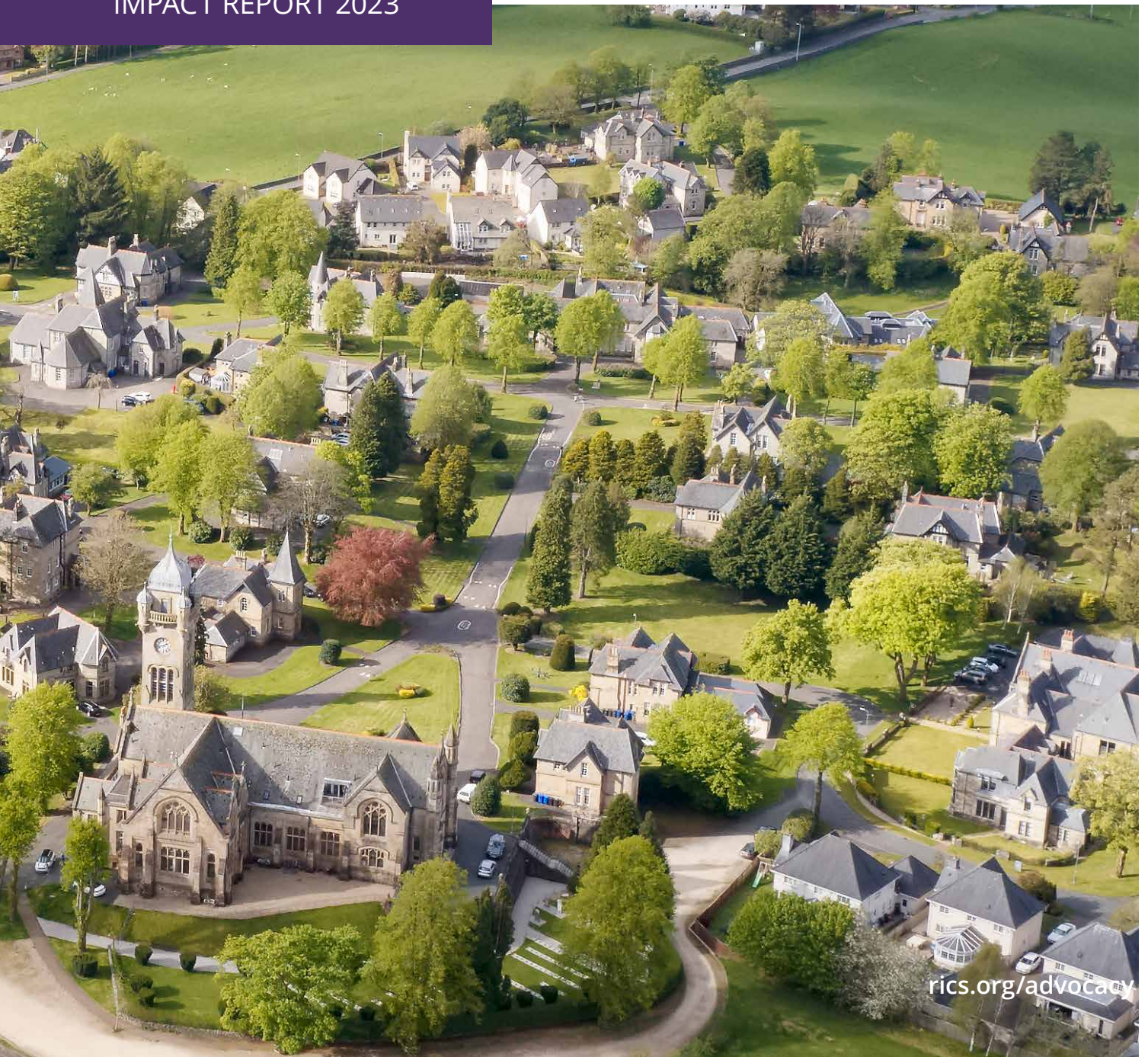




RICS influence, advocacy and thought leadership across the UK

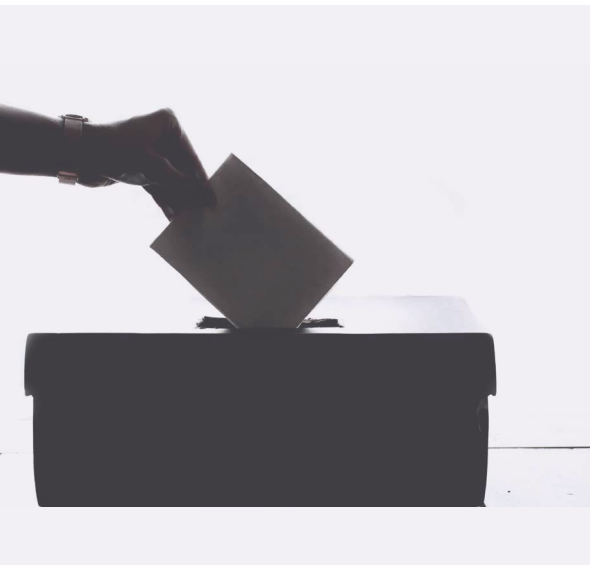
IMPACT REPORT 2023



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A natural and built environment that is sustainable, resilient and inclusive for all



As we head towards next year's general election, it has been our mission in 2023 to ensure that the surveying profession has a voice on the critical public interest issues that impact the built and natural environment.

Ahead of the main party conferences, we launched a manifesto that set out our policy calls for the next Government, and we have engaged senior stakeholders at Westminster and across England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the City of London to influence public policy and promote the value and role the profession.

Our advocacy work aims to:

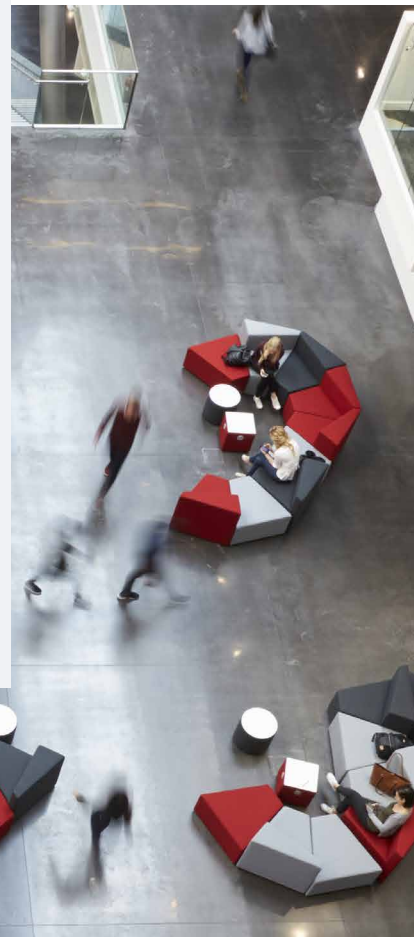
- lead and influence on sustainability
- strengthen trust in the profession
- attract a diverse next generation and
- enhance engagement with members on policy issues.

We are positioning the profession as a thought leader effecting positive change on:

- sustainability and decarbonisation in the built environment
- solutions for affordable, safe, quality, green homes and consumer protection
- levelling up the UK through place-making and regeneration of our towns and cities and
- building the pipeline of sector skills to be fit for the future.

Our programme of work includes:

- responses to government and sector policy consultations
- representation on government and industry working groups
- meeting with ministers, parliamentarians, special advisers, government officials, sector bodies and industry stakeholders
- roundtables convening members and stakeholders to influence policy matters and
- webinars informing and engaging members on policy issues.



This report provides highlights of our profession's influence, thought leadership and advocacy activity, and our impact in 2023. Thank you to all members who input their time and expertise this year.

Any members who wish to participate in future RICS thought leadership and advocacy work should contact Jo Lindon, RICS Head of Public Affairs, at jlindon@rics.org



Year at a glance



Throughout 2023, meetings have taken place with influential stakeholders, with RICS capitalising on its power as a convener to bring members together with policy decision makers, client organisations and wider built environment professions. What follows is a summary of this year's highlights.



55 responses to policy consultations and submissions of evidence on:

- planning reform and the Infrastructure Levy (IL)
- housing standards, leasehold and the private rented sector
- building regulations
- climate change and net zero
- high street rental auctions
- business rate reform
- *Arbitration Act 1996* review and
- other built environment policy.

400+ meetings between our CEO, public affairs team and government and industry bodies, notably:

- Lee Rowley MP, Minister for Building Safety, on the assurance of the RICS regulatory model
- Rachel Maclean MP, Minister for Housing and Planning, on improvements to the home-buying and selling process
- Ben Everitt MP and Bob Blackman MP on how to drive forward commercial-to-residential conversions while upholding quality, safety and sustainability standards
- Mark Spencer, Minister of State, DEFRA, on the Rock Review recommendations to develop a code for advisers of agricultural tenants and
- Julie James MS, Welsh Government Minister for Climate Change, on the expansion of RICS valuation and cladding guidance to Wales.





Leadership on sustainability

We have **championed the profession's sustainability expertise** through stakeholder adoption of our suite of decarbonisation standards, including:

- [International cost measurement standard \(ICMS3\)](#)
- [Whole life carbon assessment for the built environment](#)
- [Built environment carbon database](#)
- [International building operation standard \(IBOS\)](#).

Member engagement

3,500+ attendees joined our sector webinars on housing, commercial real estate, construction, and land and resources, designed to provide members with updates on sector policy and RICS' advocacy programme.

Media voice

7,100+ UK media mentions in 2023 (up to 17 November), with quality coverage promoting our thought leadership, public interest work and our professionals' expertise.

Highlights:

- Being asked to commentate on key topics by national broadcast outlets such as the BBC, *The Times* and the *Financial Times*, as well as key trade titles.
- Being celebrated in *Estates Gazette* for our diversity, equity and inclusion work, helping to create a brighter future.
- Gaining national front-page coverage and promoting our consumer guides across national and broadcast outlets, including several BBC radio appearances, meaning we reach the consumer-end audience and raise our profile.





Influencing public policy

Ahead of the next general election, we launched our manifesto to advocate policy solutions for some of the most important challenges of our time. The manifesto sets out a ten-point road map focused on creating safe, sustainable and affordable homes for all, taking a place-making approach to delivering community infrastructure and investment in the skills pipeline.

RICS manifesto – empowering a sustainable future

The [manifesto](#) includes the following key recommendations.

- **Housing delivery strategy:** we propose a comprehensive and ambitious strategy that focuses on local needs, skills and the creation of new homes through building and conversions.
- **Healthy homes:** we propose embedding safety, quality and sustainability standards in property conversions.
- **Place-making:** we encourage the revitalisation of high streets through investment in community infrastructure and the repurposing of commercial property into homes, where suitable.
- **Unlocking growth:** we support reform of the IL system and section 106 agreements to combine the best of both systems, and support incentives for brownfield site remediation to encourage regeneration of existing sites rather than simply building new.
- **Prioritising investment:** we believe a stable policy and regulatory environment is crucial for attracting inward investment.
- **National ambition:** we suggest developing a national property strategy to attract foreign investment and expand funding for brownfield development.
- **Sustainability:** we recommend implementing progressive energy-efficiency targets, building passports and holistic retrofit programmes for our built environment, recognising not just the environmental benefits, but economic and social well-being, too.
- **Building safety:** we propose prioritising consistent building safety standards across the UK and resourcing building safety functions to ensure effective delivery.
- **Social value:** we support modernising the *Landlord and Tenant Act 1985* to encourage mediation, reforming the business rate system, retrofitting public buildings and reviewing green belt to allow for greater housing.
- **Future focus:** we believe that commitment to sustainable transport, digital connectivity, and land stewardship in climate change mitigation are critical areas for policy development.



Party conferences

Conservative Party conference

Martin Samworth, RICS Board Chair, represented the profession on a panel with leaders from our fellow built environment bodies CIOB, RIBA and RTPI, discussing 'Will planning reform and the housing crisis determine the next election?' with Minister for Housing and Planning, Rachel Maclean MP. We put forward our recommendations for increasing housing supply, investing in upskilling the next generation, and driving greater diversity in the built environment profession. Post-conference, we continue our dialogue with the minister.



Labour Party conference

RICS CEO Justin Young spoke on a panel alongside CIOB, RIBA and RTPI on 'The future of skills and sustainability in the built environment' with the Mayor of South Yorkshire, Oliver Coppard. In his opening remarks, Justin highlighted the shortfall of 4,000 surveyor roles and the proactive action of RICS' early years engagement programme that reaches 19,000 pupils aged between 14 and 16 every year, along with RICS' calls to introduce a built environment GCSE in England to mirror the GCSE already introduced in Wales.

Throughout the conference, RICS also engaged with senior shadow ministers and devolved mayors to learn more about their strategies to address housing, high street and energy challenges. In a follow-up to the conference, we are liaising with Labour to input our expertise into their policy development and are working with the Shadow Minister for Housing and Planning, advising on Labour's house-building targets and the reintroduction of minimum energy efficiency standards.



Westminster engagement



We have engaged with a broad range of parliamentarians, peers and government departments, including:

- the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)
- the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ)
- the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and
- the Department for Business and Trade (DBT).

Many highlights are documented in this report.

Much of our engagement this year has been concentrated on the long-awaited Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill, which received royal assent at the end of October and has now officially become the *Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023*. It enshrines into law the Government's long-term commitment to 'level up' the UK and creates significant opportunities for the built environment sector, from delivering much-needed planning reform to giving communities a louder voice on place-making. It will also help unlock some of the UK's challenges in delivering new housing, regenerating high streets and bringing vacant properties back to life.



We continue our discussions with the DLUHC on clause 237 of the Act, confirming our intent to conduct our own independent review every five years, as it is important that we maintain the institution's independence to develop and uphold standards and regulation for the sector and work in the public interest to address the biggest challenges facing our built environment.

In the run-up to the next election, we have increased our engagement with Labour and responded to their consultations on 'Britain in the world', 'A green and digital future', and 'A future where families come first', emphasising our policy recommendations on housing, sustainability and trade. This is a key submission that will inform the development of the Labour Party Manifesto.

Metro mayor engagement

The party conferences this autumn provided us with an excellent opportunity to engage with regional and metro mayors as they look to deliver their future plans, including Andy Burnham's 30,000 new net zero social homes programme and Steve Rotherham's hydrogen infrastructure scheme.



Earlier in the year, we held several events with mayoral authorities, and we are building up our relationship with West Midlands, Manchester and Liverpool mayors, working in conjunction with the RICS West Midlands and North West boards to map out how our profession can support the mayors, drive sustainable regeneration and deliver net-zero targets across the devolved regions.

In the autumn, we held a webinar on Unlocking Investment – The Next Chapter for Levelling Up and Devolution, which was attended by over 200 members. Panellists included David Tomalin, Delivery Manager, West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), and David Warburton, Head of Public Land, Homes England. The discussion focused on solutions to incentivise investment across the UK, the relationship between investment, skills and sustainability, and the work of Homes England and WMCA on levelling up the region.

In September, we attended a roundtable discussion with Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands, on levelling up and the role of the mayor and the combined authority in working with businesses to support skills development and education in the local workforce.

In November, we interviewed Mayor of the Manchester Combined Authority, Andy Burnham, for an RICS podcast where he spoke about his ambition for redevelopment of land and large-scale retrofitting. We discussed the importance of professional advice in delivering his vision and why surveyors will be essential partners in the retrofit and decarbonisation of public buildings.

Influencing the sustainability agenda



Independent review of net zero

RICS responded to the publication of the UK Government's independent *Review of net zero*, having provided evidence to the inquiry last year. The review backs up our calls for a wider review of the suitability of energy performance certificates (EPCs) and the need for greater retrofit standards – something RICS is developing for launch next year. We also interviewed Chris Skidmore MP, Chair of the UK Government Net Zero Review, as part of our podcast series where he discussed the importance of decarbonising the built environment and the economic opportunities it presents. Chris talked about the need for strict targets and carbon measurement to drive decarbonisation and how RICS' *Whole life carbon assessment for the built environment* can support this work in the future.

Advising Westminster parliamentarians on carbon assessment

We met with Jerome Mayhew MP, who proposed a Carbon Emissions (Building) Bill in the UK parliament and promoted the important role of RICS' *Whole life carbon assessment for the built environment* and the Built Environment Carbon Database in supporting the drive to reduce carbon emissions. RICS had been asked to produce a short briefing for the MP on how carbon measurement can support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). This paper is shaping further discussions with DLUHC.

We also met with several members of the House of Lords to input to an amendment to the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill to mandate whole life carbon assessment for new properties and refurbishments over 1,000m². RICS' *Whole life carbon assessment for the built environment* was referenced as best practice and was highlighted in parliament, and support for SMEs was debated in an effort to ensure they are not disadvantaged in the advisory market. Unfortunately, this amendment was voted down, but we continue to engage with the UK Government to press for mandating carbon assessment.



Evidence to the Welsh Government on the decarbonisation of private homes

The Welsh parliament's Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee published its report on [Decarbonising the private housing sector](#). RICS gave evidence during the inquiry, and the committee endorsed a number of our recommendations, including the use of greater impartial retrofit guidance, the need for new minimum energy efficiency standards and monitoring, as well as investment in early engagement education and upskilling to meet the needs of those who will support the net-zero transition.

Influencing the retrofit agenda in Scotland

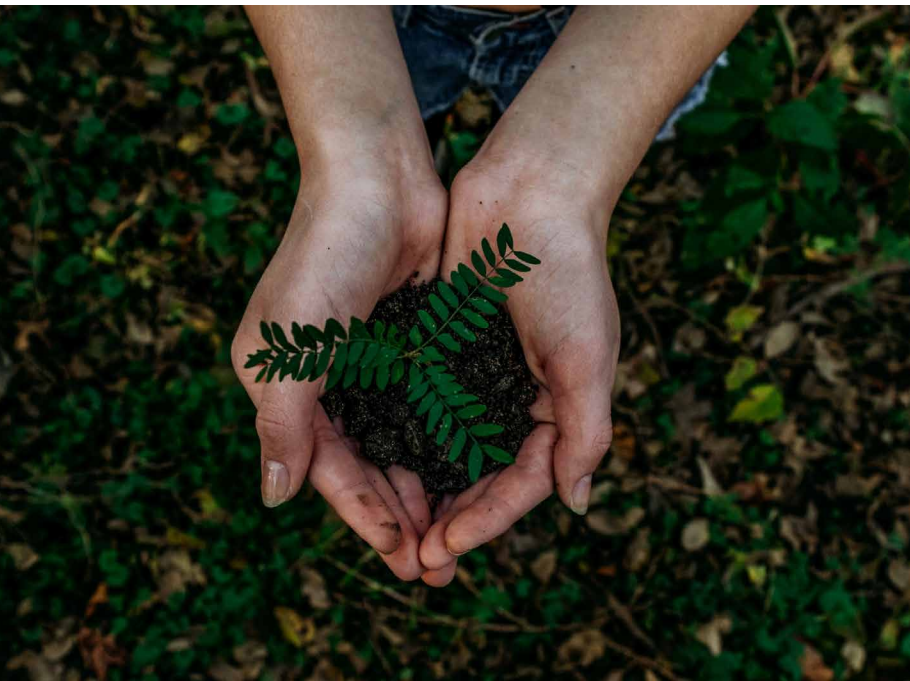
We hosted a week-long Green Home Festival in Edinburgh, opened by Paul McLennan MSP and attended by Sarah Boyack, Labour Party Spokesperson on Energy, Just Transition and Net Zero, to engage the public and businesses on energy efficiency. The event offered an excellent opportunity to promote our profession's sustainability expertise to consumers and end users.

We were also able to influence the retrofit landscape in Scotland at a roundtable led by Gordon Macdonald MSP and attended by Ben Macpherson MSP and Brian Whittle MSP, discussing RICS policy recommendations, including reducing VAT on retrofit services and EPC reform.



Advising on decarbonisation in Northern Ireland

With the *Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022* setting out targets for public authorities to reduce carbon emissions, RICS had the opportunity to feed into the development of government policy. We are working with the Strategic Investment Board and others to build awareness of carbon measurement, and we have engaged extensively with government departments to advise on whole life carbon assessment and promote the role of chartered surveyors in building greater sustainability for the future with universities, health providers, education providers, and other end users.



Effecting positive change at COP28

As the supreme decision-making body of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, all 198 states that are parties to the Convention are represented at COP.

RICS has observer status in the Blue Zone, and is participating in the Buildings Pavilion and the Buildings Breakthrough Campaign to promote our profession's critical role in driving sustainability.



Housing sector influence and engagement



Championing affordable, safe, quality, green homes and the protection of consumers.

Highlights

Improving the buying and selling process

We met with Rachel Maclean MP, Minister for Housing and Planning, alongside DLUHC officials to discuss improvements to the home-buying and selling process. The minister agreed with RICS that one in three house sales falling through in England is harming economic and emotional well-being. In our capacity as members of the National Trading Standards Estate and Letting Agency Team and the Home Buying and Selling Group, we have been working with industry and the Government to develop new material information guidance. We have also engaged with the minister to discuss how professional home surveys can improve the purchase process, underpinning the important role surveyors will have in the future.



Supporting the retrofitting of homes

RICS successfully worked to secure member recognition in the updated *PAS2035: Retrofitting dwellings for improved energy efficiency*, the professional standard for the retrofitting of homes. This means that, for the first time, RICS members are specifically encouraged to be the professional of choice for undertaking retrofit surveys; this helps address concerns from DESNZ over the lack of professionalism and impartiality of advice given to consumers. This is helping to create new work and training opportunities for RICS professionals.



EPC reform

Following the Government's removal of minimum energy efficiency standards to privately rented homes, we have called on the Government to use this time to finally create a meaningful energy-measurement system that measures and incentivises decarbonisation.



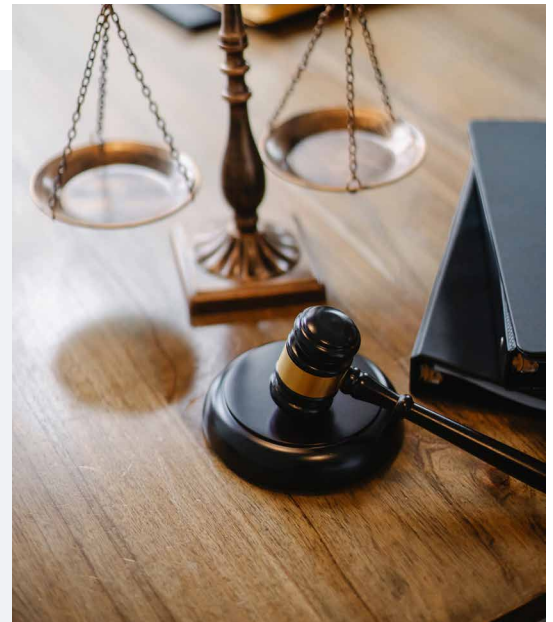
Social housing standards, quality and satisfaction

Alongside advising DLUHC on the introduction of minimum qualifications into social housing management, we have also been influencing policies that improve tenant welfare. RICS hosted a roundtable for members and senior housing managers to discuss how to drive improvements in the assessment of social housing stock and quality assurance of work undertaken. We also responded to the Regulator of

Social Housing consultation on the introduction of consumer standards, highlighting the importance that professional body membership has in delivering higher levels of satisfaction to tenants.

Renters Reform Bill

Ahead of the Renters Reform Bill becoming law, RICS has been calling on the Government to reform the court system, including digitisation, to support landlords ahead of the abolition of section 21, something the Government has agreed to undertake. We are also pushing the Government to support landlords and tenants with the expansion of the *Decent homes standard* into the sector by giving sufficient time and resources to implement the changes, otherwise landlords may feel pressured to leave the sector. Our concerns over some of the changes have been picked up by major publications including *The Times*.





Creating energy-efficient homes

We have been working with the UK financial industry and trade bodies to unlock the potential in green lending. This includes working with Bankers for Net Zero, Trustmark, and Chris Skidmore MP, the government's independent Chair of the Net Zero Review, to identify how sustainability can play a role in future valuations and encourage green lending. This is helping to shape RICS' work in calling for greater regulation and standards in energy efficiency in homes.

Nutrient pollution rules and housing

RICS is continuing to work with stakeholders across the UK to address the challenge presented by nutrient pollution rules. With plans to remove the rules, RICS is calling on the Government to provide more oversight and funding to the utility sector to invest in upgrades to treatment works, while developers also seek to explore opportunities to create low-impact homes.

Social housing minimum qualifications

Thousands of RICS members work in social housing provision and, following the UK Government's plans to introduce minimum qualifications into the sector, we have been working closely with DLUHC officials to shape what such education should look like.

DLUHC is amending the impact report based on our assessment of the impact it will have on managers and executives, and RICS is currently reviewing surveying pathways and training to support members in complying with the new minimum qualifications.



Launch of RICS' quarterly housing update webinars

At the start of 2023, we launched our new series of webinars. Free for RICS members, these webinars discuss the housing policy landscape, our residential sector influence and advocacy work, market conditions and the latest in standards and guidance development. The webinars resulted from member feedback and aim to ensure more awareness of our thought leadership and policy influence on housing matters.



Property conversions

RICS met with MPs from the all-party parliamentary groups on ending homelessness, healthy homes and buildings, and housing market and housing delivery to shape government policy on the conversion of commercial property into residential. RICS is calling for stricter standards to ensure quality, safety and sustainability is not compromised in permitted development rights and, following requests from MPs, we are exploring options to introduce new professional surveys for conversions.



Commercial real estate influence and engagement



Solutions for investible, sustainable, well-managed real estate and its value to society.

Highlights



Influencing the levelling-up agenda

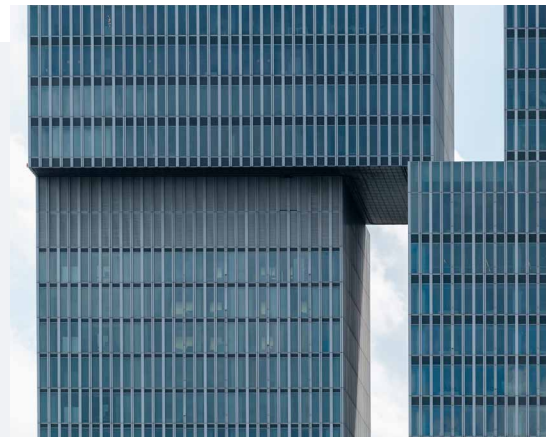
We convened a roundtable alongside a series of meetings with investors and public-sector stakeholders to agree policy positions on the Government's levelling-up agenda and to develop solutions to regional challenges, including delivering inward investment and economic growth, managing ageing property assets and providing educational opportunities for the next generation. The group's valuable insights were fed into the development of our manifesto, which we published ahead of the party conferences and which calls for a national property strategy to attract investment, the reform of business rates, and incentives for brownfield site development.

Landlord and Tenant Act review

We provided guidance to the Law Commission during the pre-consultation stage of the *Landlord and Tenant Act* review, championing the importance of balancing the interests of both landlords and tenants. We emphasised the value of promoting mediation to prevent disagreements from escalating and the use of arbitration to resolve disputes and alleviate pressures on the courts. To update members on the review, we delivered a webinar, which saw 700 delegates join us online, and a podcast that explored the review through the lens of alternative dispute resolution. There will be further opportunities for interested parties to engage with us at the next stage of consultation in 2024.

Influencing business rate reform

RICS was cited in the Houses of Parliament following engagement with Lord Thurlow and Peter Aldous MP on the Non-Domestic Rating Bill. We put forward concerns that business rates are too high, too complex, infrequently revalued and disproportionate for certain sectors, and we emphasised the importance of a more balanced approach. Lord Thurlow referenced our concerns on the 'check, challenge, appeal' process, acknowledging our contribution and the vital role in the deliberations and future direction of business rates reform.





RICS-led code to minimise risk of rogue rating agents

We recently promoted RICS' [Rating consultancy code of practice](#) in conjunction with the Valuation Office Agency, who publicly highlighted the code as best practice and quoted an RICS spokesperson in their press release. Part of the code's guidance is to minimise the risks associated with the use of rogue agents. Our proactive efforts will help guide consumers on navigating potential pitfalls when seeking rating advice. We also responded to the joint consultation from HM Treasury and DLUHC on business rates, avoidance, evasion and rogue agents, emphasising the significance of the *Rating consultancy code of practice*.

High street rental auctions consultation

Expanding on concerns we initially raised with DLUHC last year, we participated in the Government's consultation on the high street rental auction process, stressing the need to acknowledge that landlords generally aim to let out properties rather than leave them empty. We also called for due consideration of all parties involved and advocated a fair and equitable approach to high street lettings.

Industry adoption of IBOS

We have seen a broad range of occupiers recognising the potential of implementing [IBOS](#) to support the measurement and performance management of their property portfolio. Importantly, IBOS focuses through the lens of user experience and comes with a self-assessment tool to support occupiers to conduct a gap analysis of their performance management strategy.



Engaging with stakeholders on minimum energy efficiency standards

We are calling for a more proactive government approach to boost awareness, clarify regulations, and offer certainty to commercial landlords. Currently,

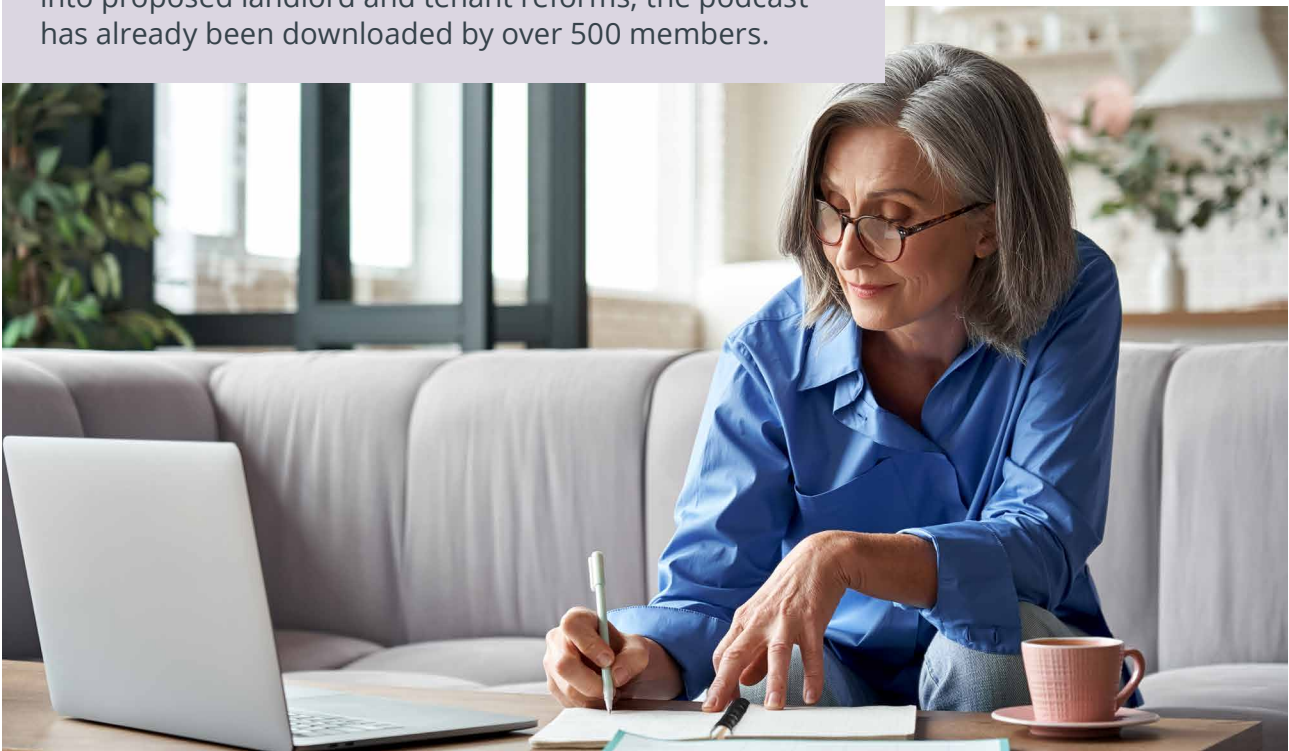
- only 31.6% of the UK's office buildings meet the proposed band C or higher standards set for 2027 and
- just 8.3% of properties will meet the upcoming minimum energy efficiency standards requirement of an EPC B rating by 2030 unless they're upgraded.

In our manifesto, we have called for incentives to encourage compliance to support landlords to improve their properties to at least meet the minimum requirement. But the push towards sustainable spaces isn't just about regulations: it's also driven by the increasing demands of occupants. RICS' spring occupier index of 2023 revealed that environmental, social and governance (ESG) and net-zero considerations have become the most influential factors when selecting new commercial real estate spaces, which underscores the importance of environmentally conscious practices in the real estate sector.



Commercial real estate webinar series

We welcomed around 1,000 members to our commercial real estate policy update webinars, featuring presentations from our economists on the latest commercial market survey trends and our work on the *Landlord and Tenant Act 1954*, the commercial lease code, and health and well-being in buildings. We also released a podcast on the *Landlord and Tenant Act* that focused on alternative dispute resolution (ADR) and delving deeper into proposed landlord and tenant reforms; the podcast has already been downloaded by over 500 members.



RICS occupier index

Our first occupier index revealed that the majority of organisations are planning to downsize, seek greater space flexibility and prioritise ESG considerations in their selection of new office space. Cost, innovation and flexibility are the key influencers, which reflects a conscious move towards more efficient, purpose-driven and environmentally friendly workplaces.

This year, we also held two occupier roundtables with property directors across the public and private sector to capture further insight to support our advocacy work on business rate reform, measures to support the high street and ESG.

Engaging with the Bank of England on valuation

In January, the Bank of England UK Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA) issued a consultation on proposals to introduce criteria for the prudently conservative valuation of real estate collateral in revised banking regulations. This could signal significant change in how secured lending valuation advice provided by RICS and its members is used in both the UK and other markets around Europe.

We submitted a response to the PRA stating that any new framework must be understood by both preparers and users of valuation, thus reducing the risk of uncertainties and unintended consequences that could be detrimental to the market and that could impact the valuation professional indemnity insurance market. We advised that the optimum approach for implementing prudent valuation criteria would be a single, consistent, market-wide measure of cycle risk, rather than seeking to alter the way individual property assets are valued. We undertook extensive work to engage stakeholders, including the Bank of England, and published updates for members, including a free webinar on the anticipated regulatory change.



Decarbonisation of real estate

We published an [addendum](#) to our report on *Decarbonising the UK real estate*, which was launched at COP28 in Dubai where the RICS President and leadership team were in attendance to promote our profession's expertise, positioning RICS' *Whole life carbon assessment for the built environment* as the global standard for carbon measurement.



Construction sector influence and engagement



Value of industrialisation, digitalisation and the shift from cost- to value-led procurement.

Highlights

Leading on levelling up

We organised an event at the RICS offices in Birmingham on levelling up the second city. Members joined our panellists for a discussion on the impact of the Deeper Devolution Deal, how Birmingham City Council balances its growth agenda alongside the imperative to reduce carbon emissions, and Birmingham's relationship with business and investment. We engaged with Henerietta Brealey, CEO of Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce, Jon Sayer, Senior Manager of Markets, Partners and Places at Homes England, and Philip Nell, Director of Property and Investment – Place, Prosperity and Sustainability, Birmingham City Council, in a session chaired by RICS West Midlands Board Chair, Tom Bell.





RICS evidence to UK Trade and Business Commission

Vincent Clancy, CEO of Turner and Townsend, represented RICS at the UK Trade and Business Commission's evidence session on challenges in the construction sector and its relationship to international trade. We highlighted how the Government and industry should embrace the modernisation of the construction sector, digital transformation and net zero.

RAAC guidance recognition of chartered building surveyors

Department for Education guidance on reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) has been updated pending extensive dialogue with RICS to recognise a chartered building surveyor as an appropriate qualified person to identify RAAC.

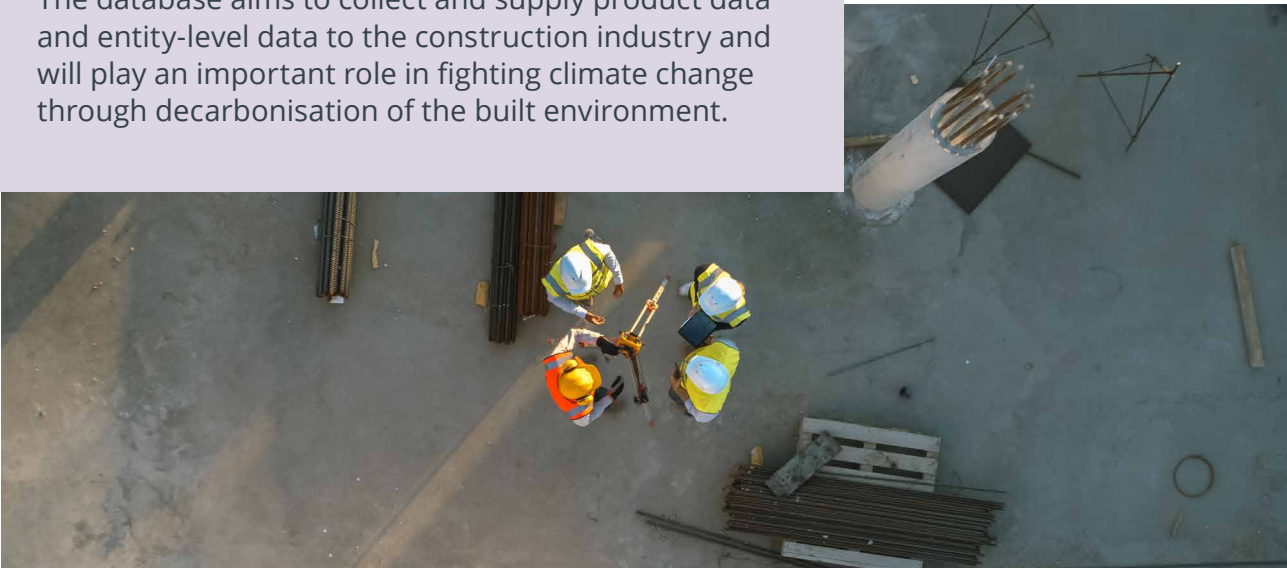
Launch of *Whole life carbon assessment for the built environment, second edition*

RICS' whole life carbon assessment standard is set to become the world-leading standard on consistent and accurate carbon measurement in the built environment. This second edition builds upon the success of the existing standard and has been extended to cover all buildings and infrastructure throughout the built environment life cycle. Supported by the Department for Transport (DfT) and Zero Waste Scotland, the standard was updated by RICS and an author group of decarbonisation experts following feedback from over 1,300 comments collected through a public consultation. The second edition provides continuity and reliability while encouraging long-term thinking through reuse, recycling and redevelopment.



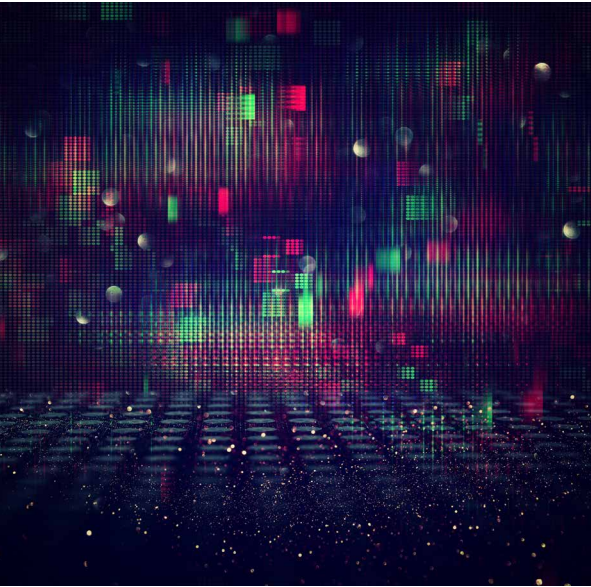
Built Environment Carbon Database launch

Developed with RICS in partnership with organisations operating across every part of the construction sector, the Built Environment Carbon Database is now live following its official launch in September. Free to access, it is designed to become the main source of carbon estimating and benchmarking for the industry, but we need you to populate it with data from your projects. The database aims to collect and supply product data and entity-level data to the construction industry and will play an important role in fighting climate change through decarbonisation of the built environment.



Modern methods of construction inquiry

The House of Lords Built Environment Committee has been working with RICS as part of its inquiry into modern methods of construction (MMC) in the UK. Members of the Lords were particularly interested in reviewing RICS' residential market and construction survey data in order to understand how the pipeline of new homes is impacting MMC producers, as well as RICS' advice on how valuing such properties has changed over time as sustainability plays an increasingly important role in valuations.



Digitalisation in construction report 2023

We published our [Digitalisation in construction report 2023](#) to highlight to the Government and wider industry that the sector cannot address the climate crisis, provide much-needed social outcomes and achieve continuing economic progress without the increased use of digital tools. Using insight from the profession, the report demonstrates our thought leadership on the barriers the sector must overcome and shows how digitalisation can support collaboration in unlocking value in the work of quantity surveying and construction project management professionals.

Conflict avoidance process industry roundtable

We held a roundtable on RICS' conflict avoidance process with over 80 attendees. The discussion focused on the conflict avoidance obligations set out in the UK Government's latest edition of the *Construction playbook*, which is directed at all those involved in public works projects. The discussion was led by Sue Barrett, FRICS Head of Contracts and Procurement, Houses of Parliament, and Martin Burns, RICS Head of ADR Research and Development.

Construction skills of the future

We hosted a webinar on construction skills of the future. Our panellists included Paul Broadbent, Net Zero Accelerator Programme Lead, LocatED, Louise Phipps, Senior Delivery Manager – Higher Level Skills, West Midlands Combined Authority, and Ian Woodcroft, Head of Policy and Government Relations, CITB. The discussion centred around what kind of green skills are needed in the future, the impact that investment in this area will have on the construction sector, and existing progress in this area.





Land and resources influence and engagement



Influencing planning, sustainable land management and rural economy issues.

Highlights



RICS' response to the Rock Review

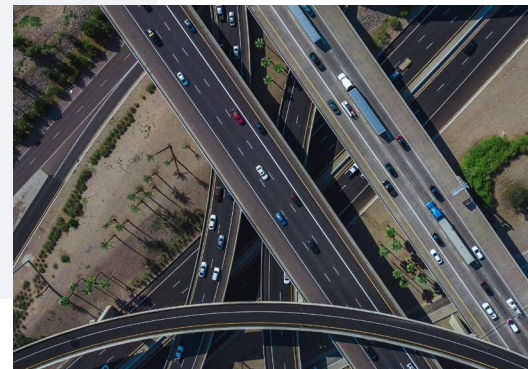
We responded to the Rock Review, which was focused on ensuring a robust, vibrant and thriving agricultural tenanted sector in England in the future. RICS Interim Chief Executive, Richard Collins, met with Baroness Rock and agreed that RICS will serve as a member of the expert working group commissioned by Defra to lead the production of a code of practice for the sector; it will set out how landlords, occupiers and agents can be expected to behave in a way that is socially responsible.

DLUHC and RICS IL workshops

We held two IL workshops with representatives from DLUHC and members of the RICS Planning and Development expert working group, who input case studies to illustrate and test the feasibility of the levy mechanism in practice. The findings from the two workshops were fed directly back to officials from DLUHC to help shape future policy. Our work to support the Government will continue into 2024 following the passing of the *Levelling-up and Regeneration Act*.

Technical consultation on the IL

We responded to DLUHC's technical consultation on the IL. We welcomed the intention to simplify the development levy system applied to new development but raised concerns about serious unintended consequences on land markets and the planning and development process. Input from members was incorporated into our submission.





Consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework

We fed into the consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework to raise concerns regarding a number of amendments, which, in the opinion of our professional experts, could have a detrimental impact on housebuilding now and in the future. Both the British Property Federation and the Net Zero Carbon Building Standard governance board requested to view RICS' response, and *Property Week* quoted our calls on housing supply.

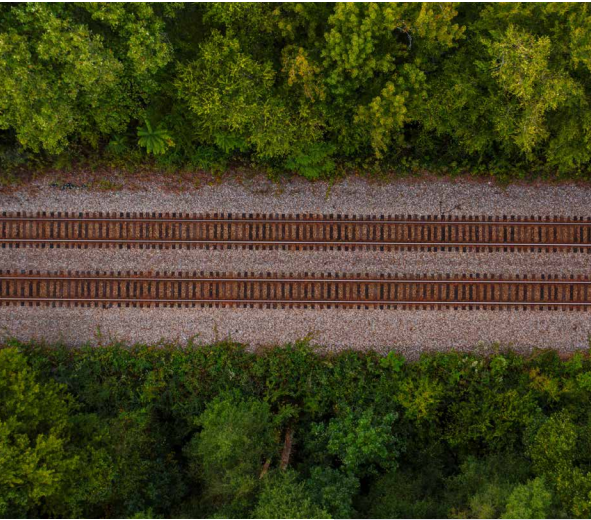
RICS' response to the impact of environmental regulations on development

We submitted a response to the Environment Committee's consultation on the impact of environmental regulations on development; the consultation considers the governance of and associated costs for developers and promoters and the impact on the delivery of projects. In our response, we promoted the use of RICS' suite of sustainability standards and advised on strategies for managing nutrient neutrality and biodiversity net gain.

Influencing the critical minerals policy agenda

We engaged with the Head of Critical Minerals at the DBT to input member insight on the opportunities and challenges facing the mineral sector. We shared RICS expertise on mineral rights and the practicalities of extraction, with officials developing policy in this area, and DBT have requested a policy paper from our expert working group.





Compulsory purchase challenges from HS2

RICS' expert working group on compulsory purchase orders (CPO) met with DfT, HS2 and DLUHC to discuss the latest challenges on HS2 and developments within the CPO sector more broadly. The Law Commission is currently reviewing CPO in terms of procedure and compensation as well as CPO-related changes in the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill, and this creates an opportunity for us to input an expert view.

Input to the Geospatial Commission report

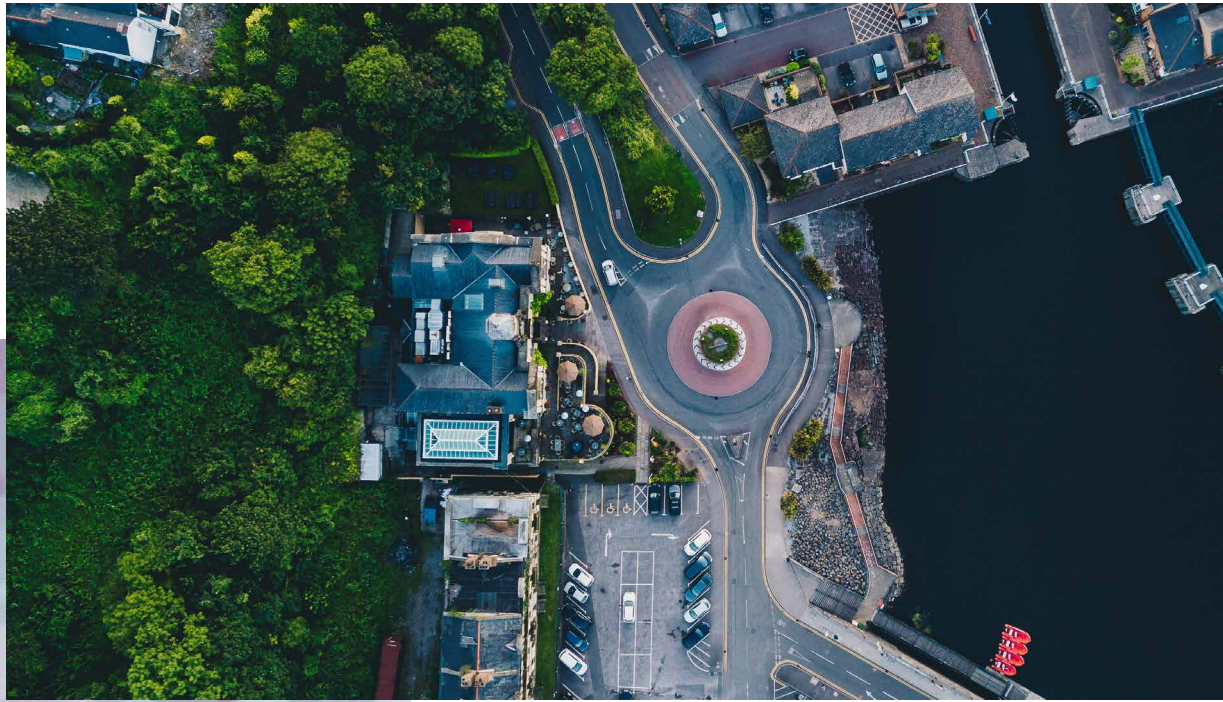
RICS input professional expertise to a new report from the Geospatial Commission that explores land-use challenges and demonstrates how data analysis and evidence can support better land-use decisions. In addition, we launched a podcast with leaders of the National Land Data Programme initiative, Professor Louise Heathwaite and Thalia Baldwin, who spoke with RICS' Head of Land Resources about innovative data analysis and strategies for better understanding unique geographical needs.

DLUHC housing supply and markets division

RICS is engaged with the DLUHC housing supply and markets division on land-reform issues that have arisen as a result of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill, particularly land option agreements.

We will soon publish our draft *Land agreements for development purposes* guidance, which will be a key tool to influence policymakers on this important topic.





Impact in Wales



Sustainability, building safety and the creation of affordable, high-quality housing has been at the centre of our activities in Wales throughout 2023. Underpinning our work has been the need to work in the public interest to address the biggest challenges facing the Welsh built and natural environment while futureproofing the important role of surveyors. This year we have also focused on supporting the next generation of surveyors, unlocking new education pathways to join RICS and inspiring future professionals.

Key highlights

Advising government and industry on building safety

We have continued to work closely with the Welsh Government and industry to address the challenges of building safety and have joined the Building Safety Stakeholder Group within the Government.

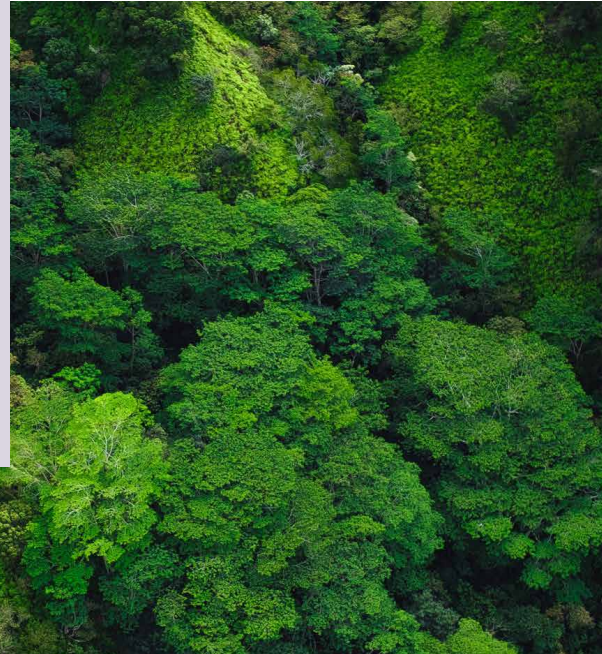
In March, the Minister for Climate Change, Julie James, released a [joint statement](#) with RICS that welcomed our work in developing guidance on the valuation of properties with cladding, which helps to address concerns related to buying and selling properties with cladding in Wales.

We have also been advising the Government on the building safety and remediation model, including the use of more in-depth surveys and data capture to ensure that resident well-being is put at the heart of safety reforms.



Leading on sustainability

Sustainability underpins all our activity in Wales and is fundamental in helping to increase recognition of the importance of the surveying profession. The role of surveyors in tackling climate change was one of the main reasons why the Welsh Government agreed to fund two surveying degree apprenticeship courses after the role RICS had in creating sustainable infrastructure and more energy-efficient, low-carbon buildings. In our position on the Welsh Government's Decarbonisation Implementation Group, we have been supporting the development of a residential route map for the minister to use to shape future policy and are undertaking a Welsh net-zero skills assessment.



Whole life carbon assessment for the built environment adopted by local authorities

The Consortium of Local Authorities Wales and Sustainable Communities for Learning Wales are using RICS' *Whole life carbon assessment for the built environment* as a benchmark for carbon measurement. The assessment also featured heavily in the Welsh Government's Sustainable Schools Competition, where developers, schools and local authorities presented plans as part of a multimillion-pound net zero school scheme.



RICS evidence on decarbonising homes

RICS evidence and recommendations on the decarbonisation of private homes in Wales has been adopted by the Senedd's Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee.

Supporting the Built Environment GCSE

Creating and supporting new opportunities for the next generation to join RICS has been a priority this year. We are continuing to promote and engage with schools with the Built Environment GCSE, working to ensure that those teaching it have RICS support inside and outside the classroom; we have also been working to expand the number of schools offering this course.



RICS market data informs First Minister

Our market data was used during questions to the First Minister in the Senedd to highlight growing challenges in construction, specifically the shortage of quantity surveyors.

Active travel in Wales

RICS joined professional bodies at the Built Environment Alliance Cymru, an event with the Deputy Minister for Climate Change, Lee Waters MS, to discuss the Welsh Government's active travel programme. The policy means there is now significant investment in active travel initiatives and a reduction in funding for new road schemes, which is seeing traditional highway departments and RICS professionals transition into broader roles.

New and enhanced apprenticeships

Following successful calls from RICS to the Welsh Government to invest in built environment degree apprenticeships, in order to create parity with the rest of the UK, we are delighted that the Government has agreed to fund four new courses, two of which will be degree apprenticeships in quantity surveying and general surveying. This demonstrates the Government's recognition of the important role RICS has in addressing our future built environment challenges.

This is in addition to RICS joining the Welsh Apprenticeship Alliance earlier this year to further strengthen relations between education providers, employers and professional bodies to help with the transition from student to qualified professional.

Re-introducing real estate to Welsh universities

September 2023 saw the launch of the first real estate degree in Wales for more than 20 years, driven by RICS members with a passion to support the next generation of talent.



Rural housing challenges panel at the Royal Welsh Show

RICS returned to the Royal Welsh Show in the summer, this time joining partners from the CLA, RTPI and several members to discuss the challenges facing rural housing in Wales, including second home legislation, housing supply and energy standards. Discussions are helping to provide good insight to shape our work with the Welsh Government and to provide first-hand accounts of some of the challenges facing rural communities. This event also marked the first time RICS has held a simultaneously translated event, proving popular with delegates speaking in Welsh and English, and helping to set the benchmark for future RICS events.

RICS Wales conference

The annual conference returned for the first time since the pandemic, with over 130 professionals joining us in Cardiff. Delegates heard from a range of speakers and debates, including Welsh Government updates on climate change, building safety and housebuilding, and discussions on investment in new transport and energy infrastructure. The introduction of freeports to Wales also proved a popular fringe, with significant opportunities presented for RICS professionals in helping to deliver the new Celtic Freeports.



Any members who wish to participate in future RICS thought leadership and advocacy in Wales should contact Sam Rees, Public Affairs Lead for Wales, at srees@rics.org



Impact in Scotland



Addressing the challenging socio-economic landscape has taken priority for the Scottish Government, but there is also a clear appetite for reform across a range of built environment issues. We have positioned ourselves at the forefront of sustainability and decarbonisation, driving up quality and safety through building standards and transforming land use to address the needs of local communities and the national interest. Our core aim is to be trusted by and influential to the Government and industry and connected with members.

Key highlights



Scottish Government and parliamentary activity

We've had parliamentary meetings with MSPs, including:

- Miles Briggs, Conservative Spokesperson for Housing
- Sarah Boyack, Labour Spokesperson for Just Transition, Energy and Net Zero, and
- Paul McLennan MSP, Minister for Housing.

These meetings provided an opportunity to forge close relationships with key policy influencers. Conversations focused on our wide range of work in Scotland and beyond, touching on the Home Report review, *Whole life carbon assessment for the built environment* and the Residential retrofit standard, and skills and workforce challenges. Future engagement will focus on legislation, including the Housing Bill and the Cladding Remediation Bill.

Scottish Government (Building Standards Directorate)

Engagement with colleagues from the Scottish Government has led to RICS' [Spray foam insulation consumer guide](#) being considered for inclusion in guidance provided by the Better Homes Division. It will be looked at during the next review of the Home Report. This information has also been shared with SPICe (the parliamentary information centre) for use in developing a paper on spray foam insulation.

Scottish Government cladding remediation working group

We regularly attend the Scottish Government's cladding remediation working group to hear relevant updates, including the Single Building Assessment programme, 'waking watch' and the development of the Accord. We are currently in discussions with the Scottish Government on emergency cladding legislation and the development of 'letters of comfort' for owners impacted by cladding.

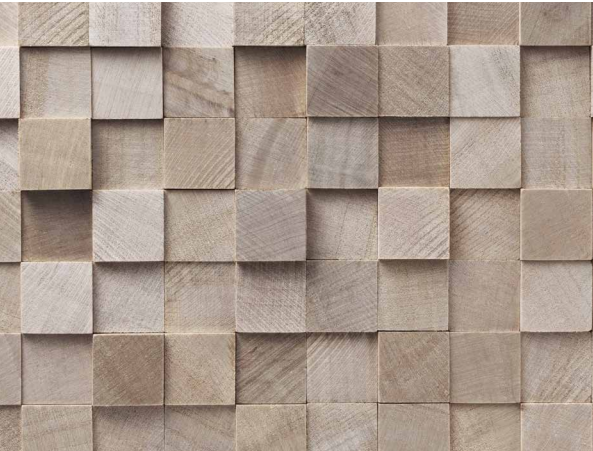
RICS hosts Minister at Scotland's Green Home Festival

RICS hosted a week-long series of events aimed at engaging the public and businesses on the global challenge of meeting net-zero targets. The festival offered hands-on guidance to help people reduce their carbon footprints and become more energy efficient. The event was opened by the Scottish Minister for Housing, Paul McLennan, who was introduced by Chair of the RICS Scotland Board, Sandra Cummings. Sarah Boyack, Labour Party Spokesperson on Energy, Just Transition and Net Zero, was also in attendance. With over 300 attendees throughout the week, sell-out shows and excellent feedback, this was a successful industry initiative that promoted the profession's sustainability expertise to consumers and end users.



Local Government Housing and Planning Committee

RICS representatives twice gave evidence to the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee on the topic of building safety. Nigel Sellars, Senior Property Specialist, gave detailed evidence on the topic of cladding remediation, particularly on building valuation and the term 'zero valuations', while Sam Piplica, Senior Building Specialist, gave evidence on RAAC, the guidance we have produced and the work that surveyors are doing to identify RAAC in buildings.



Construction Quality Improvement Collaborative

We hosted a Construction Quality Improvement Collaborative (CQIC) event at our Edinburgh office and have worked closely with the Scottish Futures Trust, who lead the CQIC. This has developed a positive relationship, leading to the adoption of two RICS standards, IBOS and the Built Environment Carbon Database, which the Scottish Futures Trust has embedded into its working practices.

RICS skills and workforce plan for Scotland

We have developed a skills and workforce plan alongside the RICS Scotland Board, which aims to provide an evidence base to outline the challenges and opportunities for RICS members in Scotland. In 2024, we aim to run several skills- and workforce-focused roundtables, with the intention of delivering a Scotland-focused report that can be used to influence government policy on skills.

Input to Scotland's Skills Investment Plan

We hosted a workshop in conjunction with Historic Environment Scotland and the Built Environment Forum Scotland, which focused on updating the Skills Investment Plan in the traditional building sector. Surveyors, structural engineers, planners and architects participated in the workshop, with tangible recommendations being created around boosting surveyor numbers, retrofit upskilling and joint continuing professional development (CPD) with other professional bodies. The Conservation Forum has also been specifically asked to feed into the draft report when it has been finalised.





Construction Leadership Forum – Skills and Workforce Working Group

RICS has become a member of a CLC group that will focus on:

- reviewing the competence of the existing workforce and
- talent attraction and retention (including equalities).

This aligns well with the plans of the RICS Scotland board to help shape and strengthen the future skills agenda in Scotland.

Tenement Maintenance Working Group

Throughout 2023, work has been ongoing to create a five-yearly tenement maintenance draft report, which an RICS-chaired subgroup of members and external stakeholders has been developing over the course of four separate workshops. This will be presented to the Tenement Maintenance Working Group in parliament before being submitted to the Scottish Government in the new year. The overall aim is to ensure the ongoing health and maintenance of Scotland’s tenement housing stock, and RICS, alongside its members, has been providing key thought leadership in this space.



Stakeholder adoption of RICS' sustainability standards

A key adoption of ICMS3 by Scotland Excel is a significant win for RICS. As the centre of procurement expertise for the local government sector, Scotland Excel's tender award criteria and framework terms now reference ICMS3. We are continuing to work with Scotland Excel to learn how ICMS3 is being utilised and to encourage the adoption of our *Whole life carbon assessment for the built environment*. We are also undertaking extensive stakeholder engagement to promote the adoption of our suite of sustainability standards, including liaising with Balfour Beatty, Scottish Water, Crown Estate Scotland, the Scottish Government, Zero Waste Scotland and RIAS.



Influencing sustainability policy

We have continued our engagement with the Scottish Government on key sustainability-focused policy initiatives, including the Heat in Buildings Strategy, EPC reform and a Passivhaus equivalent standard

Construction Leadership Forum – Net Zero Working Group

We are a member of the Construction Leadership Forum's Net Zero Working Group, an arm's-length government body that aims to drive a just transition to being net zero in embodied carbon, industry operations and over asset life cycles. This group is an ideal space for RICS to demonstrate leadership on sustainability, in particular measuring embodied carbon, benchmarking and retrofitting.

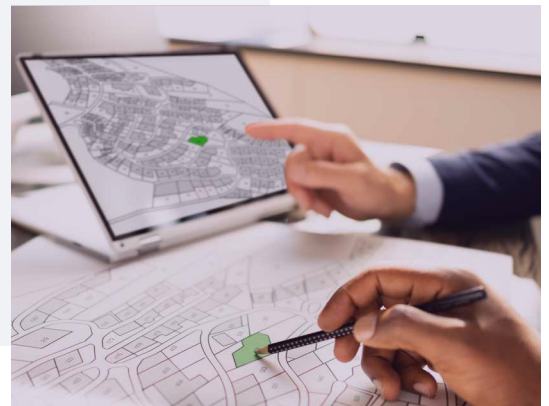


RICS Conservation Forum

This group, made up of 18 members, has predominantly focused on the skills and workforce challenges in the traditional building sector. CITB now include the RICS Conservation Forum in apprenticeship/skills programmes consultations, to ensure that a wide range of viewpoints on the traditional built environment are included. CITB usually only engages with Historic Environment Scotland, so this is a win for RICS, and the skills issue in this space is particularly important as the group felt a lot of traditional skills were and continue to be neglected in apprenticeship programmes. We have also fed into key workstreams, including Historic Environment Scotland's Skills Investment Plan review.

Local Rating and Taxation Forum

The group is made up of 16 members and represents both valuers and assessors. The key focus of the group this year has been to try to establish ongoing engagement with the Scottish Government. This was achieved this summer, with the Scottish Government agreeing to attend future meetings of the group



RICS Residential Forum

A group made up of 12 members representing firms in Scotland is focused on preparing for the postponed Home Report Review and is discussing maintaining standards and regulation in the sector.

Any members who wish to participate in future RICS thought leadership and advocacy in Scotland should contact Robbie Toomey, Public Affairs Lead for Scotland, at rtoomey@rics.org



Impact in Northern Ireland



Despite prevailing political uncertainty in Northern Ireland over the past year, we have engaged with a range of policymakers to create greater public visibility for the profession and to deepen our relationship with strategic decision makers, positioning RICS as a trusted friend of the Government and the wider built environment sector.

Key highlights

Advising the Government and the public sector on carbon assessment

RICS has engaged with a range of strategic decision makers to showcase the profession's role in measuring carbon in the built and natural environment and how our standards support decarbonisation targets. The *Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022* sets a target of a 100% reduction in net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 along with an interim target of at least a 48% reduction by 2030. This legislative framework has created opportunities for RICS members to advise the Government on the mechanisms by which this ambition can be delivered, and the following stakeholders have adopted RICS' *Whole life carbon assessment for the built environment*: the Strategic Investment Board, the Department for Communities, Queen's University Belfast, Southern Health and Social Care Trust, and Belfast City Council.

We continue to engage with government departments, education providers, healthcare providers, universities, local authorities and others on the broad theme of sustainability and the role that RICS members play in delivering a net-zero carbon future for the built and natural environment.





Northern Ireland Assembly engagement

In the absence of an executive, RICS engages with key members of the Northern Ireland Assembly on our strategic themes: sustainability, building performance and building safety. RICS participates in three all-party groups at Stormont: construction, housing, and climate action. These all-party groups provide opportunities for the promotion of RICS standards and thought leadership as well as member-led insight into specific policy areas. We regularly present at these forums and share insight with elected representatives as part of our remit to serve the public interest.

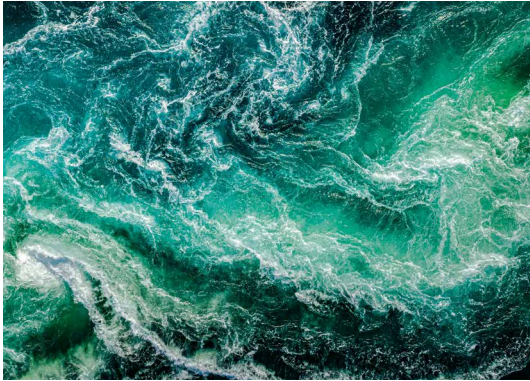
Briefing the Department for Communities

In partnership with the Historic Environment Division of the Department for Communities, RICS delivered a briefing on *Whole life carbon assessment for the built environment* and the Built Environment Carbon Database to a diverse group of built environment professionals and policymakers as part of their cross-disciplinary 'Conservation in Common' series.



Department of Finance engagement

We have continued to develop our relationship with stakeholders in the Department of Finance and presented IBOS to the Asset Management Forum. The department asked for RICS insight on the future of the office as they consider their options for property across the government estate and indicated their interest in understanding the user experience.



Department of Infrastructure promoting RICS expertise

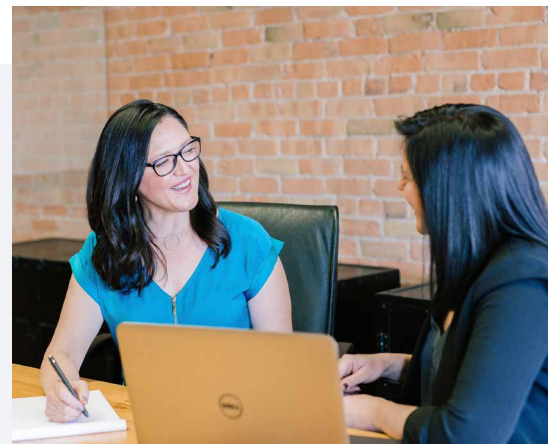
We secured adoption of RICS' [Flooding consumer guide](#) by the Department of Infrastructure to over 400 properties identified as being at risk of flooding. We promoted the role of the chartered surveyor as experts in understanding flood risk and identifying avoidance measures to help householders mitigate flood risk.

Expert Panel on Building Safety

RICS contributed technical expertise to the Expert Panel on Building Safety, which was constituted to make recommendations to improve the regime for building safety in Northern Ireland, to ensure a robust future regulatory system and framework, and to provide assurance to residents that the buildings they live in are safe.

RICS representation on the Northern Ireland Construction Group

In collaboration with other professional and trade bodies working in the built and natural environment, RICS sits on the Northern Ireland Construction Group (NICG) tasked with promoting the sector. The group acts as a mechanism for industry engagement with public-sector clients of professional services, and RICS is supporting further development of this engagement.



Promoting RICS' role in dispute resolution

We are working collaboratively with the Construction & Procurement Delivery team in the Department of Finance in respect of ADR in the construction and infrastructure sector in order to promote the role that chartered surveyors play in managing disputes. RICS delivered a member-led presentation on ADR to the Construction & Procurement Delivery team and the Centres of Procurement Excellence, and policymakers are adopting RICS' Conflict Avoidance Pledge as a signal to the market of their intent to resolve challenges early.

Policy engagement groups for members

This year, we continued with our programme of insight forums, which allow RICS members to network informally and share market insight, which guides our public affairs activity and external stakeholder discussions.

- **Housing and residential:** this group of 31 members drawn from a range of entities, including housing associations, consultancies, private practitioners and developers, focuses on market activity, decarbonisation of residential property and the need for EPC reform to more accurately measure operational energy performance.
- **High street regeneration and commercial:** this group of 42 members from commercial property, valuation, agency, consultancies, academia and private practitioners focuses discussions on Belfast City Region Deal projects, large-scale regeneration projects, small business rates relief and the revaluation of non-domestic property.
- **Sustainable construction and infrastructure:** this group of 58 members, drawn from construction contractors, consultancies, academia and private practitioners, has considered labour shortages, material price uncertainty and the need for additional qualified professionals in the broader sector.
- **Rating forum:** this forum, comprising 14 members who work in valuation, supported the delivery of the revaluation programme, which affected the rates payable on non-domestic property.



Opening of the RICS Northern Ireland office

In June, we officially opened our new office at Custom House in Belfast, where members now have access to work in the building and enjoy the facilities, which include tea and coffee, an on-site gym and larger rooms for CPD events, insight forums and networking opportunities.



RICS Northern Ireland Conference

In September, RICS delivered a conference in Belfast that focused on the Northern Ireland market and the challenges and opportunities posed by the drive towards a sustainable built and natural environment. Over 170 people from across the profession attended the event, which was designed to equip chartered surveyors with practice information. The keynote speech was delivered by Heather Evans, Head of Sustainability at Rider Levett Bucknall, with delegates learning about the 2022 RICS UK Project of the Year at Erne Campus.

Any members who wish to participate in future RICS thought leadership and advocacy in Northern Ireland should contact Emmet McDonough-Brown, Public Affairs Lead for Northern Ireland, at emcdonoughbrown@rics.org

Delivering confidence

We are RICS. Everything we do is designed to effect positive change in the built and natural environments. Through our respected global standards, leading professional progression and our trusted data and insight, we promote and enforce the highest professional standards in the development and management of land, real estate, construction and infrastructure. Our work with others provides a foundation for confident markets, pioneers better places to live and work and is a force for positive social impact.

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