

Turning ESG Strategies into reality – Using practical, human centred, real estate tools & processes to support ethical investment decisions

by Rob Parker and Henry Dace

How can corporate real estate be sustainable? There's a plethora of differing sustainability ratings, sometimes little data available from landlords or managers, and now a hybrid workforce results in hundreds of thousands of corporate work 'places'.

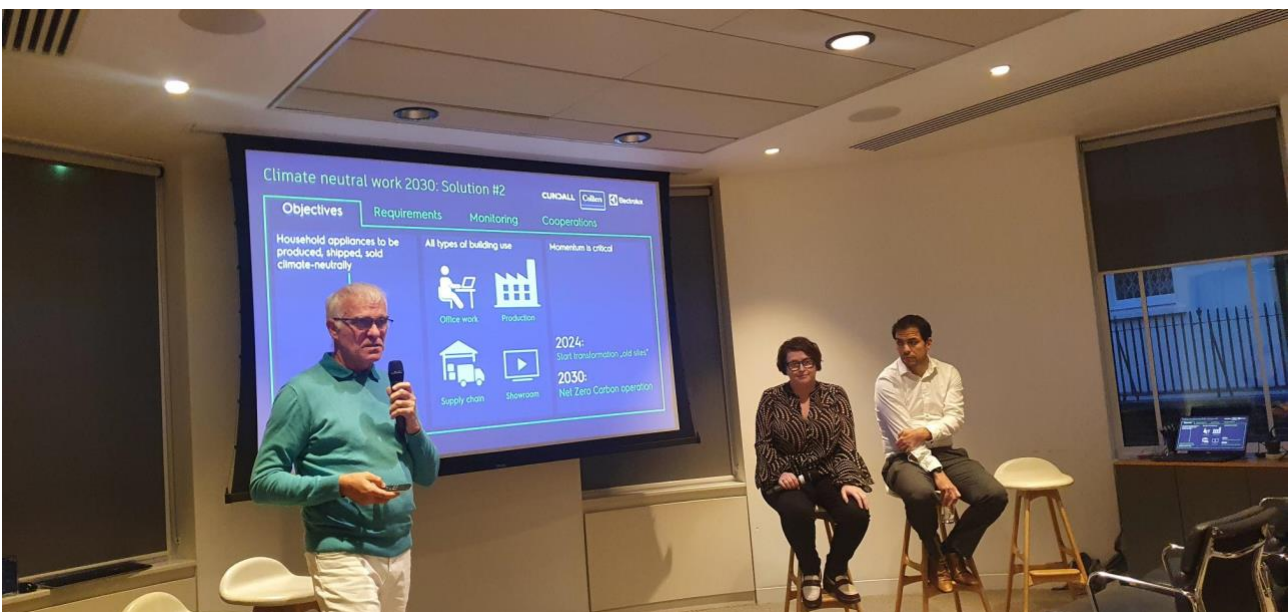


Our Sustainability Community gathered last week at the [Colliers HQ](#) to discuss how corporate real estate teams can accurately include sustainability in making better portfolio decisions.

- Simon Wyatt of Cundall opened the session with broad assault that none of the many industry sustainability certifications truly represent the environmental costs of constructing and operating a building. Existing certification schemes mask carbon impact (by bringing in other criteria to inflate scores), excluded embodied carbon in the construction or fit-out, or don't take into account the behaviour of the building users. We often rely on these certifications as a shorthand when evaluating different buildings, but risk misinformed decisions.
- Whilst certifications are plentiful, there are few established international principles for corporate disclosure and reporting. The differing approaches of landlords and occupiers can frequently be in conflict, even as we all aim to achieve better outcomes for the planet and society. Green Leasing practices are helping to solve this in some areas. One element often overlooked is the embodied carbon of buildings, with inconsistency in how embodied carbon should be depreciated over a building's lifecycle – 5 years, 15 years, 50 years?
- With an increasingly hybrid workforce, corporate workplaces now contribute a smaller proportion of an organisation's operational carbon footprint. How to we account and report on our organisation's work is being performed across so many facilities outside of our control? What is the carbon cost of a Team's meeting vs in person travel?



One occupier taking the bull-by-the-horns is Sweden-based [Electrolux](#), which places sustainability firmly at the centre of their organisation. They have partnered with Cundall and Colliers to develop a new ISO aligned tool to provide greater insight on ‘net zero’ credentials for property portfolios. Identifying that gathering data from landlords or agents is often difficult, the team collaborated to extrapolate available data to build a model that presents a broad and consistent evaluation of properties under consideration – even with minimal inputs to provide a meaningful output for decision making. This is a decision-making tool not just another accreditation system!



This system accounts for whole life carbon accounting, identifies performance within a portfolio, benchmarks acquisition/ leasing options and helps manage carbon intensity of projects. While current benchmarking for net zero decisions is a fog of solutions, with occupiers and landlords working towards varying goals and having different access to data; This system hopes to solve these challenges by being simple, iterative, transparent and open. With the aim of being freely available and open source in the future and run by a non-profit organisation with wide availability to anonymised data to allow users to benchmark their estates carbon performance.



Electrolux have deployed this tool for their portfolio and, with Cundall and Colliers, are looking to share it with other organisations (so please do get in touch with us at Corenet UK uksustainability@corenetglobal.org.uk if you are looking to collaborate on this impressive tool)

Thank you to all the presenters – [Kilian Keller](#), [Simon Wyatt](#), and [Sam Addison](#), and the moderator, [Marylis Ramos](#) for the engaging conversation, Colliers for hosting, everyone who joined - and especially all those who asked so many engaging questions! Join us for our next event as we grow the [CoreNet UK Sustainability Community](#)!