green', whether by improving the efficiency of energy usage or predicting when maintenance will be required.

Take the Sara Kulturhus Centre in Sweden, for example (see images). The Kulturhus is a timber development featuring the world's second-tallest wooden tower and comprises a theatre, gallery, library, museum and a hotel. The development was built using sustainable materials and hopes to be carbon negative over its lifetime. It is a laudable example of how alternative technologies and alternatively sourced materials can be used in multifunctional and commercial premises.

However, there is a natural concern that with innovation follows a greater liability risk – particularly where materials may carry inherent risks, for example, fire safety implications. Innovations that do not live up to expectations and the use of new technologies that are not fully understood will unavoidably present challenges for the industry (as well as the legal and insurance market). It is for that reason, the use of unique or untried materials to delivering better ecological and cost outcomes may instil a degree of trepidation into the management and legal teams of construction firms.

Claims facing construction professionals

One of the most hotly felt ramifications of net zero contracts will be the claims brought against construction professionals. Of considerable concern is the inclusion in some design and build contracts of the requirement for a design to be in accordance with prescribed criteria.

The MT *Hojgaard* ([2017] UKSC 59) case, which went to the Supreme Court in 2017, held that the contractor had an obligation to ensure that wind turbine foundations were designed to last 20 years under a fitness for purpose specification in the contract. This was so, even though: (i) it transpired this was always impossible, due to a fundamental error in the relevant global industry-wide design standard; and (ii) the contractor/designer, exercising reasonable skill and care, could not have known there was a fundamental error with the standards. The case affirms that the courts are generally inclined to give full effect to a requirement that a product/service complies with the parties' contractual terms. As such, it is crucial for construction professionals to scrutinise applicable standards in conjunction with design proposals before agreeing to be bound by them. This is particularly so where the standards are in relation to new or relatively untested technologies.

Other possible claims could arise out of a construction professional trying to achieve a new 'sustainable' design or using new products which go beyond their expertise and experience. An example of a design that might present a risk are 'blue roofs'. These are designed to store rainwater above the waterproofing element of the roof as opposed to more conventional roofs which allow for rainwater to drain off. Benefits of blue roofs can include alleviating flooding caused by stormwater run-off; and harvesting of rainwater, which can be used for irrigation of a green roof and other purposes. However, if the waterproofing membrane element is incorrectly specified or inadequately installed, the consequences could be catastrophic. Construction professionals involved in the development or review of atypical designs will need to be prudent and assess all potential issues as early as possible – flagging the risks new or untried/untested products may have in the long term.

Net zero litigation – predicted trends

The key areas for tackling climate change and achieving net zero in the construction industry will likely concentrate on: (i) the specification and use of materials; and (ii) the energy use of the completed building once it is occupied. It would follow, therefore, that these may also be the focus of litigation going forward.

If construction professionals want to minimise the risk of becoming involved in climate-related disputes, they will need proactively to assess risk. The management teams of construction firms may therefore look to reflect the following considerations:

1. How are climate change risks being dealt with (e.g., embracing innovation challenges or honouring traditional methods until practices are more tried and tested)?
2. How are climate and litigation risks identified, measured, monitored and managed (e.g., amending standard form contracts as necessary)?
3. What actions can be taken within to address these risks (e.g., increased peer/external consultant review for any use of new design/materials)?
4. Are new data and metrics needed to assess, monitor and manage climate and litigation risks (e.g., ascertaining whether there is an increase in certain patterns of claims)?

Conclusion

There are huge positives to pursuing carbon-zero ideals in the construction industry. Contractors will need to be aware of CO_2 and other emissions from the outset of projects and when developing their designs. Consideration will need to be given to the materials used in construction, the building's ultimate whole-life carbon footprint, as well as how the building will be updated or replaced once it has exhausted its design life. There will be a greater motivation for project teams to design and construct long-lasting, energy efficient and aesthetically pleasing buildings. The carbon footprint of a building diminishes the longer it lasts. If a building is widely considered an eyesore or an energy drain, there is a greater chance that it will be pulled down before it has fulfilled its design life so that a new build can be erected in its place. Evidently that will fly in the face of achieving net zero.

However, there are unavoidable downsides that the net zero demands will have. The real risks posed by claims and litigation arising from embarking on these novel, enviro-friendly projects will require cautious risk and exposure assessments. This may deter certain construction professionals from embracing the changes (out of fear of being sued or lack of resource) and so may stifle innovation. If innovation is stifled, that may paradoxically risk the industry falling behind the curve on achieving its net zero goals. Failure to carry out thorough due diligence on an untried and untested technology may also mean that claims arise out of a construction professional trying to achieve a new sustainable design, or using new products which is beyond their expertise.

All in all, the future landscape is uncertain and one that will have to be closely monitored.

Author's note:

This publication provides general information and is not intended to be comprehensive, or to provide legal advice. Professional advice appropriate to a specific situation should always be sought. Clyde & Co LLP accepts no responsibility for loss occasioned to any person acting or refraining from acting on material contained in this publication.

SUSTAINABLE ENERGY USE
Sustainable energy use within buildings

Tony Gresty tony.gresty@westbrook-industrial.co.uk

Tony was a speaker at a recent ACES' Eastern Branch meeting. He agreed to provide an article, together with a best practice case study of how warehouse assets can become greener – much of this advice is applicable to local authority property assets.

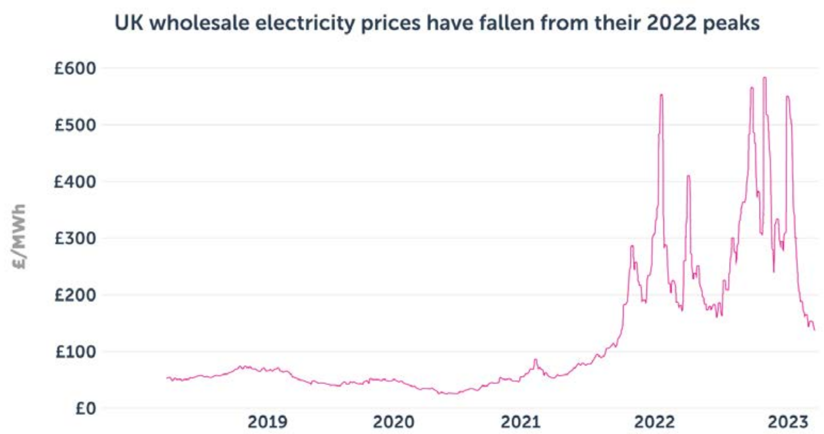
Tony is the Managing Director of ASG Energy Services Ltd., designing and installing solar and energy products and services predominantly to the warehouse and logistics industry. He launched his parent Company ASG Services some 26 years ago and in 2022, launched the ASG Energy business, providing energy solutions such as solar panels and LED lighting solutions as a joint venture with Perfect Sense Limited, who have been in renewable energy for 12 years.

The energy market, 2022 to 2030

2022 saw the beginnings of expensive prices, mainly due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Approaching winter, prices spiked further. However, prices began to plummet after winter 2022 and risk began to drop out of pricing.

The energy market in 2023 showed that both Russia and China were countries to watch for lower prices in the short term. Supplier risk has now largely receded. A new price floor may have been found, along with greater seasonal deviations. But there are no signs of any changes to energy prices at the moment.

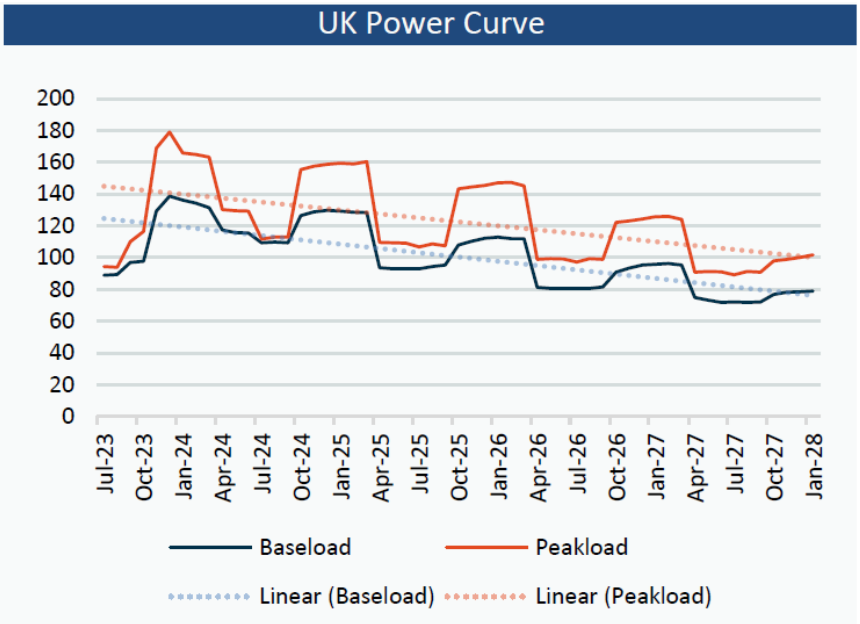
In the longer term until 2030, it is anticipated that these expensive prices will drop slightly for the next 12 months; very little change is anticipated for the following 7 years (Source: Energy prices to remain significantly above average up to 2030 and beyond - Cornwall Insight (cornwall-insight.com) . Contract options for users are to review options early, take a long-term view and look for opportunities to reduce usage, and buy green.



Today's proven technologies

The graphic (on page 62) illustrates the proven technologies available today:

- Solar PV – this can reduce operating costs, increase profits, and be protected against inevitable future energy price rises. Solar can benefit from a 20-40% return on investment and a 3-5 year total payback period. It reduces carbon emissions, and demonstrates your green credentials, particularly as so many councils have declared net zero targets. It is also an easy way to improve the building's EPC rating
- LED lighting - has rapidly developed over the last 10 years and has now come of age, and is easily controllable, with facilities including occupancy sensor switches and daylight dimming switches. Lighting can be upgraded to LED in almost every area of the workplace; offices, factories, warehouses and car parks
- Electric vehicles and charging onsite – EVs are becoming increasingly



common in the modern day shift to sustainability. EV chargers on site will help employees and vehicle fleets to benefit from reduced costs and reduced carbon output. When paired with a solar PV system, Smart Charges can ensure vehicles are charged when it is most efficient, meaning less wasted energy and less reliance on grid power

- Far infrared heating - is radiant heat; it's the same as the feeling of warmth from the sun on your face and the heat from a coal fire. It is even the same form of heat emitted by your own body. Today, new technology, in the form of our 100% energy efficient far infrared heating panels, is allowing us to use radiant heating once more in a stylish, comfortable, and highly controllable way. Another easy win for MEES and getting a building off gas if you have zone working. An under-desk version is possible for offices.

Technologies for the near future?

This second graphic shows some of the technologies to integrate into energy savings in the near future

- Bi-directional electric vehicle chargers will be a massive game changer, both residentially and commercially. Bus companies are looking at this already
- Heat pumps - there is a mixed response to heat pumps. They have limitations, especially in cold weather. But the biggest issue is having to rip out what's already there, and they can be big consumers of electricity, so may not be as efficient as anticipated. Residentially, I don't think these are the answer
- Hydrogen - Fossil fuel companies promote hydrogen as the vast majority comes from grey, brown or black (see table). Carbon capture is not yet a viable means of storing carbon. The biggest issue facing hydrogen is a massive lack of infrastructure to make it in enough quantity to make a difference in time to keep temperature rises below 1.5 degrees.

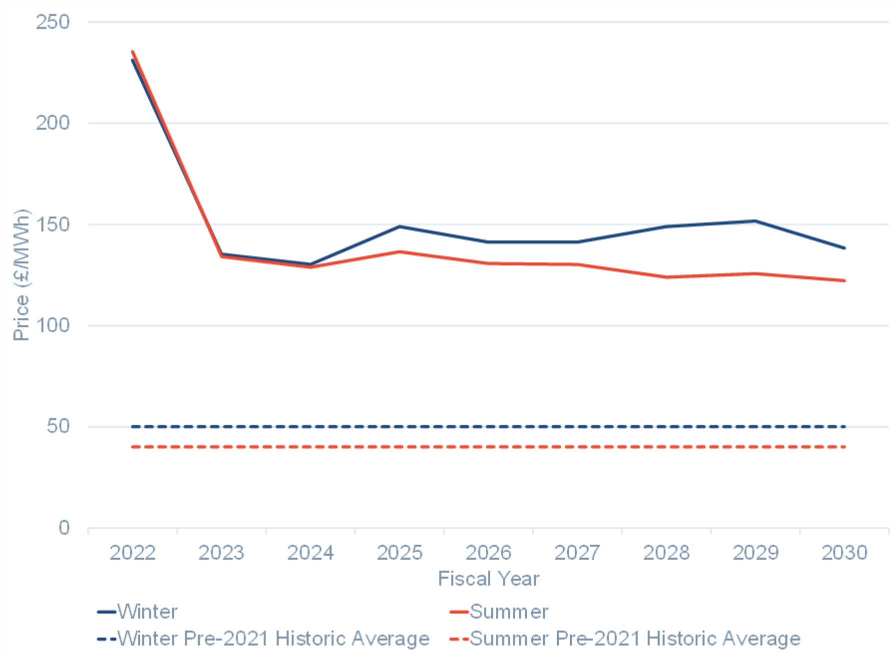
Annual warehouse best practices when becoming greener

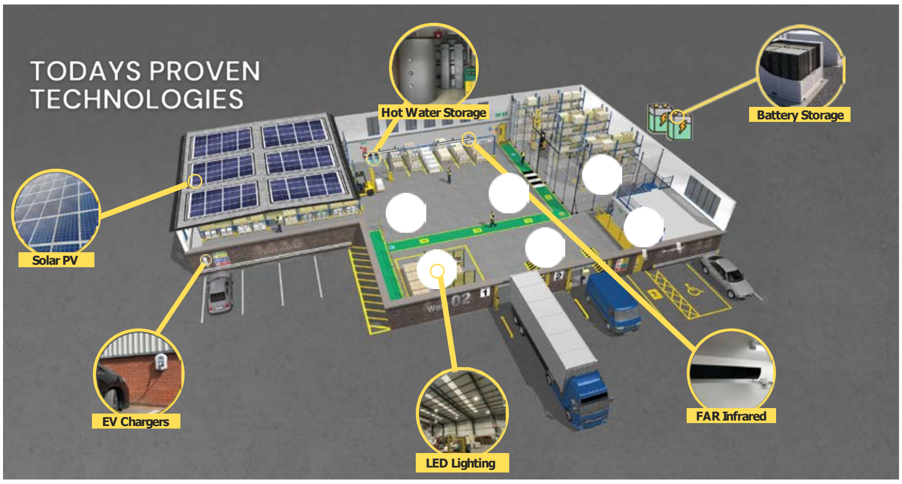
As the world becomes more conscious of its environmental impact, businesses are increasingly adopting sustainable practices. Warehouses, as hubs for storage and distribution, consume substantial amounts of energy and resources. To address these challenges, practices in the warehouse can be implemented to create greener, more sustainable operations.

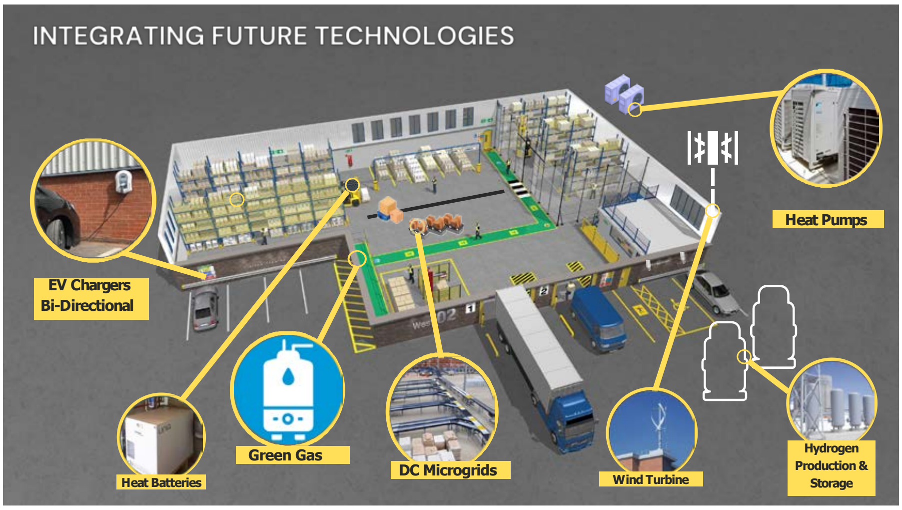
<u>Implementing renewable energy sources</u>

To become greener, warehouses can take advantage of renewable energy sources to power their operations. One effective approach is the installation of solar panels on the roofs of warehouses. Solar panels harness the power of the sun to generate clean and renewable energy. By generating their electricity on-site, warehouses can significantly reduce their reliance on traditional energy sources and decrease their carbon emissions.

The installation of solar panels offers several benefits to warehouses. First and foremost, it allows them to offset a portion or even the entirety of their electricity consumption with clean energy. This not only reduces their carbon footprint, but also contributes to the overall sustainability of the facility (EPC Rating). Additionally, solar energy systems can provide long-term cost savings by reducing reliance on grid electricity and mitigating the impact of fluctuating energy prices.







Fuels used and ways to make hydrogen

	Terminology	Technology	Feedstock/ Electricity source	GHG footprint*
PRODUCTION VIA ELECTRICITY	Green Hydrogen	Electrolysis	Wind | Solar | Hydro Geothermal | Tidal	Minimal
	Purple/Pink Hydrogen		Nuclear	
	Yellow Hydrogen		Mixed-origin grid energy	Medium
PRODUCTION VIA FOSSIL FUELS	Blue Hydrogen	Natural gas reforming + CCUS Gasification + CCUS	Natural gas | coal	Low
	Turquoise Hydrogen	Pyrolysis	Natural gas	Solid carbon (by-product)
	Grey Hydrogen	Natural gas reforming		Medium
	Brown Hydrogen	Gasification	Brown coal (lignite)	High

To optimise the benefits of solar energy, warehouses can consider integrating energy storage systems. These systems allow excess energy generated during periods of high solar production to be stored for later use. Energy storage solutions, such as batteries, enable warehouses to have a reliable and continuous power supply, further enhancing their sustainability and reducing dependency on the grid.

Energy-efficient LED lighting solutions

Traditional lighting systems can be inefficient and consume a substantial amount of electricity. However, by transitioning to energy-efficient lighting solutions, warehouses can achieve notable energy savings and promote sustainability.

LEDs offer numerous advantages over traditional lighting options. They have a longer lifespan, which reduces the need for frequent replacements and lowers maintenance costs. Moreover, LED lights consume significantly less energy, while providing the same or even better illumination compared to traditional bulbs. This translates to substantial energy savings and reduced electricity bills for warehouses.

To optimise energy usage further, warehouses can implement motion sensors and smart lighting systems. Motion sensors detect movement within specific areas of the warehouse and automatically turn on the lights only when necessary. This prevents unnecessary energy consumption in unoccupied spaces. Similarly, smart lighting systems utilise advanced controls and sensors to adjust lighting levels based on ambient light conditions, occupancy, and other factors. These technologies ensure that lights are only used when needed, leading to additional energy efficiency improvements.

Integrating future technologies into warehouses

Integrating future technologies into warehouses paves the way for even greater sustainability and efficiency:

- Bi-directional EV chargers, for instance, not only allow electric vehicles to charge but also enable the vehicles to supply power back to the warehouse grid during peak demand periods
- Heat batteries provide a means of storing excess thermal energy generated within the warehouse, which can be utilised for heating purposes during colder periods
- Wind turbines harness the power of the wind to generate clean electricity, reducing dependence on traditional power sources
- Hydrogen production and storage systems offer a promising avenue for storing and utilising hydrogen as a clean energy source for various warehouse operations
- Battery storage technologies ensure the efficient use of renewable energy by

storing excess power generated from sources like solar panels for later use

- Hot water storage systems capture and store heat, providing a renewable and sustainable source of hot water for the warehouse's heating and operational needs.

Integrating these future technologies not only contributes to environmental sustainability but also enhances the overall efficiency and resilience of warehouses in the face of evolving energy demands.

Final thoughts

If you want to know what scientists say about global warming and climate change, read Greta Thunberg's 'The Climate Book'. When it comes to the climate emergency, there is no such thing as a slow victory!

Lesley is a Director, Innovation & Insight in Avison Young's Market Intelligence team and is responsible for developing the firm's research capabilities in the industrial and retail sector, as well as supporting the existing team's track record of producing industry-leading analysis and insight.

Lesley has 25 years of cross-industry experience covering retail, technology, and business services. Prior to joining Avison Young, Lesley was the Head of Research at Capita plc, where she provided strategic support across five business divisions. Previous to this, she was Head of Research at proptech firm, Datscha, where she was responsible for reporting and commentating on trends and insights within the commercial property investment market. She has also worked at CBRE and within Tesco's property division.

SHOPPING CENTRES REVISITED

Lesley Males lesley.males@avisonyoung.com

Lesley paints a bleak but realistic picture of the plight of the UK's shopping centres. However, there are some indications that things may be improving in some centres and locations, especially where diversification of uses is happening.

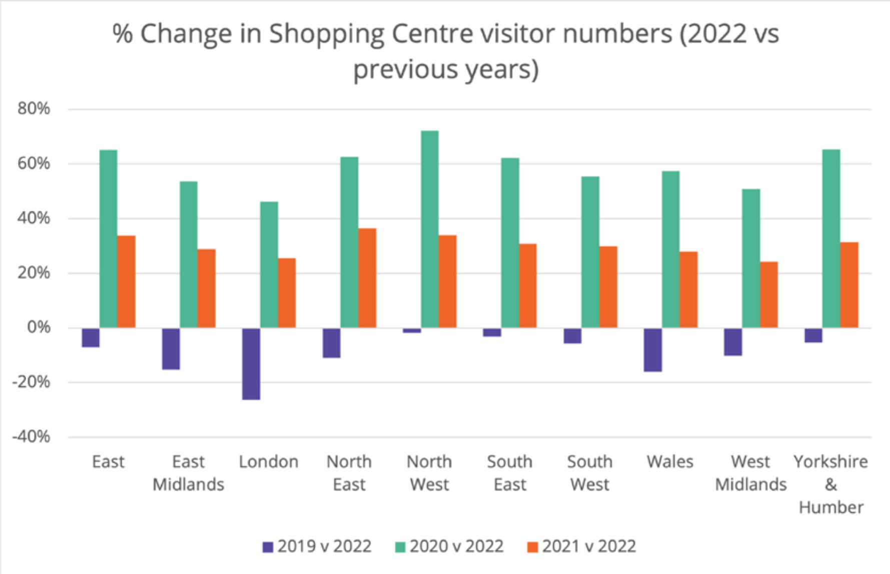
The struggles facing shopping centres, even prior to the pandemic, have been well documented. With over 680 shopping centres across the country, it is clear that there is an over-supply of shopping centre space, with many assets being old, tired or in need of redevelopment. Their exposure to department stores, many of which anchored shopping centres, as well as many of the other high street chains which have gone into administration, combined with the impact of people buying less in stores, has all contributed to the decline of the asset class. Over the last 10 years, vacancy rates have remained higher than on high streets and on retail parks. On top of this, visitor numbers have declined, rents have decreased, and capital values have plummeted. So, what is the outlook for shopping centres and is there hope for a recovery?

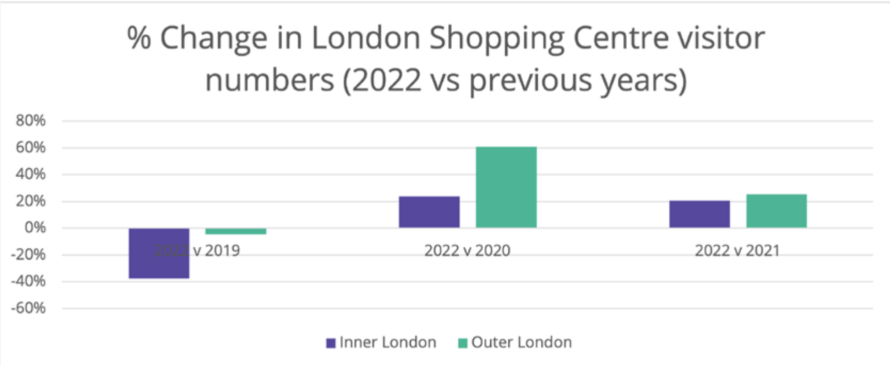
Challenges continue to be driven by high vacancy rates, changing consumer shopping habits and expensive operating costs

On average, the current vacancy rate for shopping centres across the UK stands at 18.2%, according to the latest data from the Local Data Company, but almost one in ten of them have vacancy rates of over 40%, which is causing significant headaches for landlords on how to fill these void spaces, during a time when some retailers are shrinking their estates.

Service charges on top of high rents, and high business rates, have also forced some retailers to exit these locations. A recent article by Drapers revealed that service charges could increase by up to 25%, driven by inflation and energy prices, and as a result, some occupiers are requesting service charges to be capped in order to limit these cost liabilities. This is likely to force more retailers to exit shopping centres as the increasing costs create a downwards spiral effect – the reduced number of tenants will likely result in lower footfall, thereby impacting store sales, which could eventually render the store unviable.

The strength of performance at retail parks over the last few years have also been detrimental to shopping centres. Some of the UK's biggest retailers, including Next and Marks & Spencer, have changed their strategy and are actively relocating to larger out-of-town units on competing retail parks, where footfall has almost recovered to pre-pandemic levels, as part of store rationalisation programmes. Service charges at retail parks are also significantly lower, while vacancy rates remain at record-low levels of around 4.5%, according to Avison Young's data. They are attracting more and more customers, driven by factors such as free parking, click and collect facilities, and a wide mix of tenants, which often includes essential retailers such as the major grocers.





Source: Visitor Insights

Is it all bad news though?

Despite these issues, there is some positive news. Vacancy rates in shopping centres are slowly declining - take-up of units in shopping centres recorded its best performance since 2013, resulting in a year-on-year decrease in vacancy rate of 0.9%. The impending business rate revaluation will also deliver some much needed relief for tenants; in Dartford, which is home to Bluewater Shopping Centre, retail business rates will fall by 38%.

Shopping centres also appear to be of growing interest to retailers as an investment opportunity. Recently the Frasers Group acquired the Overgate Centre in Dundee and the Mall in Luton for around £90m, while Ikea is reported to be purchasing the Churchill Square Shopping Centre in Brighton for more than £175m.

Some of the prime shopping centres are also recovering well. Earlier this year, Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield, the owner of both Westfield shopping centres in London, announced strong trading results for 2022 and hailed the end of the 'Covid effect', citing tenant sales across its shopping centres in Europe back to pre-pandemic levels. The Trafford Centre in Manchester has seen JD Sports relocate to a larger unit, which is now the brand's biggest store in the UK, and Marks & Spencer will relocate from its existing 87,000 sq. ft store into the vacant 135,000 sq. ft former Debenhams store later this year. In March this year, Grosvenor announced that Liverpool One saw a 16.5% uplift in sales in the first two months of 2023, compared to the same period in 2022.

Visitor numbers continue to increase

Visitor numbers to many retail locations across the country are still recovering following the pandemic, but there has been a steady increase throughout 2022 of shoppers returning to physical store locations. Avison Young has analysed visitor numbers across selected shopping centres across the country, comparing 2022 data with previous years, to measure the extent of this recovery. It showed that visitor numbers to shopping centres are still well below 2019 levels, especially those shopping centres that are located in town centres, where visitor numbers were down 15%.

London has seen the slowest recovery compared to other locations, on average, down by 26% compared to 2019. The situation was worse in centres located in inner London, where visitor numbers were down by 38% on average. Given its status as a global city, this is not surprising as central London attracts visitors from a wide catchment, particularly from overseas. According to data from the Greater London Authority, there were 11.2m overseas arrivals in 2022 – almost half of the pre-pandemic level of 21.7m, which had a huge impact on retail spend. In the outer boroughs, it appears the impact has been lessened, likely due to some of these centres catering for local residents and home to essential retailers such as supermarkets and local services. Hybrid working will also be a factor, as workers are typically coming in to central London offices an average of 2-3 days per week – something also benefitting the outer boroughs, as commuters spend more time and money in their local communities than they did back in 2019.

Change in tenant mix

As a result of the vast amounts of empty space, landlords are having to be more innovative in terms of the tenant mix to fill the vacant spaces. There has been increasing interest in the change of use of some of the vacant space into other alternative uses such as healthcare, education, and residential, as well as an increasing number of leisure tenants moving into vacant units over the last couple of years, which is helping to increase footfall.

The former Debenhams store at the Southside Shopping Centre in Wandsworth was converted into entertainment brand Gravity's first 'active entertainment experience' venue in 2021; it has helped deliver a 31% increase in the number of visitors to the shopping centre between 2021 and 2022. Following its success, Gravity has now secured a second site at the former Debenhams at Liverpool One which is expected to open later this year. At the Whitgift Centre in Croydon, an education start-up company, Working Class, has been appointed to take 150,000 sq ft of space "to create an education-based anchor for the Whitgift Centre, featuring a high street

campus with retail and leisure uses run by students on the ground floor with lecture/classroom space above".

What next?

There is no one solution to the problems faced by shopping centre owners – every location has its own unique characteristics and challenges. There are many shopping centres which will continue to remain popular among consumers, and those that are managed well and cater for the local demographic should continue to perform well. For those centre owners suffering from high levels of vacant space, especially those in need of redevelopment, landlords will have to think creatively and work with local authorities, local businesses and other regeneration experts in order to create a thriving location to suit the needs of the local community.

Edward is an Associate in Knight Frank's Rural Consultancy team, specialising in corporate and institutional advisory services. He supports a number of public bodies, charities and corporate entities with their rural estate matters, advising on a broad range of subjects including environmental projects, health and safety, tenancy management, restructuring and diversification.

NATURAL CAPITAL OPPORTUNITIES Making the most of natural capital

Edward Holloway MSc MRICS Edward.Holloway@knightfrank.com

Edward makes some pointers towards how landowners can capitalise on opportunities to improve the environment, work in partnership, and improve finances on their landed estates.

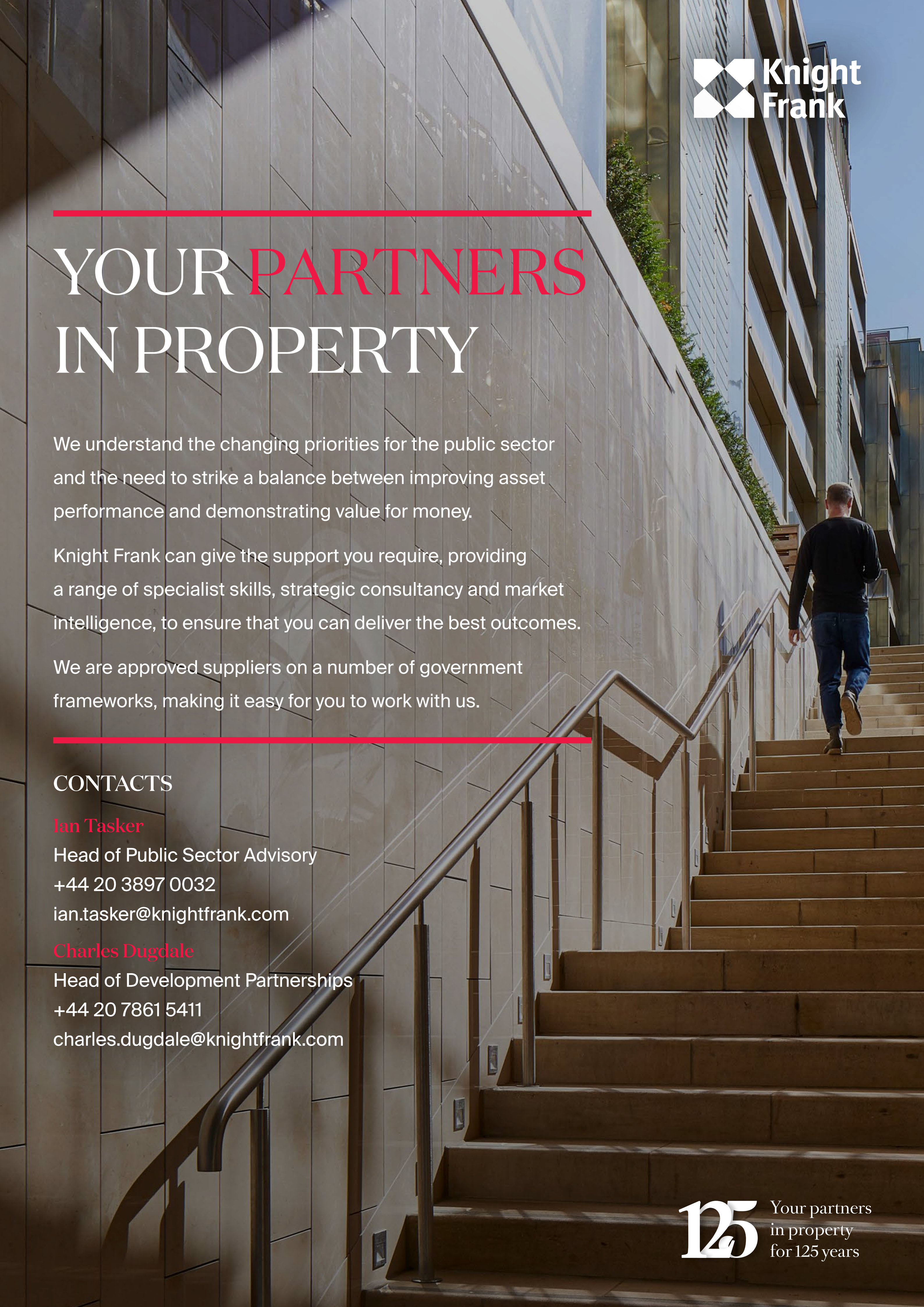
Making the most of natural capital

Much of Britain's countryside is owned by 'non-traditional property owners', that is to say entities such as pension funds, utility companies, local authorities and other public bodies, institutions, charities and many others.

Each of these rural custodians will have different ownership objectives and varying levels of engagement with the land that they own. That said, one thing they generally have in common is that they do not often farm the land in-hand, instead relying on tenants to look after it. From my experience, this arms-length relationship can sometimes mean that opportunities to maximise the value – or realise the potential – of the land are often overlooked or inhibited. Natural capital, the new up-and-coming Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) asset class, is a good example of this. So, how can this be avoided and the most be made of the opportunities presented?

1.Baseline and value your natural capital opportunity – don't undersell

It may sound obvious, but it is impossible to create a natural capital strategy without knowing what you have at your disposal and how much it might be worth. There are several providers who can provide a baseline natural capital survey and most of the work can be conducted remotely using satellite and other existing data. As a result, extensive negotiations with tenants are not required, although to be really accurate, a certain amount of ground-truthing would ideally be utilised. Once you have your baseline results, you are in a better position to work out what to do with the natural capital, whether that be to create tradeable carbon, biodiversity or nutrient neutrality credits, helping you to hit your wider organisation's own net zero ambitions, incorporating it into your Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)/ESG activities, or using it as an opportunity to restructure the relationship with your tenants (see point 3 below).



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125 Your partners in property for 125 years

A large number of organisations, with varying degrees of credibility, have emerged over recent years offering to pay you for your natural capital. Using them to broker your newly identified natural capital may sound like the most convenient approach, but it may not maximise value.

Also, consider how much of your natural capital you will need to retain to satisfy your own requirements such as net zero and CSR ambitions. Larger corporate or institutional landowners with a strong reputation, or an emerging brand, may be in a position to do something more creative with any natural capital that is surplus to their own requirements. This could involve selling a bespoke package of nature-based solutions to an organisation needing to satisfy its corporate ESG strategy.

2. Take note of policy direction

We do not know for certain what is going to happen in the increasingly intertwined world of agricultural and environmental policy and forthcoming legislation. However, we need to recognise some overarching themes that seem to have prevailed and be supported by the major political parties in the UK and globally. It appears unlikely that we will witness a complete change from a trajectory that appears set and is being reinforced through internationally endorsed bodies, such as the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosure (TNFD). According to the TNFD, more than half the world's economic output – some US$44 trillion – is either moderately or highly dependent on nature.

Financial institutions and corporations do not currently have the information they need to understand how nature impacts their immediate financial performance, or the longer-term financial risks arising from how the organisation impacts nature. The idea is that better information will allow organisations to incorporate nature related risks and opportunities into their strategic planning, risk management, and asset allocation decisions.

Assessing and reviewing your core objectives, duties, purpose and/or business model will be a requirement in the face of change. Few may realise but since 1 January 2023, all public authorities (in the course of delivering their functions) must have regard to conserving and enhancing biodiversity. Measuring impact and harnessing data and new metrics will be key. The enhanced biodiversity duty is a step change and should be interpreted as a signal of intent by government.

3. Build relationships – internal and external

As mentioned previously, much of the farmland owned by institutions and corporate entities is farmed by tenants. The temptation can be to manage these relationships fairly passively, or via an agent who handles various matters in isolation. However, the growing awareness of the opportunities presented by natural capital, and the grave consequences of continuing with the status quo in the face of the climate and biodiversity crises, requires a higher level of engagement.

Unsurprisingly, given that it did not exist as a concept when the legislation behind them was created, tenancy agreements are pretty inconclusive when it comes to the treatment of natural capital. This means that it can be extremely difficult to convince either landlord or tenant to consider anything other than the status quo in terms of farming practices. Aligning the aspirations of landlord and tenant may require difficult conversations, but the benefits to both parties could be worth the effort. For example, a healthy relationship between the parties could lead to the adoption of regenerative and sustainable farming practices which could in turn be beneficial to the farm, aid profitability or the environment, or unlock potential new environmental income streams that could be shared between both landlord and tenant.

Similarly, large organisations can be highly compartmentalised and perhaps not realise the synergies in front of them by relying on their existing teams. All too often, whether by accident or design, different parts of the entity can become siloed, and opportunities accruing in one part of the organisation, that could benefit other parts of it, can be overlooked.

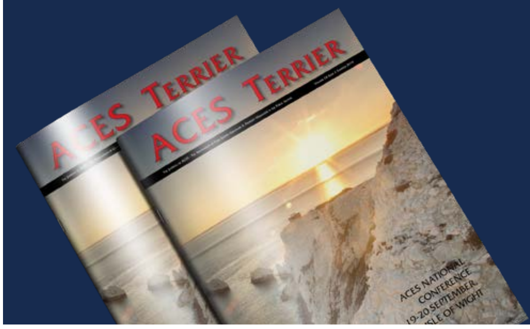
4. Make more of third-party funding opportunities

There is a plethora of grant opportunities available for rural property-owning businesses that want to help the planet, but generally they are claimed by individual farmers. However, many of them are just as applicable to institutional or corporate landowners. Indeed, organisational scale will be an advantage when it comes to certain funding streams such as the Landscape Recovery Scheme.

Some of the grants available are well known, but there are a surprising number that aren't widely publicised. A number of farming non-governmental organisations, particularly those focused around research, are also looking to work at scale with partners. We are also finding more corporates and financial institutions are investing in bespoke projects with positive impact, rather than traditional grant-funded landowner projects.

Knight Frank is positioned to help facilitate these investments.

ACES Terrier is published quarterly by ACES. The inclusion of any individual article in the Terrier should not be taken as any indication that ACES approves of or agrees with the contents of the article.



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FACES The Future of the Association of Estate Surveyors

Zamman Sheikh LLB (Hons,) MSc AssocRICS and Neil Webster

ACES National Conference last September ran a panel session on the themes Zamman and Neil outline as key to attracting new talent into surveying in the public sector. The FACES initiative is rapidly gathering momentum, to help young surveyors become chartered, which in turn helps the whole profession. "…we can tap into a diverse pool of individuals who bring fresh perspectives, creativity, and innovative ideas to our organisation."

In our rapidly evolving world, organisations are recognizing the importance of fostering diversity, equality, and knowledge within their ranks and future-proofing their professions. To embrace this mindset, our organisation is proud to report on the progress of our exciting new initiative called FACES – The Future of the Association of Chief Estate Surveyors, which if you would like to think of it, has key themes which follow the acronym: Fostering Advancement, Creating Equality, and Sharing Knowledge.

With FACES, we aim to encourage new talent, promote diversity, and foster a culture of inclusivity within our profession. We are all too clear that many members of ACES are nearing retirement age and the surveying profession, particularly within the public sector, is under-resourced.

Encouraging new talent

One of the key goals of the FACES initiative is actively to seek out and empower new talent, a lot of which is untapped and hidden within our workplaces already! We believe that by widening our recruitment efforts, we can tap into a diverse pool of individuals who bring fresh perspectives, creativity, and innovative ideas to our organisation. By actively supporting and mentoring these new talents, we can help nurture their potential and provide them with opportunities for growth and advancement. We are aware there are already a number of newer surveyors, graduates and apprentices in the public sector whom we are working to integrate within ACES. So far there has been a great turnout and response.

Promoting Equality and Diversity

FACES is dedicated to fostering an environment that celebrates and embraces equality and diversity. We recognize that diversity encourages different viewpoints, promotes innovation, and enables us to better serve our clients and communities. We strive to create an inclusive community and organisation where everyone feels valued, respected, and empowered to contribute their unique perspectives.

Through FACES, we will implement policies and practices that promote opportunities for maintaining the continuity of ACES, advancing FACES and creating higher-skilled individuals. By actively promoting diversity in our workforce, we believe we can better meet the needs of our diverse clientele and community at large.

Sharing Knowledge

Another vital component of FACES is the emphasis on knowledge-sharing. We understand that a successful organisation thrives on continuous learning and development: perhaps one of the key themes and aims of FACES. We have plans for APC support toward charteredship, knowledge sharing between public sector bodies, in order to satisfy and knowledge gaps or technical competencies/skills. As I, like any other younger surveyor, know it is difficult to hit some of those key technical competencies when the exposure may not be there through the employer, through no fault of their own. We are also looking to achieve a good channel and continuity of communication through networking events, whether that be formal or informal.

So what progress have we made so far?

Well in short:

- How many people? Approx 100 people have expressed interest nationally
- We are talking to several corporate partners to provide CPD, networking and APC support
- Carter Jonas is hosting an APC day on 27 July in Leeds. 40 people are registered
- We have expressions of interest from Lambert Smith Hampton and Avison Young to run similar events.

The benefits of such a scheme are self-explanatory. There is so much to gain from such an initiative, not just the mentoring from ACES members passing down knowledge and expertise to FACES members, but also having this reciprocated. We can all learn from each other, which would ultimately allow for:

- Increased knowledge in the public sector
- Higher qualified individuals
- Better service to the public
- Talent retention
- Easing employment and sector issues with the property profession.

Among numerous other benefits!

Lara is Chief Executive of LocatED, a government-owned property company that provides advice on acquisitions, disposals and estates efficiency to educational bodies in the public sector.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SPONSORSHIP

Lara Newman Lara.NEWMAN@Located.co.uk

Lara outlines a round table event held in early April and attended by ACES' Head of Engagement, Neil Webster and Senior Vice President, Sara Cameron. Sponsorship and mentoring are topics ACES is tackling through its FACES group.

Background

In early April at our offices, I hosted a roundtable event with a range of people from across the public and private sector to explore how sponsorship impacts career trajectories.

As background, the Property Leaders Board exists to use a collective voice to advocate for the Government Property Function. It is made up of those leading estates, workplace and property functions across government departments and related arm's length bodies. The Shadow Board is a group of professionals of all grades, again from the property function. Shadow Board representatives attend the Property Leaders Board and aim to bring diverse perspectives to the decision-making process. Each Shadow Board member also acts as a reverse mentor for senior property leaders through a Mutual Mentoring initiative. I am on the Property Leaders Board and also act as Senior Sponsor for the Shadow Board.

This event came about for two reasons: sponsorship was an aspect the Shadow Board wanted to have a conversation about, and also, Real Estate Balance, which LocatED is a member of, has sponsorship as one of its commitments which member chief executives, like me, sign up to.

I have to say, the event was even more illuminating than any of us had expected and threw up a load of further questions on the subject.

If, like many of the people we have been chatting to, you're not sure of the difference between mentoring and sponsorship:

- **Mentoring** is a supportive action and can be characterised as being a more passive form of career support, where the mentor may provide guidance and advice to the mentee on how to navigate challenges. Mentors can be internal or external to the mentee's organisation and at any level – not necessarily more senior, but has the experience to provide help on specific aspects

- **Sponsorship,** however, is proactive and interventional. The sponsor is in the same organisation as the sponsee and advises on very specific career choices and how to advance in the organisation. The sponsor advocates for promotions and stretch assignments; provides opportunities to connect with influential others and work on highly visible projects; and has some real influence over the sponsee's career and usually a direct stake in many cases.

Herminia Ibarra, the Charles Handy Professor of Organisational Behaviour at the London Business School, writing in the Harvard Business Review, summarised this nicely. She outlined the many degrees of sponsorship and different kinds of support: advocating, connecting, opportunity giving and strategising – sharing information that helps sponsees figure out a route to get ahead.

The round table event

At the event, we heard from many participants about their experiences of sponsorship – from those who had benefitted from having a sponsor for 30+ years, to those who had only just started with one. All who had been sponsored recognised the immense benefits of the relationship and were intent on giving back.

However, there was an extremely interesting theme that ran through people's stories – most didn't initially realise that they were being sponsored. Indeed, the sponsor/sponsee relationships that we heard about tended to emerge organically and over time. There is a sense that the sponsorship occurred seemingly by chance. Should we look to see what we can do to remove the element of chance? Or does forcing the issue make these sponsor/sponsee relationships less effective? As I have already noted, most agreed that making a formal pairing was not the way their experiences had started.

Additionally, those in some specific professional roles at the event – in this case legal and town planning – were clear that sponsorship had never been a part of their career development. We wondered if this was because of the very structured nature of the way their careers progress – it seemed odd, and also reflected

comments I have heard from others at LocatED in similar roles when we have discussed this internally. Something to probe further we thought.

So, what does this all tell us about the importance sponsorships play in cultivating a diverse workforce? From the conversation, it also appears that sponsorship is less prevalent within the public sector. Improving sponsorship opportunities should help improve diversity at senior levels, something which we need to do in the profession in both the public and private sectors. Linked to this, we also talked about whether it was easier to strike up such relationships in smaller organisations, and a lot of the positive experiences that were shared were indeed in smaller, entrepreneurial companies or smaller teams in larger companies. This is maybe because there is greater visibility of those at an earlier career stage or individuals that show promise for promotional and development opportunities. Again, this is something for us to explore further.

So, how do we embed a sponsorship culture so more of this happens? How do you ensure a company mindset that encourages sponsorship, even if it is organic and more informal?

All attendees felt that the important next step in making more GOOD sponsorship occur is raising awareness of what sponsorship is and how it can manifest itself, rather than setting up a formal framework; much like how mentoring has become a thing in many organisations. This increased understanding will help ensure that people at all levels feel empowered so seek out sponsorship, while those with experience and the position to have a meaningful impact know enough to want to give back.

And on that note, huge thanks to all of you that gave up your time to make the event such a success. Watch this space as we work through some of the challenges and questions raised on the day.

LocatED is an arm's-length body to the Department for Education, set up in 2017 to support the delivery of world-class education settings across England.

We work across the full life cycle of property projects: our specialist in-house teams buy, develop, and manage sites for schools and colleges, and sell properties as required. We also provide strategic property advice, to the government and education bodies, to help build a more efficient education estate.

In a highly competitive market, we use our commercial expertise to get the best value, working directly with landowners, agents, and developers. We work fast and negotiate complex commercial deals with multiple partners across the private and public sectors.

Purpose is at the heart of everything we do: we always strive to get the best possible outcome and value for the communities we serve.

Jen is a co-founder of Property Elite, a chartered surveyor and RICS APC assessor. She is also an experienced property consultant (co-Director of Projekt) with FRICS status and an RICS Registered Valuer, with over 10 years' experience working in the commercial property sector.

Jen has extensive experience in providing training services to students, RICS AssocRICS, APC and FRICS candidates and corporate clients, together with academic experience as a Senior Lecturer at the University of the West of England, Lecturer at the University of Portsmouth, and Associate Tutor at the University College of Estate Management.

RICS ASSESSMENT PLATFORM
How to use the new RICS assessment platform

Jen Lemen BSc (Hons) FRICS jen@property-elite.co.uk

Carrying on ACES' aspiration to assist young surveyors, Jen here gives a thorough 'walk' around the new online assessment platform.

What is the new platform?

RICS launched its new online assessment platform at the end of 2022. It is now in use by all UK APC (and AssocRICS) candidates and can be accessed at assessment.rics.org. In this article, we will be looking at how candidates, counsellors and assessors can make best use of the new platform.

The platform replaces the former Assessment Resource Centre (ARC), which was withdrawn from use and replaced with an online submission form for a period of time. The new platform provides a central resource for the storage of data and submission of candidates' written work, a platform for counsellors to keep track of and approve candidates' submissions, and for assessors to submit availability and to view their upcoming assessments.

Old ARC data is now referred to by RICS as legacy data. This should simply feed through into the new platform for candidates to view, such as competencies and photograph. There is also a legacy data box to click which allows candidates to download old ARC data, including summary of experience and CPD record, as a Word document. Candidates can then use this to upload into either the summary of experience Word document template or online CPD record.

What improvements have been made over ARC?

The new platform has been completely redesigned, based on feedback on the former ARC system.

Some of the key improvements include:

- CPD record now has an in-built rule to require 50% of the total CPD hours to be formal. This will prevent candidates from applying for assessment unless they comply with this mandatory RICS requirement
- There is an expanded employment history section to allow candidates to add in bullet points on their role and responsibilities. Candidates should take time to write about their role as it gives assessors essential context about the candidate and enables them to provide the highest standards of assessment
- Candidates can change their pathway and counsellor directly on the new platform, rather than having to contact RICS to make the change
- The system has improved confidentiality levels
- Special considerations can be added online and are far more visible to RICS and assessment panels. We understand that refresher assessor training is also being rolled out by RICS to ensure that special considerations are applied appropriate at the interview stage
- Candidates can add in their expected final assessment date, which will help them, their counsellor and RICS to manage their assessment journey
- The platform has a new proposer and seconder notification system. All APC final assessment candidates need one proposer and two seconders, all MRICS

or FRICS (there is no requirement to have a FRICS specifically) and at least one who is outside of the candidate's firm. Candidates can input email addresses and RICS numbers for each of these parties on the new platform up to three months in advance of their submission date. This allows approvals to be sought in good time. The parties will then receive an email asking them to support the candidate's application.

Although the new platform is intuitive and easy to use, you should still familiarise yourself with how to use it well in advance of your submission window.

How do candidates submit using the new platform?

The first thing candidates will see on the new platform is a toolbar on the left-hand side, including:

- Competencies
- Diary
- Case study
- CPD
- Personal profile
- Professionalism module
- Messages.

I will cover these various sections within this article.

The Candidate Home page provides a quick progress update, with a progress tracker. It is easy to navigate back to this page at any point by clicking on the RICS logo at the top of the screen.

The personal profile section should be kept up to date. If any qualifications, employers or memberships, for example, are not available on the drop-down lists, then candidates should email RICS to ask for these to be added into the new platform for them to select. It is essential to keep contact information up to date as this will be used by RICS to contact candidates about their assessment process.

Unlike ARC, where the summary of experience was uploaded in separate online text boxes for each level of each competency, the new platform makes use of a downloadable Word document template. This can then be filled in and uploaded back onto the platform. The template is the same as that used for the existing application process, so candidates should not need to make any major changes to this.

The case study includes a downloadable template, which is then filled in and uploaded as a PDF when complete. You can also download a case study template with added cover page and other key elements via the Free Resources section of the Property Elite website (https://www.property-elite.co.uk/).

Sections that are inputted directly into the platform are the CPD record, structured training diary (including filtering for use in compiling the summary of experience), candidate photograph, academic record and employment history.

The CPD record now includes the new in-built rule requiring 50% of the total CPD hours to be formal, and will prevent any candidates applying for assessment who do not meet this requirement.

Candidates who have been keeping their diary offline, for example in Excel or Word document format, can keep this and upload the totals to date (per each level of each technical competency) to the diary section of the new platform. They may then prefer to keep recording their diary in their existing format, uploading the totals as they go along – or they may wish to switch to the new platform altogether.

The Professionalism Module, which must be undertaken within 12 months of submitting for assessment, is accessed on the left-hand toolbar of the platform.

Finally, the whole submission can be downloaded as a PDF preview at any time. This is a great way to check how your submission is progressing!

Candidates can change pathway directly via the new platform. This will force a change of competencies that comply with the new pathway. Candidates can also change competencies at any time and the new system will ensure that they comply with the specific pathway requirements

Candidates can change counsellor directly via the new platform. This will notify the new counsellor by email, who can then either approve or deny the request. Once approved, the change will show on the candidate's platform and the counsellor will be able to view the candidate on their platform.

How does the counsellor approval process work

The counsellor sign off process has been split into three approval stages:

1. Summary of experience
2. Case study
3. Overall approval.

The counsellor will be able to view their candidates' competencies and levels, employment history, full submission and CPD record.

There is a messaging section on the platform between the counsellor and candidate. This cannot be viewed by RICS. The counsellor can also leave feedback for the candidate to see in each of the platform sections, i.e., case study and summary of experience.

The counsellor platform also includes counsellor guidance and training modules.

Learning and development and training managers at firms can request their own access to their platform, providing a view only platform for all of the candidates in their organisation.

How can assessors use this system?

All information for assessors and auditors is now on the platform.

This includes:

- Availability
- Assessment panels allocated and whether an auditor will be present
- Training requests, including chair, refresher and Senior Professional Assessment – working towards the RICS' goal to retrain assessors every 3 years
- Assessor guidance and pre and post-2018 pathway guides.

What should I do next?

After reading this, I recommend heading to the platform to access the different sections and understand how they work in practice. On the bottom right-hand corner of your screen, you will be able to access the user guide for the system, which we also recommend that you read.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of your RICS APC confidentially, just fill out the form on Property Elite's website (https://www.property-elite.co.uk/free-consultation) - we provide each and every candidate with a 15 minute consultation. You can also access substantial free support resources on our website (https://www.property-elite.co.uk/free-resources) and in our blog (https://www.property-elite.co.uk/blog).

Graham is part of the RICS UK & I Candidate Support team whose role is to ensure enrolled candidates on all routes to membership understand the requirements of the RICS and are prepared for the assessment, as well as offering a suite of additional resources to support their progress and well-being.

RICS APC Overcoming a referral result

Graham Brooks gbrooks@rics.org

Graham gives some practical advice if you receive a referral from your assessment. "Try not to see it not as a failure: for most it just means 'you're not quite there yet'."

It's the outcome every candidate undertaking an RICS assessment dreads. However for many, the 'refer' result is a reality. So, when the unfortunate does happen, what happens next, and how can you overcome the disappointment and move forward in a positive way.

The result

Before continuing, it's worth providing a little context. The assessment process is undertaken by a panel of qualified RICS members who have undertaken training for the role of assessor and/or panel chair. The process uses a holistic approach where all elements are considered, with a final decision made by consensus. Your fate is never just decided by one person.

The outcome will be either a pass, where you will be awarded your qualification, or the disappointing refer result.

Own the feedback

Following a referral result, you will receive a detailed feedback report from the chair providing the reasons for the result, and highlighting the competencies the panel felt were not demonstrated to the declared levels.

It is easy as someone not on the receiving end to say this, but try not to take it personally and fight against the feedback. Own it. It might be a difficult read, but the purpose of the report is to help you. Attempt to address the points constructively and with an open mind, even if there are parts you might disagree with.

RICS does not question the merits of a panels' feedback, or overturn a result. However, if the proper processes were not followed, which may have had an unfair impact on the outcome, an appeal can be lodged. Following review, if upheld you will be offered a redo of the assessment based on your original submission, but ensuring the proper assessment standards are now adhered to.

Use your support network

Share your report with your counsellor and discuss the feedback. Speak to your candidate support team if you need some help with the next steps. The network is still there to support you through your referral.

We also know a referral result can pack a huge emotional punch given the time, work, and effort you have put in. If you do need some extra support to get over the disappointment, even if it's just friendly voice to talk to and help put things into perspective, our friends at LionHeart are there to assist [Ed – also see FACES report in this issue of ACES' Terrier].

Your next attempt

Once the initial disappointment has been processed, it's time to think about that next attempt. Work with your counsellor and employer to identify the deficiencies highlighted in the report, to develop a plan of action moving forward in readiness for your next try.

A common question we're asked is 'How much of my submission do I have to update?'. The answer to this is that it can be updated as little or a much as you feel is needed, based on the feedback provided. You will still need to ensure that timeframes for case-studies and CPD align with the new submission date.

Another thing we're often asked is if a candidate has to resubmit immediately following a referral. No, you can resubmit for any future session when you are ready. If you feel you need more time, take it.

You're not the first and you won't be the last

The referral is something many members went through before successfully gaining their qualification. Try not to see it not as a failure: for most it just means 'you're not quite there yet'. Many will tell you that in hindsight, it ultimately was an experience that helped them in their next attempt.

The immediate aftermath of a referral result might bring with it a lot of negative feelings and emotions, but try to remember you've still put a lot of hard work and effort to get to this point, and although you might not be feeling the love right now, the goal of everyone involved is to get you over that finishing line. Stay strong and keep positive and you will get there.

For more details of the support available, visit the RICS and LionHeart websites and remember, we're here to help, so don't be afraid to get in touch.

Branches News

DAN MEEK, RURAL BRANCH

ACES Rural Branch members met at the Farmers Fayre, Stoneleigh on 18 May 2023 for an interesting day of topical and focused CPD, together of course for the all-important networking.

18 members from 12 different local authorities from across England attended.

Delegates received presentations from two guest speakers. The first speaker was Dr Dan Carpenter, Associate Director at Ethos Environmental Planning who presented on 'Biodiversity Net Gain in Practice'. The second speaker was Rachel Jones, Ecologist for Wiltshire Council, who spoke to delegates on the knotty subject of 'Nutrient Neutrality'.

Both speakers cited a number of case studies that delivered practical solutions to the policy challenges.

Helen Mcleod–Baikie, Chief Property Officer for Pembrokeshire County Council, represented ACES Rural on The Welsh Government's Tenancy Working Group. The Group was established and met to look at the Government's Outline Sustainable Farming Scheme proposals, published in July 2020, through the lens of the tenant sector. The group provided feedback for consideration by the Welsh Government in April 2023.

ACES Rural Branch has also been invited by the Rt Hon Mark Spencer MP to become a member of the new Farm Tenancy Forum that is being established as part of the government's response to the Rock Review. The joint industry and Defra Forum will put in place more formal engagement and feedback structures between Defra and the tenanted sector, building on the valuable work that the previous Tenancy Reform Industry Group has delivered over many years [Ed - featured in previous issues of ACES' Terrier]. A primary role of the Forum will be to support the implementation of the commitments the government has made in its response to the Rock Review, feeding back real-world experience and insights on progress.

The Forum will also feed into and support the design and delivery of policy and schemes in England from the perspective of the tenanted sector.

JACQUELINE CUMISKEY, EASTERN BRANCH

The April Branch call included an interesting talk from the author Chris Brain on "Building a Local Authority Property Strategy in 6 easy steps" [Ed – see article in this issue of ACES' Terrier]. Chris, ACES' Valuation Liaison Officer, is a regular contributor to ACES Terrier and his book is based upon 40+ years' experience. It was a lively debate with lots of questions from the attendees.

May's event included a presentation on "Building Green on Net Zero Construction Projects'. Harry Dyson from Zurich spoke about how the construction industry target is affecting the industry. Four main

L-R Peter Whitington and Tony Gresty, speakers, Alan Richards, Chair of Eastern Branch and Philip Doggett, host, Cambridge City Council areas are air pollution; materials and using new technologies i.e., green concrete and dynamic glass to meet targets; off-site manufacturing; and smart technology. The last year's rise in costs, inflation and lack of resources will add to the burden, but there is a strong commitment to meet the sustainability objectives. For local authorities where we are involved in development projects, this will support sustainable development [Ed – see article in this issue of ACES' Terrier].

On 23 June, the branch held the popular in-person branch meeting, hosted by Cambridge City Council at the Guildhall, Cambridge. The presenters this time were Tony Gresty, Managing Director for ASG Energy, Peter Whitington Director - Public Sector Valuation at Lambert Smith Hampton, and an update from Zaman Sheikh, Southend Council, from the Future ACES group within the Eastern Branch.

Tony's presentation looked at the sustainable energy solutions within buildings, taking in solar PV, LED lighting, EV charging and heating solutions. The high cost of energy last year would see a quicker return on investment than previously thought, albeit Tony advised that the energy market forecast is for a return to lower costs, but it still makes the return on investment favourable [Ed – see article in this issue of ACES' Terrier].

Peter informed the meeting about the mandatory changes to IFRS 16 in 2024 and its impact which brings leasehold (and potentially all occupational) assets onto the balance sheet.

Finally, Zaman gave a short presentation about Future ACES progress and Alan Richards expanded on this, to canvass how a mentoring programme could be set up to bridge the gap between both groups.

[Ed - see Zamman's piece in this issue].

ALISON HEXT, HEART OF ENGLAND

RICS Offices, Birmingham. L-R Amanda Badman,(Cannock Chase), Philip Colledge, Vice Chair (Mansfield), Andy Husband, (Birmingham City Council) Julia Nock (Wolverhampton City) Alison Hext, Secretary (Worcestershire County) and Kevin Moore, Chair (Worcester City).

HoE held its branch meeting on 8 June 2023; the hybrid meeting was kindly hosted by the RICS in its offices on Colmore Row in Birmingham. The venue worked well for those attending the meeting in person and thankfully, there were no train strikes planned for the days around the meeting. Eight people attended in person with 6 attending on-line.

Ian Tudor of BondWolfe gave a very interesting talk on the merits of sales by auction and how on-line auctions have become the most popular format for vendors and purchasers. Members had a number of questions for Ian and examples of auction experiences to share.

Mahvesh Ibrar, Senior Public Affairs Officer, RICS, ran through a number of RICS matters, providing updates on consultations on rating, asset valuations and the Infrastructure Levy [Ed – see RICS response in this issue of ACES' Terrier], the recruitment situation for surveyors generally, colleges in the region offering learning for Apprentice Surveyors, and forthcoming CPD events.

Kevin Moore (HoE Chair) secured an offer from MEPC to give members a tour of the new Paradise Circus development after the meeting. This was unfortunately cancelled during the meeting as the development was evacuated on the discovery of a suspect package.

The in-person meeting encouraged general discussion about matters concerning members and their authorities; lunch was included to enable members to network further.

Due to the success of holding the meeting at the RICS offices in Birmingham, the November meeting will be held here again (and will be hybrid).

There are 3 new HoE members, representing Shropshire Council, Bromsgrove and Redditch BC and Birmingham City Council). There were no resignations.

The next HoE Branch meeting is the AGM, with CPD, on 9 November 2023 (10.00 for 10.30am), to be held at the RICS office in Colmore Row, Birmingham.

GERRY DEVINE, WELSH BRANCH

The NHS came to the fore at the Welsh Branch Spring Meeting, held virtually on 17 May when the Branch Chairman, Clive Ball, NHS Wales Specialist Estates Services, welcomed ACES President, Helen Stubbs, NHS Property Services Ltd., in what surely is an ACES 'first'.

The President outlined her varied and diverse background in her surveying and estate management career, from her early days in rural forestry work, to her current senior position in NHS Property. Helen went on to speak about the ACES Presidential Conference to be held in York on 21 September, setting out the principles and proposals for the Conference and the AGM [Ed – see conference flyer in this issue of ACES' Terrier]. The theme for the conference is "Health and the public sector working together in partnership" including case studies of examples that have worked, as well as some that haven't, as it is important to discern why they didn't work and to learn from any mistakes made. Helen said she would be interested to know about any such partnerships or collaboration in Wales.

Public sector/NHS partnership experiences

In response, Stephen Morgan outlined the re-purposing of the former Debenhams store in the centre of Carmarthen; Lorna Cross talked about a project in Barry (Vale of Glamorgan) with NHS, which is still at the proposals stage, while Geoff Bacon reported that he had tried to get health schemes off the ground in Swansea, but had not yet succeeded, as they always turned out to be too complex. Clive admitted that the NHS process can be a bit bureaucratic and perhaps not as agile as the LA model seems to be. Ben Winstanley, Branch Vice-chairman, said he is looking at two sites in Caerphilly County Borough that could be regenerated, while David Pugsley is hoping for good collaboration on a site at Llantrisant (Rhondda Cynon Taf) to set up a regional facility. The Chairman referred to today's (17 May) announcement of 40 new hospitals, while cautioning that the timescale for these may in reality be very long.

As Nathan Burdett from Anglesey, who is on his APC path, was attending, Helen also spoke about the FACES APC initiative.

CLAW (Consortium of Local Authorities in Wales)

Geoff Bacon explained how ACES Welsh Branch and the CLAW Asset Management and Estates sub-group work together in Wales as CAPE (CLAW and ACES Property and Estates). CLAW has six property-related sub-groups and the leaders of the sub-groups held a meeting on 9 May. CLAW supports the branch's CPD provision by Chris Brain. In answer to a query about CPD in other ACES branches, the President said ACES Council is looking at ways to support branches in CPD provision as CPD and APC support are important for the future of ACES, but no one size fits all.

RICS

Sam Rees, Senior Public Affairs Officer, and UK Housing and Sustainability Officer, RICS Wales, reported that there is a great need for more surveyors to carry out carbon assessments. RICS Wales member numbers have grown by between 5% and 10% in the past five years, and RICS is creating more opportunities to be a surveyor in Wales by expanding RICS accredited degrees, and securing degree apprenticeship funding for QS and Real Estate/Asset management courses: two are starting in 2024, with three more in the pipeline to follow. RICs is partnering with the Welsh Apprenticeship Alliance to increase employer sign-up. Sam encouraged members to offer apprenticeships and also drew attention to GCSE and A-Level course expansion. The Chairman thanked Sam and urged all to promote the new Real Estate course at USW (University of South Wales) [Ed – see article in 2023 Spring Terrier].

RICS Whole Life Carbon Assessment, 2nd Edition Guidance is currently being developed to enhance consistency of measurement across all property and infrastructure assets. It will be a helpful tool for public sector carbon assessments of existing and new properties, and can support consistency in procurement where estimates of carbon footprint are required for new developments.

In other news, the new RICS Wales office in Cardiff is opening shortly as part of a built environment hub with other professions (architects and engineers) and it will enable a return to face-to-face APC counsellor support. The new North Wales RICS group is now organising regular CPD events (e.g., Dark Skies seminar and Caernarfon Castle tour).

RICS is developing TAN 15 (Technical Advice Note 15) guidance for surveyors on development, flooding and coastal erosion. Creation of RICS Retrofit Standards will support the decarbonisation and energy efficiency improvement of domestic and non-domestic property, and valuation guidance for properties with cladding is also being revised and expanded.

Welsh Government and Ystadau Cymru (WG and YC)

Dr. Claire Bloomfield, Head of Estates Operations, WG Land Division, reported the carbon literacy training by YC has recently been delivered; asbestos awareness training is being provided for town and community councils, but it is also open to others. The Land Release Fund funding is still available for this year and subsequent years – applications welcome. Funding has been granted for projects in Haverfordwest and Porthcawl.

Testers are needed in a 'real life' situation for the Social Sustainability Matrix; YC is seeking to incorporate or link it to monetary value, especially for Community Asset Transfers (CAT). An Asset Collaboration Grant is being launched to fund, e.g., feasibility studies for decarbonisation, in collaboration with community groups. A committee is being set up to review CATs; scoping work is ongoing, but it will be an independent task and finish group including Cardiff University personnel; the 2023 YC Conference and Awards will be held, again virtually, on 30 November.

Valuation and estates/asset management matters

Various topics were discussed, including:

Climate change and decarbonisation to net zero –WG is possibly rethinking Scope 3 Emissions – up to 80% of our emissions could fall within this and exclusion would bring a huge reduction in calculated emissions. WG is expected to open applications for the Public Sector Decarbonisation Grant soon. The grant is to bridge costs between conventional energy sources and renewable energy systems.

Local Area Energy Plans - Geoff Bacon explained more of our energy needs to be produced locally and this is a very important piece of work for property people to be involved in. He has had excellent discussions with others in the Swansea region (City Deal) and has brought members on board with plans. Ben Winstanley has had recent discussions with colleagues in the Cardiff (City Deal) region and consultants have recently been appointed.

Data Cymru – Wishes to see significant increases in the availability and use of open data in Wales in the next few years. It will be running a series of data mapping events with local authorities and other public sector organisations, the first of which was held recently.

Communications Act Update – A Barrier Busting Taskforce meeting had been held late last year, chaired by Dr. Claire Bloomfield. The stakeholders included mobile telephone and broadband companies, both infrastructure and providers, as well as public sector landowners (as site providers and landlords) and Ofcom. The telecoms companies complained that there wasn't a standard approach to lease terms and rent levels from local authorities, as well as a lack of information about public sector land ownership. In response, it was pointed out that the information is available on Database Wales. However, when the discussion moved to the potential for sharing of masts by the providers, they seemed reluctant to share masts or information. Parallels were drawn with the Scottish model, which was useful and were incorporated with the 'barrier-busting' recommendations in the report published on the WG website (https://www.gov.wales/barrier-busting-taskforce-report-html) .

CPD Session - Chris Brain (www.chrisbrainassociates.com)

Chris advised the group that this CPD session would be a short property news update, followed by an in-depth look at the 6 Ps method contained in his recently-published "Property Strategy Handbook: Building a Local Authority Strategy in Six Easy Steps" [Ed – see article in this issue of ACES' Terrier].

Local authority finance - WG and WLGA had held discussions on LA funding: applying for several separate pots of money (grants or loans) is seen as burdensome and time consuming, especially for smaller authorities, so fewer pots are proposed from next year.

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council - has announced a proposal to vacate various sites and relocate its main offices to Pontypridd town centre ('Office Accommodation Strategy Workspace Plan: Fit for The Future', reported to its Cabinet on 15 May).

HM Treasury consultation on non-investment asset valuations - the proposals are to dispense with the valuation of Specialised Assets, and to replace EUV with Fair Value. If approved, these changes should simplify some asset valuations.

RICS – EUV Guidance is being revised. Chris advised keeping an eye on the RICS website for updates.

RICS – Valuer Rotation (UK VPS 3.3 Rotation) – Whereas Valuer Rotation was formerly a recommendation, it is now to become mandatory, so that the continuous relationship between a client and a valuer and/or a firm providing valuations for the same regulated purpose in the UK will not exceed eight years. After five years, there must be a 'service review'. Contracts with valuation firms must not exceed five years but, 'subject to a service review', can be extended for a further three years. The implementation date for these changes is 1 October 2023. Under transition arrangements, any contracts then in place must be terminated at the end of September 2026, but may be extended for a maximum of 18 months (until end of March 2028). If a contract ends after 1 October 2026 and has been in place for eight years, it must be terminated and the terms varied (provided this can be done without penalty). The arrangements will be different in each local authority. Internal valuers should make notes that they have done any valuations themselves and this should then satisfy any RICS inspection. These rule changes only apply to investment property.

Property strategy – The six Ps

Strategic asset management is important; the way a public sector body manages is property is reflective of the way the organisation is run. We must know our course when we set off, and be able to keep on course throughout the journey. Pilots use the 1 in 60 Rule; if you are 1 degree out at the start you will be a mile off course after travelling just 60 miles. The purpose of owning a property can, through a lack of discipline, change from that for which it was originally acquired. RICS Guidance on Asset Management says you need:

1. A policy (for asset management)
2. A property asset strategy and
3. An asset management plan.

Where do you go from here? If I told you any more here, I'd probably be in breach of copyright, so you need to go to Chris' book, of course! If you haven't got a copy yet, make life easier for yourself – get one to plug that gap in your knowledge and use his simple, 6 Ps logical path to stay on course. Some bookshops are even offering discount!

JOHN READ, NORTH EAST BRANCH

It has been another quiet period for the branch, with executive members keeping in contact and Helen preparing for the National Conference in September in York [Ed – see flyer in this issue of ACES' Terrier].

We are still seeking to resolve our banking arrangements and working directly with the customer care team at Barclays Bank to ensure a resolution and a return to normal service [Ed – see the financial section of National Council notes in this issue of ACES' Terrier – an issue for a number of branches].

In the meantime, the branch continues to work with the academic sector, promoting ACES and the NE Branch through awarding prizes to surveying students for their work. Northumbria University has recently submitted proposals for the ACES award from students studying its Real Estate Programme and is considering a student development appraisal assignment from the Urban Planning and Development Module as a potential prize winner. In addition, Sheffield Hallam University has also submitted three student posters for consideration for the Annual Poster Prize given by the branch. We hope to report on all of the prize winners in a future edition of ACES' Terrier.

The Conference

The ACES flagship event of the year will be an in-person event in September 2023 with the usual line up of excellent speakers and great networking opportunities for ACES members and others working in or for the public sector at exceptional value for money.

Hear how the health sector and public sector can work together to achieve common goals, efficiencies & costs savings, deliver new facilities, contribute to regeneration schemes and achieve best practice in the property profession, all with the ultimate aim of improving health and living for the community.

The day will focus on how we can collectively work together to bring forward new health developments and contribute to the wider health, wellbeing and social value agenda. Questions to be answered, among others are: what are the key areas that need to be considered; how should the partnerships work together to ensure an outcome; what does the leadership and governance look like? We will feature sessions on place, strategy, finance including valuation, construction and planning, and landlord and tenant. There will be plenty of case studies showing what does and doesn't work – and the reasons why, along with technical elements. There will also be discussions on broader current property matters.

Cost   ACES Members - £70   Non-members - £100

The networking and social elements

Conference Networking Meal

Held in the historical Hospitium in the York Museum Gardens, a 3-course evening meal on Wednesday evening with fellow conference attendees and guests. A chance to socialise and network prior to the main conference event.

Cost - £70

Social Programme and Meal

For those who prefer the social side of the conference, a fantastic social programme has been arranged by Marcus Perry. The main programme will take place on Thursday with an optional informal meal on the Thursday evening. A York Visitor pass can be purchased for anyone staying over and wishing to experience York in more detail on Friday.

Cost - £60 (social programme Thursday;
£40 meal Thursday evening);
York Visitor Pass - £59 (Friday only optional)

For further information and how to book, see https://aces.org.uk/national-presidential-conference-2023-social-programme/

WORTH THE WAIT
The secret nuclear bunker, Kelvedon Hatch

Betty Albon editor@aces.org.uk

So what is worth waiting 15 years for?

In September 2008, ACES held its Centenary National Conference in Basildon, presided over by President Jim Ross. As tradition holds, partners of ACES' members spent the days on local visits, one of which was a trip to the secret nuclear bunker at nearby Kelvedon Hatch. As I was still in employment (but not yet Editor), I felt very envious of the partners who went on this trip. My husband David reported back that it was fascinating.

So why did Sally and Jim think the bunker worthy of an ACES social members trip? On their initial visit, they were both struck by the amateurish nature of the museum site, and at first you believe this is due to the fact that the museum was set up by the family, but the more you stop to think, the more you realise that it is the government facility itself which is amateurish and the now, almost incomprehensible belief that such a building firstly might have remained secret.

Sometime soon after at an Eastern Branch meeting, I told Jim that I was disappointed to have missed that excursion, and at that time – and regularly over subsequent years – he has invited me to visit the bunker. So finally, almost 15 years later, Jim met me at Ingatestone railway station to fulfil his promise. The bunker is actually located close to the M11, M25, A12 roads and the nearest place is Brentwood.

The first problem was to find it: it's not called 'secret' for nothing! After a tour through Essex countryside, Jim turned into an unassuming gateway which had a very discreet sign, and we wound along a single lane surrounded by fields and woods to the car park, then made our way to a bungalow nestled in the woodland. Inside were handsets (themselves seeming to represent technology of some decades previously), and we set off down the tunnel…..

History

The underground bunker had three lives, built in 1952 and starting in its role as a RAF ROTOR station (air defence radar system), then a brief period in the 1960s as a civil defence centre, through to its most recent life as a regional government HQ also serving London.

Designed for up to 600 military and civilian personnel, possibly even the Prime Minister, their collective task was to organise the survival of the population in the aftermath of a nuclear war from bombs dropped by the Russians (what goes around..?).

The land was requisitioned by the government from the local farmer, J A Parrish. Paradoxically, as the 'heat' of the Cold War died down, the bunker and its ancillary systems were no longer required by the government and were costing up to £3m p.a. to keep on standby. They were used on occasion for test manoeuvres and equipment checks. The bunker was decommissioned in 1992-4 and offered for sale at a closed bid public auction. The family bought it back. This of course prompted Jim and I to rack our brains to remember the name of that famous case which established that the government had to offer it to the landowner from whom it had been requisitioned. Once a surveyor, always a surveyor, our powers of recall sprung into action within about 10 minutes! (Crichel Down Rules, for those of you with similar 'memory challenges').

A guided tour

The underground bunker sits within 25 acres of farmland and woods. Its entrance is an unassuming rural bungalow, and a local man told us that everybody in the nearby village was told not to trespass in the site, nor children play in the woods, but they were oblivious to what was there, assuming it was just the bungalow used by the military for some reason.

The Parrish family has opened it up to visitors, making few changes to the ambiance of the mid-20th century. Contemporary government information messages and news bulletins are run from various rooms around the bunker advising what to do in the event of a nuclear attack (not a lot, really). In today's world, there's a naivety when they show a household stocking up on tinned food, or taking a living room door off to shelter under, or filling up the kettle because a safe water supply might be hard to find.

The ground floor

The bunker is accessed from the front door of the bungalow, which is the entrance to a gently sloping corridor 120 yards long. Part-way along the tunnel are some original annotated cross sections of the structure (reminded me of being back in the planning department in the 1980s!). The whole bunker was encased in 10-foot reinforced concrete and incorporated a 24,000 gallon tank of fresh water.

The tunnel bends sharply at the bottom – to facilitate combat defence (possibly against desperate civilians 'on the outside' trying to get to safety and resources).

To get into the bunker proper, there are 1.5 tons blast doors. Once these are sealed, up to 600 incumbents had 3 levels of fully self-contained facilities – generators, food, water – planned to last 3 months. In a nuclear blast, it could be 45 degrees outside with millions of people dead or dying. The ministers and civil servants would be locked in for the duration.

The ground floor is the main communications hub containing the Home Office radio room, to communicate with the nation, through the BBC Home Service, and coordinate supplies. State of the art equipment included a telecommunication room with banks of telephone wires, manually operated exchanges (it reminded me of seeing Janet operating a domestic version in Dr. Finlay's Casebook – now who remembers that?), typewriters, rotary phones and ticker tape machines. We did spot what looked like a relatively modern IT screen. Everything had to have the potential to operate without electricity.

Also at this level is the plotting floor, which was just like you see in old films, with maps on tables and a vertical Perspex map to mark bomb burst locations in the UK and Europe. Radiation spreads had to be plotted to enable the evacuation of people and warnings to be disseminated to the other 11 bunkers in the country, and through Europe. Our handset information advised us that ground bursts were the worst, as they lift material which becomes radiated and is dispersed; air blasts apparently don't produce so much radiation, but could get blown to the UK from Europe, depending on wind directions.

Because of the siting of this bunker in South East England, central and regional government would be coordinated from here.

Passing through another set of metal doors takes you to the plant room. This contains the generator and primary and secondary filters. Air passed from an external air vent with a canopy over, so radiation carried on the dust wouldn't come down and in (the theory). The air then went through both sets of filters and then through a fine mist of water to remove the smallest particles, before being pumped around the bunker.

The majority of the massive plant acted as a giant refrigerator: 600 people each produce 1kw heat per hour, so the main challenge in a locked underground bunker is to keep it cool, not warm.

Middle floor

This floor is the administration hub. The bunker would be headed by a government department commissioner who would be a cabinet minister, and in charge of running the entire bunker operations. He would be supported by a principal officer, who might be an ordinary minister or a civil servant; he would also be the back-up commissioner. Each had an individual combined room for working and sleeping (just a bunk bed), with a similar room allocated for the Prime Minister, who would be responsible for negotiating peace, not running the bunker (I just had an unpleasant vision of one – or more - of our recent PMs doing that!).

The main administration space was open plan, with areas allocated for each department (Ministry of Public Buildings and Works; Department of Transport; Dept of Defence, etc). When the bunker was decommissioned, the wooden signs were left on the walls. The sole purpose of the 450 staff was to allocate resources and keep the country functioning. Personnel must have spent a tedious time, working 2 shifts on and one shift off.

The office storeroom looked like any office of that time with walls covered in angle iron shelving, reams of paper, store boxes, etc. Pencils were used with a holder, so each person could use them right to the bottom. A stub had to be given back before a replacement one could be issued. The exception to a typical 1950s storeroom was the presence of a pile of clunky Geiger counters, ready for testing to see if it was safe to exit.

Third floor

This was largely reserved for dormitories and health care. The sick bay was equipped with a basic operating theatre. To bring the point home, leaning against the wall were cardboard coffins (easily stored flat), and body bags. We were told that after 3 days, an occupied body bag blows up! Therefore personnel had to be able to eject bodies from the bunker.

Toilet facilities included running water cubicles and showers, but once the tank water was used up, a bank of Elsan toilets came into play, as no water could be brought in after a bomb had fallen.

The dormitories consisted of regimented bunk beds. Sleeping operated on a 'hot bed system', like on a submarine, of one sleeper out and the next shift worker in. Each person was allocated their own sheet sleeping bags. Interestingly, an exercise held in the 1990s showed that everybody was disturbed at shift changes as there were no bedside lights – nor hardly room to swing a cat (not that cats were part of the 600-strong contingent).

The canteen was – and remains - open every day and is virtually unchanged for the contemporary visitor. As with the rest of the secret bunker, nothing is dumbed down to pander to modern tourist needs. You make your own coffee and pay for this – and your entrance fee (when you exit!) - in an honesty box.

The exit now takes you through the 10-foot reinforced concrete wall, to the woodland beyond.

Editor note: much of this information is adapted from the Kelvedon Hatch Secret Nuclear Bunker website https://secretnuclearbunker.com/

And was it worth waiting for?

I would definitely recommend stopping off for a visit if you're in the area – and can find it! The tour takes about an hour to complete. Making your own coffee takes another 15 minutes!

The measures taken to react to a real threat in the 1950s of nuclear attack are fascinating and illustrate state of the art technology of that time. What is sobering, in the context of current world affairs and power struggles, is in reality how vulnerable we all are.

Jim's further questioned the government's naivety that the nuclear bunker would have served its intended purpose of keeping the 600 people underground safe, while everyone outside would be dying at various speeds depending upon proximity to the explosion, and that those still alive would be capable of accepting being governed by a government enjoying such protection, while they were left exposed and in all probability starving.

And would the P.M., whoever that might have been at the time of the war, together with all the Ministers of State and senior civil servants, have willingly gone into the bunker for a period probably in excess of 6 months while their spouses and family were left at home, probably to die?

Going back 15 years later, post Covid, it is even harder to envisage, when you look at what government Ministers, aids and their mistresses were getting up to throughout 'Partygate', at a time when isolation was meant to be the norm, that our senior politicians would have been capable of voluntarily isolating themselves in such a way.

Jim concludes that he remains as confused as ever. Was the bunker constructed to give the population a belief that there would be life and governance after the big bang? Were politicians and civil servants really more willing to serve and sacrifice then, than they are now?

Or was it just an expensive scam to convince the population that everything was under control?

Jim's cynicism never fails to impress. Thanks Jim for taking the time to escort me, and contributing to this article.

SELWYN – THE EARLY YEARS

The race for independence (1976)

Dave Pogson

For 50 years until retirement Dave practiced as a surveyor in Lancashire and Cumbria, becoming a Fellow of the RICS and working for the Department of the Environment, Lancashire County Council, South Lakeland District Council and the NPS Group. During that time, he wrote articles on surveying topics and work experiences which allowed him to introduce some controversy, humour and the odd bit of fiction. https://davidlewispogson.wordpress.com

'The Selwyn Series' and 'Herdwick Tales' that precede 'Selwyn – The Early Years' were written specifically for ACES' Terrier. Each story was a self-contained episode in the life of a council property manager from 2001 to the present day and beyond, as he approached and enjoyed early retirement from the fictional Herdwick District Council. They can still be read in back-issues of ACES' Terrier, starting from 'The Final Vote' in 2017/18 Winter Terrier.

The characters often presented controversial and outspoken opinions on local and central government policy and practice. The stories were fictitious and occasional historical background details may have been changed to fit the chronology. The views expressed were those of the author, not those of ACES. The second series ended just after Selwyn's death from old age in 2036.

'Selwyn – the Early Years' is a supplement to that original series, taking Selwyn back to the start of his career, and the same disclaimer applies. The author offers thanks to former ACES member Martin Haworth (ex-Lancashire County Council) for contributing suggestions to help improve this series.

'Just because I married a farmer's daughter, work for her wealthy landowning father and live in a cottage on his farm, Photo by kind permission of Frank Walker

doesn't mean that I've forgotten my townie roots. I've still got a trick or two up my sleeve. I could outsmart them when I was at Shepdale Grammar School and I can still do it now. So will you join in with me?'

Selwyn and Ron, his elder brother, were sitting in the lounge of their parents' home where Selwyn had moved back to about three years ago when he'd split up with Jackie. Ron's obviously pregnant wife Mary was sitting outside talking to Selwyn's parents in the garden at the rear of their house in Shepdale.

'Ok, big brother. If you insist, but don't you think that you're getting a little too old for this kind of thing now that you're in your thirties and about to become a dad.'

'Not at all. It'll be good fun and I've got a plan. If it comes off then I'll be able to crow about it to those farm lads for the next 200 years. It doesn't seem to matter that I've been involved with farming for the last 15 years, they still see me as a townie off-comer. This will show them what town boys can do.'

'Don't you think it's too hot for physical effort?'

'No. You'll enjoy it.'

'That's not like you farmers. The weather is never right for you. Usually it's too hot or too cold, too wet or too dry, too windy or too calm.'

'This isn't farming. Anyway, we can cool off with some Rampant Ram in the pub afterwards. There'll be a bit of a 'do' with food later. It'll make a change for you from the Wandering Tup. There'll be girls there too. Mary might get you fixed up.'

'Oh God, no!'

'Well, you're 25 and still living with your parents. It's time that you met someone and moved out.'

'I've tried that. It didn't work out. And hark at you. At least I'm not trying to impress a bunch of farm lads. I think I'll give it a miss.'

'Too late, you've already agreed.'

***

As the crowds gathered to surround the competitors on the 'Horn of Plenty Inn' car park, Selwyn could see the village green behind them. Its grass was burnt brown by the sun. Dust scuffed up as people walked across it to join them. There were a few American accents among the spectators. Selwyn and Ron were wearing giant white nappies, made out of bath towels, pinned over their shorts. It was a requirement of the entry rules. Villagers pointed and laughed and shouted wisecracks, but they smiled and stayed silent, maintaining their concentration, studying their opponents; waiting to come under starter's orders. The competition looked beatable. The village boys and the farm lads were handicapped with heavy prams or push chairs with small wheels.

'No-one has a racing pram like ours,' whispered Ron.

'Right – let's be having you. All entries for the men's pram race line up along here.' The starter was pointing to a line chalked across the car park's tarmac surface.

Ten pairs of men shuffled forward. Selwyn was pushing the pram, his brother was riding and Selwyn deliberately chose the nearest starting point to the first obstacle about 25 yards away. It was the kissing gate that led onto the narrow public footpath through the housing estate before opening into the Long Field.

The noise of expectation rose. Passing cars pulled into the side of Main Street and passengers alighted to watch. The crowd grew as stragglers rushed down the village to join them and drinkers wandered out through the pub doorway to swell the rear ranks. Selwyn leaned on the coach springs and tensed.

'Ready …get set …GO!'

He'd taken the strain, anticipating the

signal, and pushed away to a flyer, making it first to the kissing gate and completely blocking it while he and Ron lifted their pram over the top. The other teams queued up behind them. They'd got their strategy right so far and were looking good for victory if they could maintain the lead. They knew it wouldn't be easy against the very fit farm lads.

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Local Government Reorganisation had been a challenge over the last two years, but Selwyn felt that the new organisation was bedding in at last. Arthur was the Head of Property Services with Selwyn as Estates Surveyor under him. Selwyn now had his own assistant and far more property to manage over a greater geographical spread, arising from the merger of the old councils into the new and larger Herdwick District Council. His other friends had survived too: Jim had become the new Assistant Committee Clerk to Tom, who remained Senior Committee Clerk, despite the hiccup at the 1973 Election, and Eric had been retained in Finance.

The spring and summer of 1976 seemed set to be the warmest since records began. Lawns shrivelled and died, the leaves on the trees turned brown and fell early. Hosepipe bans were introduced, and the government issued advice about saving water … 'share a bath with a friend' being one of them. Selwyn wasn't really convinced that he wanted to share a bath with Arthur, Jim or Eric.

It was unbearably hot in the old Shepdale Council offices at the rear of the town hall, with no air conditioning. The staff took it in turns to buy ice creams for each other every day. The dress code was relaxed to permit removal of ties except when attending council meetings. A pint of Rampant Ram in the Wandering Tup with Arthur at lunchtimes was essential to Selwyn's survival. Jim, who felt he owed Selwyn something for saving the election team from complete embarrassment at the 1973 election, and Eric from Finance, who just liked beer, now joined them on a regular basis. Despite the intense heat, Selwyn had never been happier in his work and whistled to himself as he strolled down the town hall yard to the offices each morning.

Unusually, Selwyn avoided the fells in his free time because it was just too hot for comfortable walking. It didn't stop the tourists who continued to test the limits of the Herdwick Mountain Rescue Team, with dehydration being the cause of most call-outs. Even the hardy Herdwick sheep out on the fells struggled in the drought as the streams dried up and the farmers brought them down to the lowlands. They sheared them early and tankered in water to help them survive. Selwyn still had his doubts about strenuous physical effort in those extreme conditions but Ron wouldn't hear of him backing out.

That summer coincided with the 200 years' anniversary of the American Declaration of Independence which had happened on the 4th of July 1776. It seemed a little strange to Selwyn that two neighbouring English villages within Herdwick district should want to celebrate the loss of Britain's biggest colony from the Empire. But nobody held grudges, especially since the Americans had helped Britain out in two World Wars. And the American tourists brought in income when they came to visit the church. Ron and Mary farmed near one of the villages and intended to join in with the joint celebrations. The parish had a historic connection with the estate owned by George Washington's ancestors. The Washington family's coat of arms was carved into the church wall. It was that coat of arms which had formed the basis for the 'Stars and Stripes' flag which now flew over the church located halfway along the road under the crag between the villages. All week that flag had hardly fluttered above its tower with only the occasional breath of air to stir it.

A programme of events had been planned, with the highlight being the pram race across the fields on 2 July, the nearest Saturday afternoon to the Independence date. The pram race course was from the 'Horn of Plenty Inn' located in one village, to 'The Shepherd's Crook' pub in the other. It was about one and a half miles between them, following the public footpath leading directly across the level fields. From the 'Horn's' car park, the competitors could see the other village in the distance, nestling on top of a small hill. The 'Shepherd's' car park was on the far side of that hill and spectators would be able to watch the start at the 'Horn' and then drive around the edge of the fields on the road past the church beneath the crag, to watch the finish on the other car park.

In the weeks leading up to the race, Ron had found an old coach-built pram in his barn. The chrome was rusty and its fabric coverings were worn and faded. There was no way that Mary would allow him to put their expected baby in that so it was surplus to requirements. He'd stripped it down to its chassis. The hood and tub had been disposed of, to be replaced with a plank bolted straight on to the fixed axles to form a base for sitting. He'd cut off the pram handle with a hacksaw. The curls of the redundant coach-springs at each end were retained. In all, it was now a lightweight, low-slung racing machine with no unnecessary features.

One evening in the week before the race, Ron had made Selwyn walk the route with him to assess the problems that might arise from the footpath surfaces, and how they could overcome the variety of gates separating the fields that provided obstacles along the route. Then Ron got his brother to join him on his driveway for a short, slow-motion trial to rehearse their changeovers.

'Don't you think that you're taking this a bit too seriously?' was Selwyn's question.

'We have to win. It's a matter of pride.'

'Won't it be a bit uncomfortable without suspension?'

'We'll be fine. It'll only average out at ¾ of a mile each sitting down. You can stand it for that long.'

'What about steering?'

'The passenger sits looking forward on the plank holding onto the front curl springs to stay on. The pusher holds the rear curls and steers as he pushes. I've removed the brake as we won't be parking a baby in it ever again. Are you happy now?'

'It'll never work.'

'Of course it will. Light and fast for lifting over gates and pushing. You'll see.'

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The run along the length of the Long Field and the small field beyond it towards the next village saw them increase their lead. The other prams just couldn't match their speed. They changed over from pusher to passenger regularly as they tired but, looking back, they could see the others struggling with their unaltered carriages as they fell further behind. Selwyn started to relax because the race was in the bag but Ron urged him on, keen to impose as crushing a defeat as possible on the others. The final gate to bring them alongside the old quarry and onto a decent gravel surface was no problem and Ron's 6' 3" rugby-player's physique soon had them speeding along the edge of the village playing fields. Only the final leg up through the village streets and down to the pub car park remained before a welcome pint to celebrate victory on a blistering hot day.

Ron called out, 'Racing change' as he tired.

He slowed, Selwyn jumped off and Ron kept pushing. Selwyn spun behind him and took over his pushing position as Ron dashed ahead, ready to climb aboard. That's when the heat-induced madness set in. As Selwyn slowed to let him on board, Ron inexplicably launched himself into the air in a flying sideways leap, landing his full weight squarely on the plank seat. The bearings collapsed, the wheel rims buckled, and the spokes pinged out sideways like scarifiers. The axles bowed and the whole chassis ground to a shuddering halt as the bottom of the pram thudded onto the floor in a cloud of dust and gravel. Ron rolled off the plank, picked himself up and helped Selwyn to straighten up from where his skinned and bleeding knees still rested on the gravel floor.

'Sorry, little brother.'

Their race was over.

They looked at each other. Selwyn laughed at the hopelessness of the situation. Ron sighed. Discussion was unnecessary. Together they lifted the remains of the pram to carry them up and over the last hill to the pub as the other competitors closed the gap. However, such was their lead that, even when just walking, they still finished before any of the others. But they knew that they were disqualified for being unfit to race. It didn't matter; it would be a better tale to laugh about later over a pint than if they'd won.

'The farm lads will have a field day now,' said Ron.

The crowd laughed and cheered as they walked in. A very pregnant Mary was holding out a pint of Rampant Ram for Ron. Standing next to her was the most stunning girl that Selwyn had ever seen. And the vision was holding out a sorely needed pint towards him.

'Hello Mary, still looking swell as usual,' said Selwyn, his eyes still on the vision. 'No nearer producing that baby yet?'

'I was hoping the excitement of watching you two race today might move things along but after hearing about that pathetic finish, no chance!'

'Thanks for the pint err … what's your friend's name?'

'This is Megan, Selwyn. She knows who you are. She was at school with you although a few years below. She remembers having to watch you play rugby for the school 1st XV on Wednesday afternoons. Don't you recognise her?'

'You'd think that I should have remembered that.'

'Nice outfit, not as attractive as your rugby strip though,' Megan laughed, pointing at the giant nappy. 'It reminds me of work.'

'What work?'

'I'm a nurse at Northshire Herdwick Hospital. I've just moved back to the village after working down south.'

'We met when I went to maternity for a check-up. I invited her to join us today,' said Mary, looking very intently at Selwyn for a response.

'I'm pleased that you did.'

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The evening in the pub was a great success. Hunger was satisfied and thirsts were quenched. The farm lads thought that Ron and Selwyn's disastrous race was hilarious and asked them to tell and re-tell the story continuously in the crowded bar. Selwyn noticed that he and Ron hardly had to buy any drinks. With each re-telling the farm lads thrust another pint each into their hands and Ron embellished the tale until it was cemented into local legend. By the end of the night, he had Selwyn and himself 'three fields ahead of the pack' and his sideways leap included enough twists and somersaults to win the diving gold medal at the Olympic pool.

In a rare quiet moment Selwyn whispered to Ron, 'Surprisingly, I think our failure in the race has earned you the outcome that you wanted. The farm lads seem to have accepted you, Ron.'

'I told you that I had a plan, Sel.'

'It seems that you were right, even if it worked out for all the wrong reasons.'

'What wrong reasons? It worked. Anyway, I told them that it was really all your crazy townie idea and that I never thought it would work.'

Megan asked, 'What are you two laughing about?'

Selwyn, with enough beer inside him now, seized his opportunity, 'Just remarking on what a good day it's been. By the way, what are the chances of me seeing you again after tonight?'

'Well, if you're thinking of continuing with pram racing then there's every chance that I'll see you in the hospital with more damage than skinned knees. Otherwise you'll just have to ask me out.'

'Tell me Megan. If I did end up in hospital, would you tell everyone about my injuries?'

'I wouldn't be allowed to – medical confidentiality.'

'That's good to know', thought Selwyn. 'I like a woman who can keep my confidences.'

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Diploma in Public Sector Asset Management

As a result of a protracted period of austerity in our economy and particularly in the public sector, key knowledge, skills and experience have been lost in property and asset management teams across the UK.

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Module 1 Strategic Asset Management, Introduction and Organisation

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Who should attend

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- Property Staff new to the public sector or new to Asset Management
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- Staff in other areas who may be involved in strategic property activity i.e. finance professionals, key clients from services, etc.
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How will the diploma be taught?

Whilst the diploma can only be attained by completing all 7 modules and successfully passing the end of course examination, each module is discreet and can be taken independent of other modules to help fill specific knowledge gaps. The course can be completed through online webinar training or via face to face classroom based teaching at locations around the country, or through a mixture of both.

How will the diploma be assessed?

Short confirmatory assessments will be completed at the end of each module to ensure students have understood the module content. At the end of module 7 a full written assessment will be completed covering all elements of the course.

What will be the cost of the diploma?

The cost of each module will be £400 for CIPFA Property Network Members and ACES members. For non-members each module will cost £500.

Network Members—£2,800+VAT for the full Diploma

Non Network Members—£3,500+VAT for the full Diploma

For a copy of the course syllabus please contact Keeley Forsyth, Property Business Support Officer at keeley.forsyth@cipfa.org