

Commitment Forum – August 2021

The following notes summarise the discussion held at the Commitment Forum on 26 August 2021. The topic of discussion was: *'organisational experiences in developing and implementing an energy action plan, as part of the core requirements of the Net Zero Carbon Buildings Commitment'*. The notes are structured around the prompt questions in pink which led to a discussion on the subsequent barriers and opportunities the signatories have experienced. The session also featured a presentation from the [CUBE Competition](#) who are bringing together landlords, managers and occupiers in a friendly competition to improve energy efficiency from their buildings.

This meeting was open to c. 47 UKGBC member signatories to the Net Zero Carbon Buildings Commitment, representing stakeholders from across the property and construction value chain. The notes are being made publicly available to help grow the knowledge pool on barriers and opportunities to delivering net zero carbon buildings at scale. If you would like to provide any feedback on these notes, please contact us at ANZ@ukgbc.org.

	Barrier	Opportunities
What are some key issues to accurate energy monitoring and reporting, and how can these be overcome?		
1.	Lack of technology in existing buildings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smart sensors and meters are lacking in existing buildings and are difficult to retrofit. Without smart meters, a change of tenant risks a loss of historic data. 	Implement robust processes and resourcing to ensure accurate energy monitoring is in place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For example: GLA Be Seen (pre-consultation guidance). Factor in time and resources to develop and implement an energy action strategy. When working with a third-party, establish expectations in the contract in terms of utility provider and data access via smart metering.
2.	Differences across building typologies and lease requirements, causing inconsistencies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial buildings are generally better set up to collect data than residential, for example. Lack of data in existing residential making benchmarking difficult. Inaccurate data estimations based on the tenant/landlord areas of whole building. Impact on service charge between rental options. 	
What are some key barriers between landlords and tenants, and how can these be overcome?		
3.	Plans and targets are not aligned: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> E.g. Building design is not matching tenant goals. They lack ownership to make equipment changes, lack transparency of energy data and are not a key decision maker. E.g. Landlords having difficulties communicating and implementing overall energy action plan. 	Collaborate better on energy action plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate and gain overall alignment on objectives and the reason behind them from the get-go. Encourage open dialog which goes beyond typical conversations around repairs and fees. Encourage tenants to act by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Giving tenants a shortlist of actions to help their decarbonisation. Setting goals for energy performance based on design. Provide the tenants with an app for easier measurement and monitoring. Provide a model which demonstrates the returns from operational energy savings for occupiers. Gamify energy efficiency through competitions such as the CUBE Competition.

	Barrier	Opportunities
4.	Lack of access to energy data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meters that don't allow for easy access or understanding on the breakdown of energy consumption. • Tenants and landlords must have an agreement in order to share/access this data. • Accessing unregulated energy data will be the next challenge. 	Incentivise energy saving through sharing energy data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve energy data sharing and awareness through a tenant app. • Set green clauses / energy data sharing requirements within the contract (or MOU) between the tenant and landlord. • Share information across wider portfolio to increase knowledge around energy usage.
5.	Challenging relationships due to lease type: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short tenancy lengths mean there is a lack of time to collaborate on a deep level. • Smaller tenants have materiality issues and are unlikely to have an ESG/sustainability role to be responsible for reporting energy data. • Multi-tenanted buildings can be difficult for landlord to engage with. 	Establish groundwork from the get-go: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight the commercial gains and/or cost savings which can be made from reduced energy usage. • View capital investment for retrofits/refurbs through multiple timeline lenses e.g. tenancy, next tenancy rotation, landlord plans. • Smaller tenants could collectively advocate to landlords.

How can organisations transition to 100% renewable procurement that creates additionality?

6.	Procuring energy from renewable energy tariff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting everyone signed up to some sort of renewable energy tariff as the important first step. • Facing big push back from green gas availability. • Tenants can push back due to increased energy prices. 	Educate and clarify reasons: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial - sell the business case of renewably sourced energy e.g. helps to reduce company footprint. • Residential - developing understanding of energy sources and benefits of renewables.
7.	Achieving additionality through renewable energy procurement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding PPA's is difficult - in particular for a diverse portfolio such as residential. • Organisations focusing on credible offsetting rather than additionality. 	Directly impact renewable energy supply by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where possible, maximising renewable energy generation on-site and work to export additional capacity.
8.	Working in a changing market: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are emissions climbing from working-from-home? • Will energy procurement move to hourly carbon factors? 	Employers should actively work to monitor and encourage reductions for emissions from home working.

How can tenants make the business case to implement energy efficiency measures?

9.	Identify easy/quick wins: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy savings from products with a quick pay-back (eg lighting and controls). • Energy savings and income generation potential from solar (eg using roof mapping tools to identify array size). 	
10.	Consideration of bulk cases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insulating several buildings, district heating may be the best option, eg in an area where there are a cluster of large buildings. Often there is a lack of ownership and control in these cases. 	
11.	Leverage your power as a tenant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use lease renewal negotiations to request retrofit/improvements that make spaces compatible with net zero. • Consider looking for new spaces which are more compatible with your own energy action plan. 	