

# **Annual Environmental Sustainability Report 2024**

## **Report from the Head of Environmental Sustainability**

This report covers progress under the Environmental Sustainability Theme at the CIOB during the period 1 January to 31 December 2024.

### **Executive Summary**

This is the first annual report on progress under the Environmental Sustainability theme of the Corporate Plan and the implementation of the Environmental Sustainability Action Plan.

During 2024 progress has been strong, with momentum gathering throughout the year, and this will provide a strong foundation to build upon in 2025.

Highlights have included:

- The launch of the CIOB's first comprehensive Environmental Sustainability Action Plan, which provides the roadmap for implementation of this focused corporate plan theme
- The establishment of a Sustainability Ambassadors Initiative, with 35 member ambassadors and 7 internal champions appointed
- The CIOB's first annual Sustainability Conference, which focused on Accelerating the Built Environment Towards Net Zero in 2024
- Extensive communications supporting the environmental sustainability theme across all channels and the launch of the Nature of Building: Biodiversity in the Built Environment digital series, which has resulted in an unprecedented level of engagement
- Detailed policy research, advocacy and consultation responses as well as considerable media coverage for the sustainability theme
- Active engagement in the COP29 UN Climate Change Conference

### **The CIOB's commitment to Environmental Sustainability**

The CIOB's objectives, defined by our Royal Charter, include the promotion for the public benefit of the science and practice of building and construction as well as the advancement of public education in that science and practice. No current definition of public benefit can neglect our role in tackling the environmental crisis, and the CIOB must provide visible leadership for sustainability, promoting environmental sustainability in construction practice, and advancing the development of relevant knowledge and skills to enable members and wider industry to make a positive contribution to a sustainable future.

The CIOB Corporate Plan 2023-28 identified Environmental Sustainability as a focused strategic theme and outlined three ambitions goals to:

- equip CIOB members (individual and company) with the knowledge and skills to manage and deliver the construction process in environmentally sustainable ways.
- embed environmental sustainability into relevant learning programmes across schools, colleges, and universities.
- support industry and stakeholders in building the case for change through environmentally sustainable activities and metrics.

The Environmental Sustainability action plan is a framework to deliver change, setting out activities to embed Sustainability across CIOB directorates and functions for the period January 2024 to December 2028. The measures include providing visible leadership for sustainability on a national and international basis, including influencing policy-makers; ensuring leadership for sustainability is a core part of the value proposition of CIOB membership at all grades; embedding sustainability in relevant learning programmes and ensuring built environment professionals have the knowledge and skills they need to embed environmental sustainability in their approach to modern professionalism; supporting other crucial stakeholders such as clients, and ensuring the CIOB is 'walking the talk' in its own operations.

The plan includes approximately 70 actions, to be delivered over a five-year period, aligned with the Corporate Plan period.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **i) The Board of Trustees**

As the governing body of the CIOB, the Board of Trustees (BoT) is responsible for the management of the Institute and ensuring that it meets its obligations as set out in the Royal Charter, in addition to relevant legislation and regulations. The BoT will consider this annual report to monitor progress against the agreed Environmental Sustainability objectives and other requirements.

### **ii) Environmental Sustainability Advisory Panel**

The CIOB Environmental Sustainability Advisory Panel provides a forum for members and non-members with expertise in Environmental Sustainability to support and promote the agenda across the built environment sector. The Panel is coordinated by the Policy Team and works with the CIOB and its Head of Environmental Sustainability, to play an advisory role and provide expertise to support the promotion of the environmental sustainability theme across the built environment sector at an international, national, devolved, state and regional level.

### **iii) Head of Environmental Sustainability**

The Head of Environmental Sustainability role was established in September 2023 and reports to the CEO on a day-to-day basis and the Board of Trustees annually. The role is responsible for ensuring that the CIOB embeds its commitment to environmental sustainability in all directorates and functions and demonstrates leadership across the built environment sector.

#### iv) Leadership Team

Each of the actions in the Environmental Sustainability Action Plan has a 'responsible director' who is responsible for ensuring the action is completed. This is generally the Director of the relevant directorate.

### Highlights and Achievements 2024

This is the first year of implementation of the Environmental Sustainability Action Plan and key highlights and achievements have included:

- i. The **Environmental Sustainability Action Plan** was approved in December 2023 and launched in January 2024 and has been communicated throughout the year. This has included a CPD Webinar for members (which is also available via the CIOB Academy), presentations at Members Forum, regional CPD events, Hub Committee Meetings, Global Staff Update, and a Take a Break and Learn session, as well as ongoing communication through the Sustainability Communications Plan (see also vii).
- ii. During the **members engagement survey** in 2024, we established a baseline for awareness of CIOB activity under this theme and engagement with it, for the first time. This demonstrated that 54% of members were aware of our activity under this theme and a total of 30% had engaged with it (either passively or actively). This provides us with a good baseline to build upon and will be measured annually to demonstrate progress.
- iii. In March, the CIOB launched the **Sustainability Ambassadors** Initiative, which aims to see all Hub Committees represented by an ambassador. By the end of the year, we had 35 Sustainability Ambassadors in post (24 UK and 11 international) which represents 86% of established and developing UK Hubs and 50% of established and developing international Hubs. Sustainability Ambassadors were provided with an initial briefing session and meet quarterly to share ideas, best practice and solutions. We also have 7 internal Green Team champions who meet monthly, bringing the total number of Sustainability Ambassadors/Champions to 42.
- iv. Environmental Sustainability has been a key theme in our other **knowledge development activities** during 2024. This has included a sustainability day as part of Members Forum in June, a total of 46 CPD sessions/events which have contributed to the sustainability theme delivered across our regions in

the UK and internationally, two sustainability-focused webinars for Company Members and two sessions which supported this theme for Tomorrow's Leaders. We also successfully delivered **new publications**: a new Guide to Embodied Carbon in the Built Environment as well as a Retrofit of Buildings Technical Information Sheet during 2024, the latter of which has also been translated into Chinese and is in the process of being translated into Arabic.

**Our portfolio of Environmental Sustainability products and services (courses, webinars, and publications) available via the CIOB Academy has increased from 132 to 159 (20% growth) with a 46.6% increase in uptake.**

During 2024 we also completed the review and refresh of the **CIOB Undergraduate Education Framework** for accredited degree programmes, which has included a significant refresh of sustainability requirements, and initiated the review and refresh of the postgraduate Education Framework which is due for completion in 2025.

- v. In September we delivered the CIOB's first ever **Environmental Sustainability Conference** (virtual) with the theme of Accelerating to a Net Zero Built Environment with an excellent list of speakers and panellists from the UK and internationally. This attracted 201 registrations (paid and unpaid), including CIOB Members, non-members, students and other stakeholders. Many thanks to the events team for their fantastic support of this event.
- vi. For the first time in 2024, we calculated the **carbon footprint of holding the Member's Forum in South Africa**, which found that the event would produce 389.1 tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> (including international flights: 369.6t, accommodation: 15.2t, catering: 4.2t, and materials: 0.133t). We were unable to include energy use at the venue or waste generated in these calculations, due to lack of data availability, which is an area for future improvement. As well as keeping these emissions as low as possible by only sending essential events staff in person, CIOB offset the remaining emissions by purchasing carbon credits through the United Nations Carbon offset platform, supporting a project on the African continent.
- vii. We have had a particularly strong year in terms of building the case for change through **sustainability-related communications**, with thanks to all involved in the Marketing & Communications Teams. We have delivered a comprehensive sustainability communications plan during 2024, which has included 15 sustainability-themed CIOB blog posts, a Biodiversity Themed edition of both Construction Management and 21CC Podcast on World Habitat Day, a marketing campaign aimed at raising awareness about the

Chartered Environmentalist registration, and regular sustainability themed communications across all our CIOB channels.

**Social Media Analytics demonstrate that we have had a total of 138 posts supporting the environmental sustainability theme, resulting in 5.7k clicks, with a reach of 627.1k and 4.4k likes.**

In addition to this the Head of Environmental Sustainability's own LinkedIn posts on this topic have generated almost 175,000 impressions, demonstrating the value of CIOB staff being active on social media.

- viii. In October and November, we launched our extensive **new digital series** The Nature of Building: Biodiversity and the Built Environment across two phases. This project was a partnership between the Chartered Institute of Building and Content with Purpose, and it was delivered at no cost to the CIOB (being fully funded by sponsored partner content). The series comprises partner content, expert interviews, and case studies. This includes contributions from both the UK and internationally.

Partner content was provided by AtkinsRealis, Birdlife Europe and Central Asia, Centre for Worldwide Sustainable Construction, Ibstock, Jewson, Marsh Industries, Morgan Sindall Construction, NatureSpace, and SpeedyHire. Additional Case Studies were provided by London Borough of Tower Hamlets and Stride Treglown (to follow).

Expert interviews were provided by Amanda Williams (CIOB), Anusha Shah (ICE), Sir John Armit (National Infrastructure Commission), Marco Lambertini (Nature Positive Initiative), Martin Baxter (IEMA), Nigel Silcock (Exubia), Stephanie Wray (Athene Consulting) and Tom Butterworth (Arup).

**A total of 13 videos were published with a reach of 556.1k, 618k video views, as well as 2.5k microsite visitors. This has been hugely successful in raising the profile of both the theme and the CIOB.**

- ix. In November, both the CIOB President and the Head of Environmental Sustainability attended **COP29 in Baku**, Azerbaijan. The 29<sup>th</sup> conference of the parties or UN Climate Change Conference ran for two weeks, with CIOB in attendance during week two to coincide with Urbanisation, Transport and Tourism Day, which is also the thematic day covering construction and the built environment. This provided an opportunity for us to contribute to events in both the Blue Zone and the Green Zone, observe official negotiations, meet with various industry stakeholders, and expand CIOB networks and visibility.

Our attendance at COP also provided the opportunity for CIOB communications via LinkedIn, CIOB Blogs, and external media. In the run up to the event we endorsed the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessments Green Skills at COP campaign which resulted in extensive coverage both in the UK and internationally.

- x. The **Policy, External Affairs & Research** Team have continued to do great work to support the environmental sustainability theme, through the facilitation of an active Sustainability Advisory Panel, and through research, advocacy and consultation responses. For example, CIOB submitted detailed responses to the Future Homes and Buildings Standards consultation, the reform of the National Planning Policy Framework consultation, and the Irish Draft Revision on National Planning Framework consultation. In the devolved nations of Scotland, ROI and NI, particularly detailed advocacy on this topic is carried out through well-established stakeholder relationships and committee memberships. The Policy and Public Affairs Officer for Scotland led a crucial cross-industry collaboration to encourage the Scottish Government to take urgent strategic action on draughty homes, resulting in a research report entitled Meeting Scotland's Retrofit Challenge: solutions from the industry. The Head of Sustainability also attended roundtables with the new Ministers for Climate and Nature, and the Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Climate Change.

The Global Working Group has also initiated a piece of work to map the **international policy landscape** on environmental sustainability in relation to construction, an exercise due for completion in 2025.

- xi. We have been very successful in securing **media coverage** of our work under the environmental sustainability theme, with thanks to the Media Relations Team. This has included an opinion piece in The Times, comment in The Guardian, a double page spread in Transform magazine, a podcast episode with Responsible Edge Podcast, and numerous pieces across external industry media in the UK and internationally as well as our own publications. In 2024, we had 235 separate pieces of media content supporting the Environmental Sustainability theme - 19% of all Media content achieved.
- xii. Environmental Sustainability has been a key theme in **Client Development activities** in 2024 with three net zero roundtables held for client organisations in the education, housing, and developers/investors sectors. The Sustainability section of the Client Guide has also been substantially refreshed ready for the relaunch in 2025, and additional sustainability-related resources have been added to the client pages of the website.

- xiii. In December 2024, our **new [Sustainability pages of the CIOB website](#)** went live providing a one-stop shop for all sustainability activity and resources which is easy to find and navigate from the CIOB homepage.

### **Challenges and Areas for Improvement**

Overall, the Environmental Sustainability Action Plan has enjoyed excellent support from colleagues and members, however, there have been some minor challenges including:

- i. Willingness of volunteers to come forward for the Sustainability Ambassador roles - this has taken some considerable encouragement. Areas for improvement include the London, North of England and MENA Regions and the Head of Sustainability continues to work with CIOB colleagues in these areas to close the gaps.
- ii. We have worked hard to increase communications and awareness about the Chartered Environmentalist registration this year, however, this has not yet been translated into an increase in rates of application with just five successful applications in 2024 despite the best efforts of all involved. Recognising that there can be a time lag between increased awareness and application, due to factors such as confidence, competing priorities, procrastination, and filling evidence gaps relating to the competencies, we hope to see this effort reflected in increased applications in 2025.
- iii. The Environmental Sustainability Action Plan makes several commitments in relation to the impact of our own Operations, and while there has been some good progress in this area in 2024, there are also areas where progress has been hampered by the need for colleagues to focus on other strategic priorities such as the implementation of the new CRM. This is an area where additional effort in 2025 will be required to get back on track, and given an additional action planned for 2025 on scope 3 emissions.

### **Decision**

This report was presented to and noted by the Board of Trustees on 28 January 2025.