

The Changing Shape of the 'Landlord v Tenant' Relationship

Thursday 24 October 2013

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Courtesy of CBRE, CoreNet was able to host an exclusive preview of the forthcoming industry-wide campaign to be led by the UK-Green Building Council (UK-GBC), the aim of which is to improve the understanding of operational energy use in buildings.



Sam Pickering, chair of CoreNet UK Sustainability Community, led off saying that while there is a lot of data available and a lot of certification projects, there is little consistency and co-ordination between them. And there are many organisations that aren't paying any attention to operational energy use data for their buildings. Does BREEAM, he asked, mean anything as a stand-alone qualification? This notable lack of data for benchmarking buildings is the target of UK-GBC's latest project for which they are seeking information from the wider property community.



Explaining the evolution of the idea Richard Griffiths of UK-GBC described how it emerged from a desire to help UK-GBC members get to grips with their own energy use - to 'walk the talk'. The proposal now being taken forward is to provide non-domestic property owners, occupiers and the wider industry with a common, open-source data platform that creates consistency, rationalises effort and gives us all a better understanding of how buildings work. A consultation event on 5th November will ask 'What are organisations already doing?', 'What platforms are already in use?', and 'Are they fit for purpose?' The plan is for the scoping work to continue through November and December with a view towards the platform being ready to receive data in July 2014 (tbc).



It was then down to Paul Ruysevelt of UCL's Energy Institute to explain why this project is important. Quoting examples from the Probe project he demonstrated how energy efficiency can be less than projected through bad design or even bad management and that if these results are fed back to the design community then designs will improve. The proposed web based project with UK-GBC is to be focussed on users' needs, easy, clear and consistent, and anonymous or named. Elements to be factored in include annual energy use by fuel type, location, floor area, and hours of use. The aim is to gather, store and share data on buildings across the UK.



Summing up, Sam noted anomalies in the landlord/tenant relationship, the importance of cost, energy and compliance, and institutional investment decisions. The missing element in benchmarking despite the mass of data is insufficient transparency. And the following panel discussion covered such points as multi-tenanted buildings, building performance and predictions for buildings often being not the same as the actual result. Questions raised covered the effect on listing of heritage buildings, the easiest area for energy saving, and the component of energy costs in service charges.

The subject of the meeting attracted a good and varied audience and its success was demonstrated by the number of informal discussions arising afterwards.