

CREATING CIRCULAR WORKSPACES

To Support Your Journey To Net Zero

“

**We must work as one-
Governments, companies, and consumers
alike - to break our addiction to plastics,
champion zero waste, and build a truly
circular economy.**

Antonio Guterres

UN Secretary General,
World Environment Day 2023

Inspiring places and performance
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CROWN 
WORKSPACE

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Phil Oram

Regional Director, Crown Workspace UKI

Whilst good environmental practice has always been important to our clients, increasingly with the drive to net zero we are finding clients and workplace strategists engaging directly with us on their and our net zeros targets.

We know from our own experience that embracing the plans to deliver net zero targets as an organisation takes commitment. For anyone working towards developing and embedding a sustainability policy, the journey involves navigating new hurdles for which there is no previous strategy or track record.

We believe that for the courageous, this latest business challenge represents a huge opportunity to stand out from the crowd and become a pioneer.

Benefits of circular economy values are not only in protecting our planet from rising temperatures. Lower carbon emissions will free up energy budgets, and an enhanced reputation both internally and among customers has the potential to yield impressive results.

Circularity has become more and more mainstream, with the spotlight firmly shining on global brands' emissions and values. As customers vote with their money, smaller businesses must follow suit, embedding and communicating circular values.

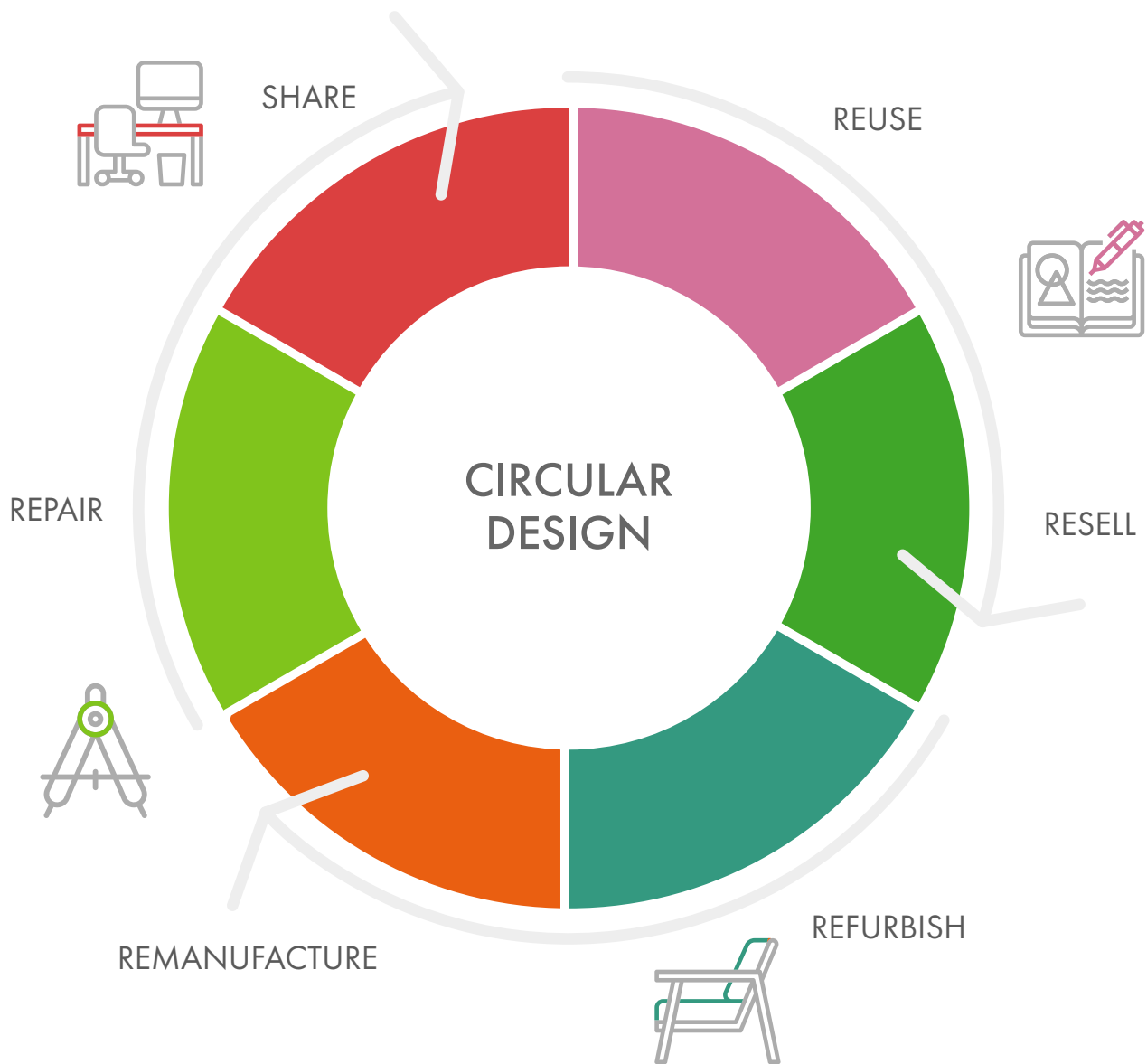
When it comes to your business's sustainability goals, actions speak louder than words. We hope that you find the insights helpful in your own journey.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P. Oram". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Phil Oram

Regional Director, Crown Workspace UKI

WHY TURN YOUR WORKPLACE CIRCULAR



Embedding these circular economy principles will support organisations working towards net Zero targets that have become imperative in today's economic environment. Doing so can also deliver cost savings, competitive advantage and enhanced reputation, as well as social value – surely no business can afford to turn its back on such opportunities?

The circular model

The effects of climate change are being felt across the world. The significant impact we are having on people and the planet has been taken to heart by many of us and is influencing what we invest in and who we work for, what products we buy and who we will buy them from. Businesses are being driven by their stakeholders, regulations and market pressures to set net zero targets and adopt circular economy principles to play their part in tackling the climate emergency and to give the world a chance of slowing climate change.

The cornerstones of a circular economy - designing out waste and pollution, keeping products and materials in use, and regenerating

natural systems – are sound business practices as well as benefiting our environment and society. Yet embracing circularity and transforming theory into practice can present a challenge for organisations who need to rethink strategies, systems and operations before the wheels of revolution can begin to turn.

For businesses looking to transform their processes and systems into a more circular model, the workplace itself is an ideal place to start.

Acquiring less, minimising waste, prolonging assets' lifecycles are principles that can easily be applied through everyday operations, refurbishment projects or relocations.





BUILDING A CIRCULAR WORKPLACE: Pivotal Point On Your Net Zero Journey

The UK's built environment is responsible for 25% of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions. emissions (UK Green Building Council). And embodied carbon from the construction and refurbishment sector – that is carbon emissions from the production of the materials used in those projects - makes up 20% of UK built environment emissions (World Green Business Council). Tackling these emissions therefore, by bringing circular economy values into the workplace, has the potential to contribute significantly not only to a business' net zero target but that of the UK as a whole.

When we talk about a circular workplace, we mean a workspace that is designed and managed with these principles in mind – through responsible procurement, repair and remanufacturing to prolong the life of assets, and eliminating waste wherever possible. This has the potential to make dramatic impact on your financial, social and environmental goals

but the onus is senior management to create a culture which is founded upon the key principles of the circular economy, so that processes can put words into action.

Sustainability values are not a quick fix: there are hurdles to overcome. Yet where there's a will, there's a way – supply chains are developing, knowledge is being shared. If your organisation is committed to making a difference to the future of our planet, then support is out there.

This document, sharing the learning and experiences of those already putting circular economy principles into practice, can help you get started. And as you communicate the wins from each action you take, those positive messages will gather momentum and help sustainability become a core pillar of your workplace values.

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS CIRCULAR WORKSPACES

Three organisations showcase the results from adopting circular economy principles

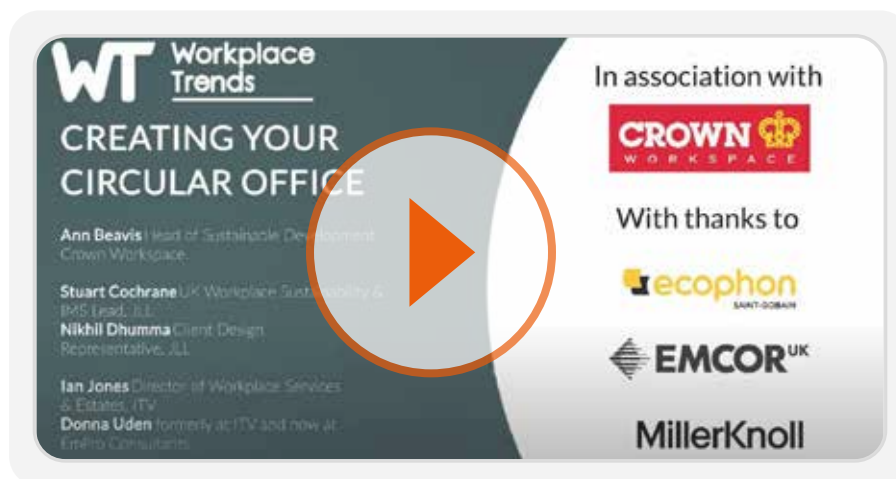
In the spirit of 'working as one' towards the circular economy, as evoked by the UN, event organisers [Workplace Trends](#) hosted a presentation by workplace planners and designers who shared their experiences and knowledge about creating circular workspaces as a catalyst for wider change.

Representatives from Crown Workspace, JLL and ITV focused on the hopes, the hurdles and

the high-five moments during their circular workspace projects and showcased the financial and environmental results the projects yielded.

In this white paper, we will explore some of the key themes and learnings from the event with the aim of helping other organisations navigating their way towards turning their workspaces circular.

Click below to watch the complete recordings of all presentations from this event:



WHAT, WHO, WHEN, WHERE?

Four key challenges, and solutions for creating a circular workplace

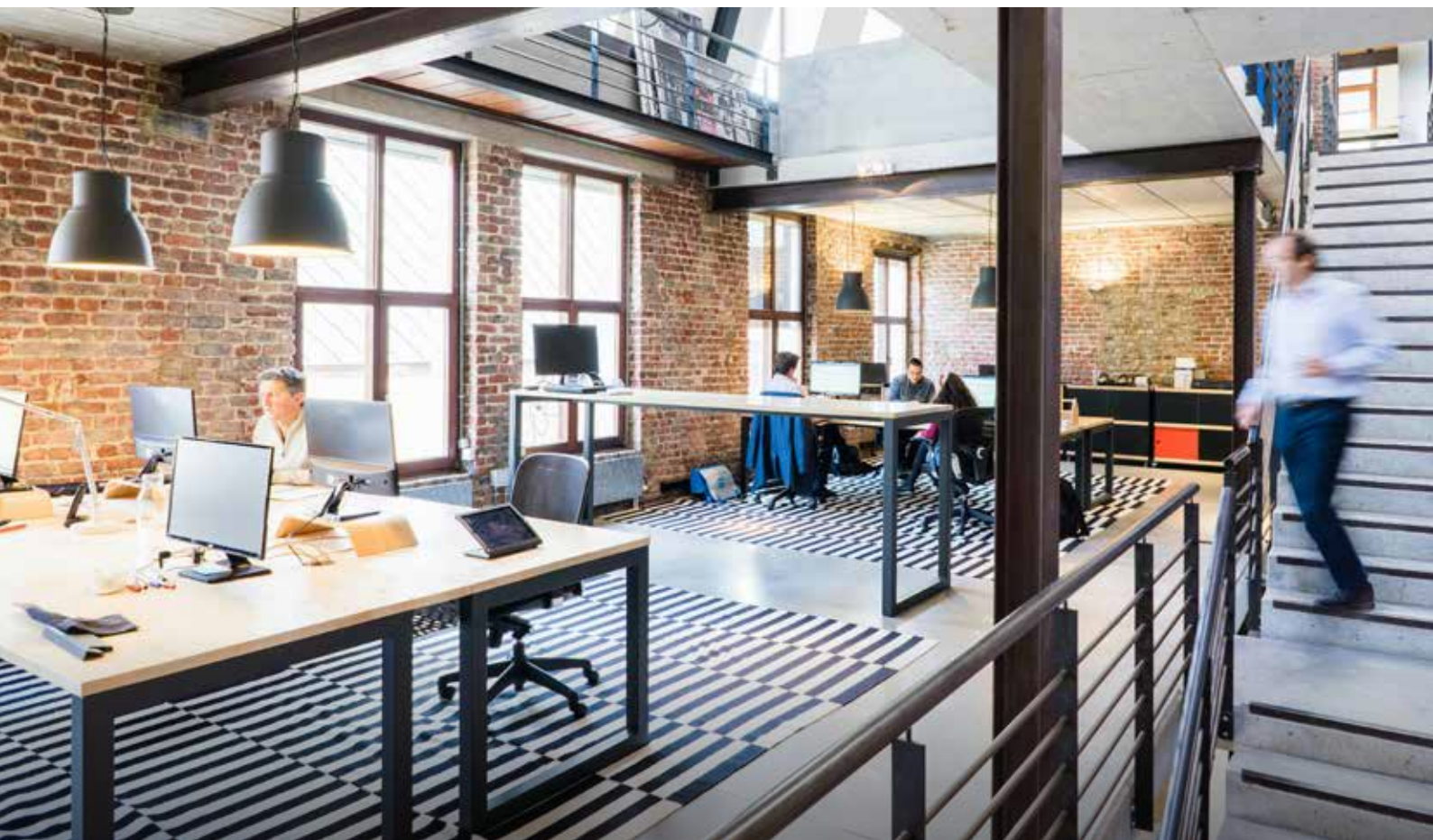
Successfully integrating circular economy principles into the workplace starts with laying strong foundations. This approach ensures that early successes are not short-lived, but instead lead to lasting, impactful change.

1. What Does A Circular Workspace Look And Feel Like?

Offices, manufacturing sites, warehouses, meeting rooms: physical buildings showcase a business's core values and culture to the workforce, suppliers and clients. So what better place to start the journey to net zero than by tackling the bricks and mortar.

But what does a circular economy workplace look like, exactly? The answer will be different for every organisation, every industry. There is no blueprint.

In a typical office set up, furniture and laptops for 100 office-based workers represents 30 tonnes of embodied carbon – the equivalent of powering 44 homes for a year. (Crown Workspace statistics 2024)



Your first steps towards circular workplace could begin with:

Redesigning spaces to be flexible and adaptable

Reconfiguring communal areas for multiple uses can enable businesses to downsize workspaces, optimise the space they have, and minimise the need to continually refurbish as requirements evolve.



Donating redundant equipment to charity partners

End-of-life electrical, furniture and IT items can be donated to charity organisations to keep these items in use for longer, thus adding social value.



YOUR FIRST STEPS TOWARDS CIRCULAR WORKPLACE COULD BEGIN WITH



Choosing pre-loved furniture over new

To change preconceptions over second hand items, finding a quality supplier and communicating financial and environmental savings can combat negative attitudes.



Purchasing reconditioned IT equipment

Tackling e-waste offers huge potential for net zero targets. Finding a reliable supplier of reconditioned IT ensures security and quality items for staff use.



Tackling canteen waste

Rethink menus to limit food and packaging waste, phase out single use plastics and consider composting or giving away leftovers.

Such changes are all valid ways to reduce the carbon footprint of any size of business, yielding not only financial results and contributing to sustainability and social value reporting, but also demonstrating the organisation's cultural values to the team, clients and stakeholders.



2. Who Should Be Involved?

Business strategy is typically the remit of the executive board or top tier management, but when it comes to sustainability, everyone has their role to play.

Gaining support from senior management is, needless to say, essential. For Ian Jones, Director of Workplace Services and Estates at ITV, getting a Financial Director on board was key to the success of delivering a large-scale relocation sustainably:

“Getting a high-level sponsor meant sustainability was embedded from the beginning.”

Basic questions such as, ‘Do we have to throw it away?’ ‘Is there a spare one somewhere?’ and ‘How can it be fixed?’ have the power to become deep-rooted cultural values which flood the system from the top down (or the bottom up).

But whilst the responsibility to build a more sustainable business falls on everyone’s shoulders, if there is no clear role allocated to the implementation of the policy and decision-making, action can be half hearted.

Designating or creating a role with clear responsibilities will ensure that liaison between teams is fluid and helps to drive visible results.

External stakeholders matter too: communicating your organisation’s circular economy principles can – and should – include suppliers, customers, service providers, even charity partners.

Behaviour change within a team does take time, but through communication and reward, the organisation will cruise towards net zero with happy people on board the ship, sailing alongside a fleet of other like-minded pioneers.



3. When To Start?

The sooner circular principles are embedded in a project plan, the easier it will be to achieve the overall aims. Hesitating over decisions when it comes to sustainable workplace change could cause the general movement to lose momentum as various parties become frustrated by lack of clarity. It is vital not to lose sight of the end goal: change for the better.

If possible, allowing research time can open up extra possibilities to reuse. Thorough research early on will help avoid rushed decision making and misplaced investments.

Finding the right partners bolsters success, so taking the time to research what support is required and find a suitable service provider to carry it out can ultimately forge a long-term relationship in which both sides can flourish in this newly circular world.

“staggering of estate leases gives more opportunity to strip out as many assets as possible for relocation to the new premises, rather than having to abandon serviceable furniture or décor due to lack of storage or space, or because company relocation timeframes mean that an entire building needs vacating Friday and the whole company starts in a new building on the Monday .”

Likewise, as new business strategies or projects are developed, make sure that sustainability targets are included in the plan from the outset. As evidenced by ITV’s Director of Workplace Services and Estates in the [Workplace Trends presentation](#).

4. Where To Begin?

Developing and carrying out a company-wide movement towards a circular economy can be overwhelming, especially if finances and staffing are already stretched.

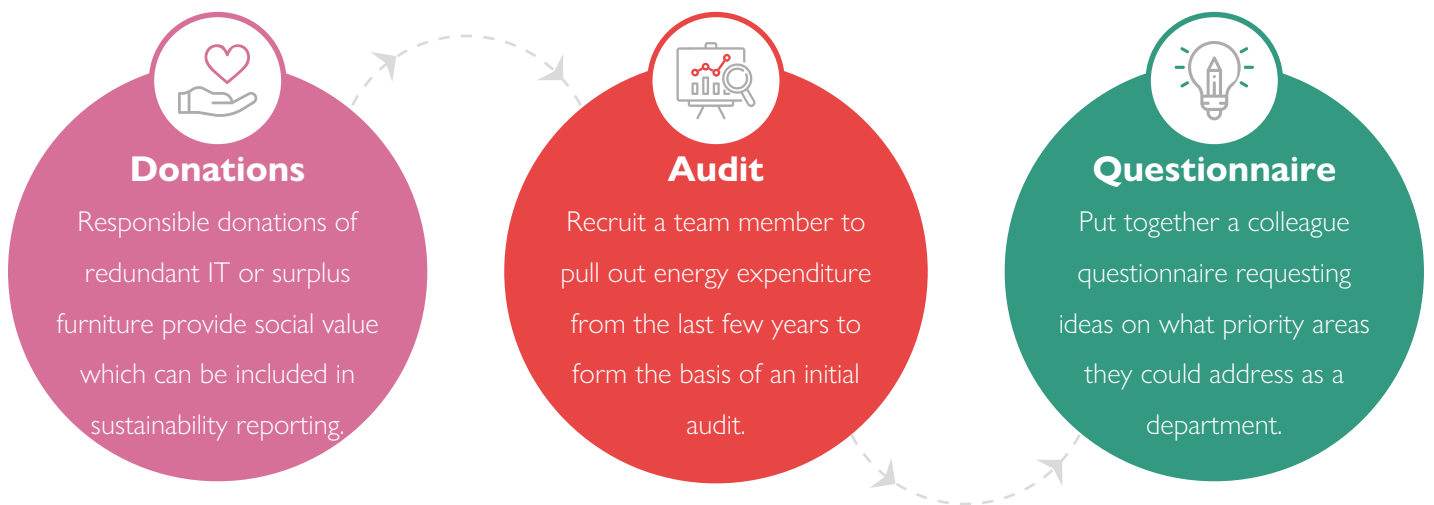
Staying realistic about schedules and goals will avoid frustration and disappointment. If the overall vision is not yet clear, start anyway, but start small.

Quick, every day changes can build up to a significant success when it comes to end of year reporting, so be sure to record actions and results as they happen. Indeed, these small actions may also inspire more substantial processes and strategy changes in the wider business.

Stuart Cochrane, JLL's UK Workplace Sustainability and IMS Lead advocates a feet first approach when it comes to initiating a sustainability project:

“Until you start, you won't know what the problems are that you need to solve.”

How about starting here?



THREE INSPIRING STORIES

JLL – harnessing data and sharing workspace design stories on the journey towards a 2030 net zero goal

Recognising that the built environment makes a huge impact on global carbon emissions through its use of raw materials led JLL to embrace the challenge of pursuing a collaborative and optimistic way forward to demonstrate leadership within their own real estate. In 2019, the real estate services company signed up to the World Green Building Council Net Zero Carbon Buildings Commitment. Since then, carbon reduction has been embedded into the corporate real estate strategy with a commitment to only occupy assets that achieve net zero operation carbon by 2030.

Stuart Cochrane, JLL's UK Workplace Sustainability and IMS Lead acknowledges that moving from a linear to a circular economy needs a mindset shift. This could be overwhelming, he admits, but encourages businesses to, "just start the journey," of embedding circularity and reuse into office space design.

Likewise, Nikhill Dhumma, JLL's EMEA Design and Programme Director, recommends that a post-Covid redesign of the workspace represents an opportunity to make some environmentally driven improvements, both physically and in attitude. As desk ownership is less of a permanent idea with colleagues

working flexibly, he explains that "spaces need to work hard to be flexible and reconfigurable." He also advocates storytelling for internal and external engagement: "It is important to explain the impact of key decisions to key stakeholders

"It is really important that circular or second life doesn't mean second best," says Cochrane.

early on to get their buy in. If you get asked those questions mid-way through, then the whole thing slows down."

And so JLL's team make use of clever design solutions – reusing existing materials to create new, easily-dismantled furniture, and making sure any new materials procured can be reused in the future.

Key discussions about circular design in recent fit out projects have focused heavily on positive messaging: Storytelling is key to getting stakeholders on board. JLL takes the opportunity to give tours of, and share stories about, their flagship circular workplace fit-outs. "Stories that resonate are often about materials, giving back and social value." Dhumma points out. During such tours, the JLL team take the time to detail the decision-making processes. This helps visitors understand that using meeting pods instead of setting aside entire rooms is better for energy consumption, or that the decision not to add suspended ceilings saves dramatic amounts of carbon.

JLL's methodology on each bespoke fit out project that the team have undertaken since 2020 has harnessed the internal capabilities of the team to capture and analyse data, from which the decisions for the next project are based.

Even though going circular in the workplace remains a relatively new concept for many businesses, in conclusion, Cochrane believes

that “embedding (circular) aspirations into projects, and indicating your intent, gives you a chance.”

He reassures anyone attempting a circular project that, “there are supply chains out there – and more suppliers are coming through. You need to secure the right design and construction partners. There will be more opportunities and enthusiasm than you think.”

Click to watch the recording of the presentation:



ITV – Maximising space and assets across a global estate

“What do we need in the new building and what can we do with what we’ve got?” asked Ian Jones, Director of Workplace Services and Estates at ITV when pondering how to start on a project to create a social space in a property accommodating 1,250 people. The first answer was to cut down desks to create extra space, prioritising the larger desks for permanently present colleagues - but Ian knew they needed to think beyond furniture. The team managed to lift and reuse almost 30,000 sq ft of carpet, as well as light fittings and even stripped air conditioning units (that they knew would be scrapped) for spare parts in the new building. They engaged early with the landlord of the building they were leaving who was going to strip out the space and install new. As a result, they were even able to take the entire underfloor power infrastructure!

ITV has embraced the concept of home working: “The first way of being sustainable: reduce our property portfolio.”

Like so many businesses in the early 2020s, the workplace changed dramatically. A collaborative partnership with Crown Workspace’s Renew team was formed, which saw existing desks used in more flexible designs that could be interchanged to suit a more flexible space.

A major step forward for the post-Covid project was to get a “high level sponsor” in this case, a Finance Director who was seeking to evidence sustainability. Reuse was embedded in the project from beginning.

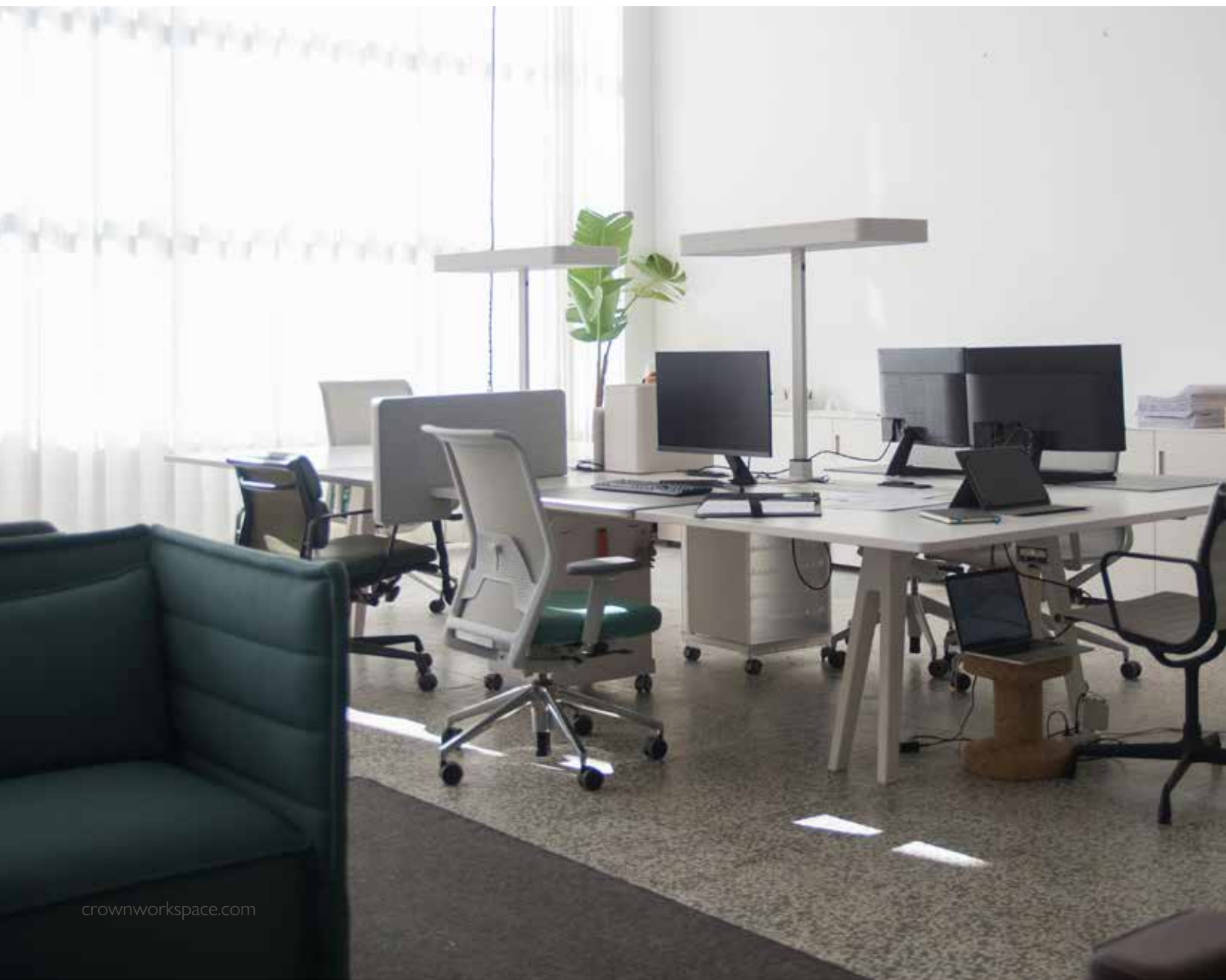
This new strategy yielded impressive results and became part of the ‘business as usual’ ethos. As the office footprint reduced from 200,000 to 120,000 sq.ft, Jones was careful with assets, retaining and relocating as much as possible, then donating or selling what couldn’t be reused, and sending nothing to landfill where possible. Jones adds, “If we got to the stage of recycling, we were disappointed.”

Click to watch the recording of the presentation:



Whilst carbon reporting was not a priority (but has been estimated at 180 tonnes), **financial benefits were an impressive £2.3 million**, through careful asset reuse during ITV's relocation to White City. Knowing that so many assets would be reused formed a relatable story to share with stakeholders. Donna Uden, EmPro Consultants and formerly of ITV, explains that although it is not always easy to find suppliers or service providers for all tasks, it is worth persisting: "We even found someone to take the very old foam rubber from furniture that we couldn't donate because

it didn't have fire safety tags. This was recycled and used instead of virgin materials to create surfaces for children's playgrounds." Part of the mission was also to tackle a hoarding mentality by simply shutting down many available storage spaces. After a ruthless sort out, all retained items were asset tagged and a system was set up "like eBay" whereby teams could request and locate particular items as required. Other items were sold off or given away, giving social value to items which had previously been hiding in storage.





Crown Workspace – Collaborating To Tackle The Decarbonisation Challenge

Sustainability has been the backbone of Crown’s business strategy for over a decade, and has certainly helped many clients reduce their carbon footprint and add social value. But staying abreast of evolving workplace practices in environmental matters has required agility and forward-thinking. Understanding circular economy principles and embracing them in their own business’s day-to-day practices has helped Crown’s leadership team to understand clients’ changing needs and develop services to help drive the circular revolution.

Ann Beavis, Head of Sustainable Development at Crown Workspace, Discusses the Company’s Sustainability Focus

“The climate crisis and social inequality are now at the forefront of business leaders’ minds,” explains Ann, “so Crown’s focus as a business has moved from managing waste in line with the waste hierarchy, to preserving assets and materials to keep them in use for longer, helping our clients’ reduce their carbon footprints, and give social value back to their communities.”

“Crown has developed new sustainable services, expanded facilities and capabilities, and seen demand for these grow exponentially. And all this has created fulfilling jobs in the green economy too.”

“We have transformed our business to focus on value creation not just for clients but for communities and the environment,”



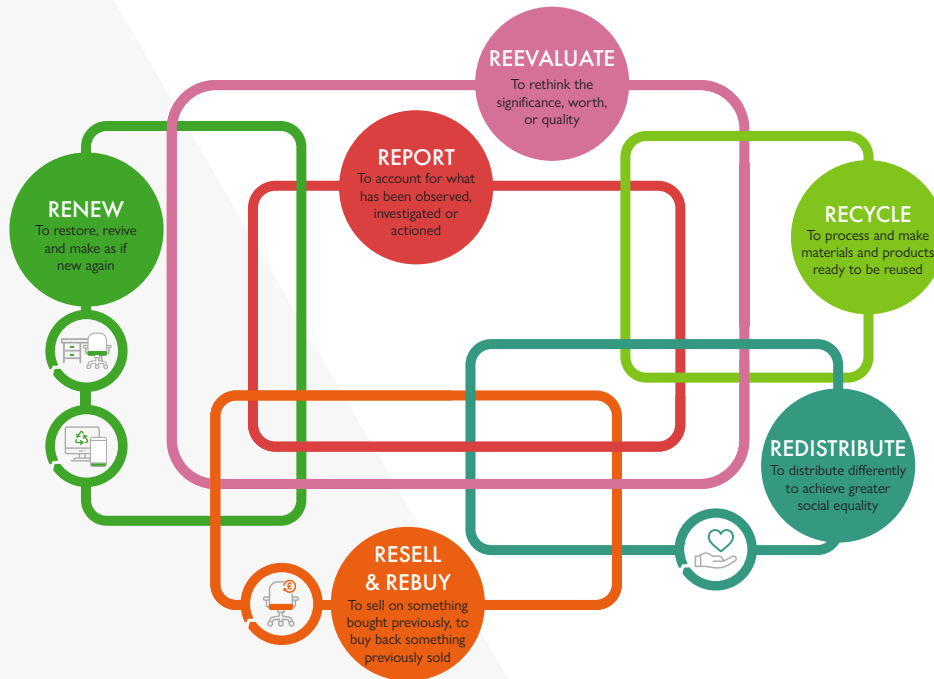
Working in close partnership with clients from the very beginning of a workplace change has yielded some remarkable results:

- Logging, storing and tracking assets has enabled larger organisations to reuse items within their wider estates. Team members can view an existing item in the database, see an image, understand its condition, check its location and have it delivered.
- Rather than procuring new furniture, when clients switched to agile working, the expert team at Crown's award-winning [Renew Centre](#) were able to reconfigure desks and meeting room furniture, keeping existing items in use for longer.
- During business relocations, Crown's IT specialists audit equipment, offer data wiping, and either recondition for resale through a dedicated channel, or donate it to public service or charity through the [Giving Back Project](#).



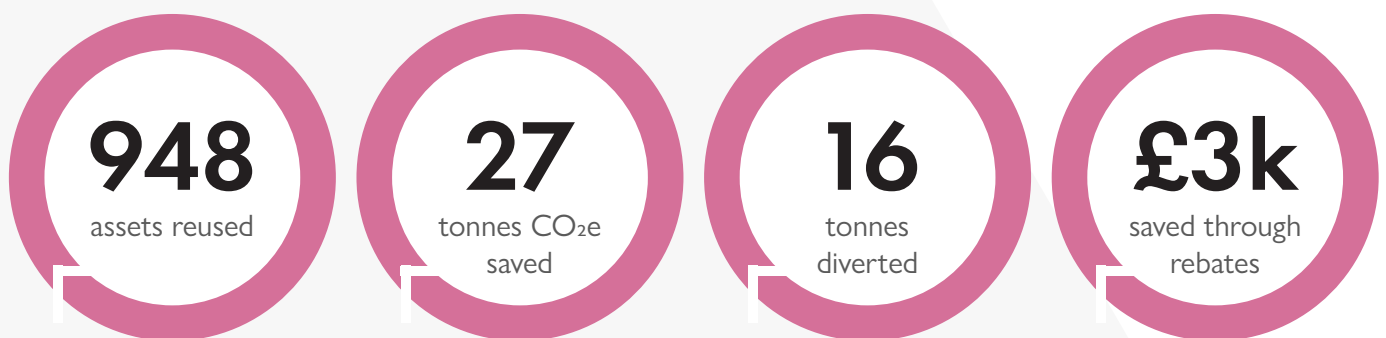
A collaborative approach with clients has helped Crown develop the services those in the built environment need to support their organisations' business and sustainability goal. The company has also been able to exceed internal net zero targets and yield a second Gold rating from EcoVadis in 2024, in the top 5% of all responding companies.

To reflect this shifted focus, the progress in the market, and Crown’s ability to embed circularity into business-as-usual practice for clients, Crown Circulate was launched in early 2024. Guided by six circular principles, Crown’s Circulate services are designed to create maximum value for clients’ communities and the environment. Our services are low carbon, embrace the circular economy and use natural resources responsibly.



Sustainability reporting for each office clearance, relocation or business as usual service carried out has meant that Crown’s clients can understand the project savings from reuse, resale and rebates, donations and the charities supported, and the carbon savings, and use these in their own annual sustainability reports and onward communications.

Project Highlights



This would be enough CO₂e to power **40 homes** with electricity for an entire year

Like JLL and ITV, the Crown team believes that storytelling is a responsibility of the collective journey to net zero. Visitors to Crown’s Renew Centre can see work in progress which gives clients inspirational ideas and gives the opportunity to discuss practical possibilities with the design team.

*(Source: example of what clients receive in the Client Savings Report)

KEY ACTIONS FOR A CIRCULAR WORKSPACE

Saying “this is our circular journey” loud and proud is an important part of the circular economy process: the revolution is based on collaboration. Some key takeaways from the Workplace Trends event include:

01

Have a go

Face the challenges head on, and learn through trying.

02

Get everyone involved

Working together to maintain momentum.

03

Designate a key member

To take overall responsibility and drive results.

04

Think reuse from the get go

Tighten the purse strings and adopt a reuse mindset.

05

Seek useful supply chain partners

Spend time researching and networking for word-of-mouth recommendations

06

Develop opportunities

To create financial, environmental and social value across the overall business.

07

Record and communicate every success story

To keep the good news rolling.

08

Make reuse part of your ‘Business as usual’ culture.

Additional resources

- <https://youtu.be/SyEDp36ixTU?feature=shared>
- <https://youtu.be/BZZSWrnrkC4?feature=shared>
- [Visit Crown Workspace’s Renew Centre](#)
- <https://workplaceevents.co/>
- [Read Crown Workspace white paper ‘Revolution versus Evolution: A Guide to adopting circular economy principles in your workplace’](#)
- <https://www.jll.co.uk/en/newsroom/jll-to-achieve-global-net-zero-carbon-emissions-by-2030>

Why Crown Workspace?

Crown Worldwide Group strive to adjust to ever-changing circumstances. We do everything possible to prioritise the health, safety and peace of mind of our employees and stakeholders and focus on the needs of our clients and customers.

Our story began over five decades ago. Since then, we've grown into an extraordinary global business that has helped millions of families relocate their lives throughout the world.

We have also helped thousands of companies move their office and IT equipment, as well as designing new work paces for many.

We've supported company assignments, transported priceless art collections and kept vast amounts of company data and records safe.

We know about change, and we know about people. We are committed to making it simpler to live, work, and do business anywhere in the world.

Contact us

Crown Workspace is your one-stop-shop for workplace change and an ideal partner for advising on and managing change right across the globe.

Get in touch to discuss your workspace challenges and requirements.

Web: crownworkspace.com

Inspiring places and performance
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