



# ACCELERATING FACILITIES TRANSFORMATION

Eight key questions FM leaders must ask

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The exceptional, every day

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Foreword by Phil Bentley, CEO

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Mitie, in collaboration with Jeffrey Saunders, CEO of workplace and research consultancy, Nordic Foresight, set out to understand the biggest challenges facing FM leaders today. Our aim was to highlight pressing issues and to prompt conversations about ways to respond.

The research uncovered an increased focus on sustainability and environmental goals, with investment in new ways to power buildings and reuse resources. Adapting workplaces to meet changing employee needs and expectations is also a big concern.

Throughout the white paper, we'll share expert insights from across the FM industry, offering a framework for the assessment of your services and future plans. Look out for key takeaways in each section, which provide practical ideas on how to tackle the issue.

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We spoke to 20 leading practitioners across the UK and Ireland's facilities management industry. From our conversations, we identified eight key questions you should be asking in your organisation, along with expert insights on where you should focus your efforts.

## Foreword

### MITIE CEO, PHIL BENTLEY

Much has changed in the six years since I joined the facilities management industry. The transactional 'mop and bucket' nature that once typified the sector has rightly been consigned to the past.

Facilities management has transitioned to a digital-first, technology-backed model: one where floors are still cleaned, but by smart, energy-efficient robots that disinfect using UVC light rather than harsh chemicals. Retailers still focus on protecting their people and their merchandise, but data analytics and incident management inform the deployment of resources. Office buildings are still heated and lit, but by renewable energy, while they are also monitored by efficient management systems. This approach is epitomised by Mitie's *Science of Service*, which combines industry-leading innovation with data-driven insight, creating the solutions our customers need. In short, the days of facilities management are numbered; it's now about facilities transformation.

The Covid-19 pandemic certainly hastened disruption, and while the ship has steadied somewhat, for many organisations the path ahead remains unclear. They must contend with challenging net zero commitments, an increasingly mobile hybrid workforce, and outdated places and spaces that are no longer fit for purpose.

This report is intended to help facilities management leaders chart a course through these choppy waters. We collaborated with senior figures in the FM industry across the UK and Ireland, gaining valuable insights on the current state of play, and where things are heading. Each of the eight sections begins with a question, the answer to which is critical to understanding how an organisation is performing on decarbonisation, welcoming spaces, hybrid working or otherwise. There are also takeaways, providing useful advice to enhance performance.

As the report makes clear, in order to survive, our sector must never stand still, but constantly evolve according to changing needs. Facilities management leaders should contemplate each question carefully and consider an appropriate response. In doing so, they will create robust and successful organisations that will survive and thrive as they transform their built estate, and whatever the future holds.



Phil Bentley, CEO



“The days of facilities management are numbered; it's now about facilities transformation.”

# 1

QUESTION ONE

## What is our pathway to net zero carbon?



### KEY TAKEAWAY FOR FM LEADERS

Use building data and insights to ensure optimum efficiency of buildings and invest in decarbonisation of heating systems. These are essential steps on every organisation's pathway to net zero carbon.



## QUESTION ONE

# What is our pathway to net zero carbon?

### DELIVERING DECARBONISATION

Our research revealed that cutting carbon emissions is one of the biggest challenges for FM leaders today. Responsibility does not rest with FM leaders alone, but you are among the most important stakeholders, who must implement appropriate policies, tools, measures, processes, roadmaps and decarbonisation reporting. Naturally, a scientific, data-led approach is critical to reaching sustainability goals.

The majority of experts interviewed for this paper have made net zero carbon commitments, with the ambition to meet targets by 2050 at the latest. It's worth noting that emerging regulations in Europe, the UK, Japan, and the USA require third-party verification of carbon reporting, much like an official audit of accounts. Attempts to appear green have resulted in some red faces; organisations have had to retract statements and face accusations of 'green washing'.<sup>1</sup>

### BUILDING COMPLEXITY

In order to meet net zero carbon commitments, some customers are reviewing their entire building portfolio. As buildings age, the complexity of the challenge increases.

While retrofitting is always the best approach to reducing carbon footprint, some may ask if it would be best to dispose of less carbon-efficient assets. This avoids the outlay associated with bringing them to the highest standards of sustainability.

One Mitie customer said: "With a 20-year-old building, some critical assets and infrastructure systems will need replacing or adapting. Where is it going to land in the future?" It can be easy to feel overwhelmed, but that need not be the case.

### HEATING SYSTEMS: A GOOD PLACE TO START

While every organisation's decarbonisation goals are unique, the pathway to net zero must begin somewhere, and generally heating systems are a good place to focus. Transitioning to low carbon alternatives not only improves energy consumption, but assists with decarbonisation of the estate.

Consider implementing air-source heat pumps and electric air-conditioning systems powered by renewable energy. FM leaders should also tune and optimise smart building controls to ensure that the building operates at peak performance.

Many organisations are joining local smart grids and microgrids to power their buildings. These independent grids enable a more efficient transfer of electricity between grid-interactive buildings, quicker restoration of electricity after power disturbances and reduced building operations and management costs.



## Renewable energy and electric fleets

Acquiring renewable energy is an important consideration for FM leaders managing the journey to net zero.

All electricity that Mitie buys for its controlled sites is 100% renewable. While sustainable energy providers are easy to source, when it comes to running an electric fleet, organisations must be mindful of how electric vehicles (EVs) are powered.

With over 2,700 EVs\* on the road, Mitie has one of the largest pure electric fleets in the UK. Mitie's 3,000 EV charging points use renewable energy and we partner with the specialist provider, TMC, to ensure colleagues charging vehicles at home or at customer sites obtain electricity derived from renewable sources.

\* Correct as of November 2022.

# 2

QUESTION TWO

Does our management team support flexible, hybrid working?



## KEY TAKEAWAY FOR FM LEADERS

Strengthen relationships with your HR, IT, and leadership teams to tackle the hybrid working challenge together. With stronger relationships, you'll gain greater insights into employees' workplace experiences, and be able to meet their needs more effectively.



## QUESTION TWO

# Does our management team support flexible, hybrid working?

### EMPLOYEES BENEFIT FROM HYBRID WORKING – BUT SOME ORGANISATIONS MAY BE HESITANT

Following the pandemic, more employees want hybrid working options from their employer.

ONS reports that more than eight in 10 workers in the UK who had to work from home during the pandemic said they plan to adopt hybrid working models in the future.<sup>2</sup> Additional reports show that employees want flexibility in both location (79%) and schedule (94%).<sup>3</sup>

But despite such a significant shift in employee attitudes, organisations may struggle to define and implement clear policies around flexible working arrangements. Some are hesitant to offer hybrid working as a permanent option due to concerns about productivity.

However, it's important to note that in *Is hybrid working here to stay?*, ONS also reports 52% of workers feel they can complete work more quickly at home; and 53% face fewer distractions. For some businesses, increased productivity is one of the three main reasons they wish to continue with a hybrid model.

The tension between employees and employers can make it difficult for facilities management teams to meet the needs of everyone. But, there is a way FM leaders tackle the challenge.

### STRONGER BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS CREATE BETTER EMPLOYEE OUTCOMES

To help organisations deliver hybrid working options successfully, FM leaders should strengthen their relationships with key functions including IT, HR and senior leadership.

IT is crucial for the digital infrastructure that makes hybrid working possible, HR must ensure the workforce is supported regardless of location, and senior management buy-in is required to roll out such policies across the organisation. Strong relationships with key stakeholders mean that FM leaders can facilitate the collaborative approach required to realise successful hybrid working.

Close collaboration will also make it easier to accurately review employees' workplace experiences and to highlight any areas that need improvement. Crucially, for FM leaders, strengthening these relationships can make it easier to gain unique insights into employees' working environments that might be otherwise missed in traditional data collection. For example, with more open data sharing between teams and functions, it will be easier for FM leaders to spot when specific spaces aren't being used often, how different environments affect employees' morale and performance, and where the organisation can save on wasted resources.



# 3

QUESTION THREE

## Are our workplaces commute worthy?



### KEY TAKEAWAY FOR FM LEADERS

Think about whether your workplace offers enough incentives for your employees to make their commutes, and whether it offers a better alternative to their home office set-ups. Do you provide an ecosystem of spaces that include features such as: individual work pods, rest and relaxation areas, collaborative work stations, private call booths, prayer rooms, well-equipped desks, cafes and kitchenettes, and lockers and showers?



We must make the workplace worth the cost of the commute and day care. You're not going into the workplace to answer emails, you can do that at home. You are coming in for a purpose.

We are now gearing up around the challenge of how we make coming into the office special."

*Mitie customer*



## → QUESTION THREE

# Are our workplaces commute worthy?

### FM LEADERS NEED TO REDEFINE THE VALUE OF THE WORKPLACE

As more companies are requesting their employees come back into the workplace, the purpose of in-person workspaces is a hotly debated topic. For example, as transport adds approximately one hour to the average workday, some employees may feel that time would be better spent working at home. Also, 49% of UK workers cite commuting costs as a cause of stress.<sup>4</sup>

As an FM leader, you know how much a well-designed workspace can influence employees' productivity and satisfaction – often boosting collaboration, relationships and morale. But to convince your people to make the commute and experience those benefits, you'll need to assess whether your organisation's workspaces are dynamic enough and cater to your employees' needs.

“When you look specifically at the role of the office, if you look at a situation where it's completely on demand and people are free to work anywhere, the office can still add a tremendous amount of value.

In fact, if we look at companies that are 100% remote, and have been for a long time, they still have a lot of times when they get together and value physical space.”<sup>5</sup>

*Ryan Anderson, Vice President of Global Insights at Miller Knoll*



## Give your people a reason to come back to the office

Convincing your colleagues to choose your workspace as the primary destination for their working hours can be difficult, especially if your organisation offers hybrid working options.

But, if you can create an ecosystem of spaces that offer a variety of settings for your employees to complete their work, it will be much easier to attract people in.

This means thinking about spaces that cater to employees' diverse needs. You'll also need to consider the home comforts employees have enjoyed over the past few years and think about how they might be implemented in your workspaces. Meanwhile, organisations that try to enforce in-person working without properly addressing their workspaces could risk losing talent.

Many leading organisations are now investing in higher-quality workspace real estate. For example, Google is increasing its real estate investments by as much as 50%, providing “new types of collaboration spaces for in-person teamwork and creating more overall space to improve wellbeing.”<sup>6</sup>



# 4

QUESTION FOUR

## Are our spaces welcoming to everyone?



### KEY TAKEAWAY FOR FM LEADERS

Think about ED&I from the outset of workspace design. Take a data-orientated, bottom-up approach to mitigate any inherent biases in your decision making and ensure you're reflecting the needs of every employee.



We are very focused on increasing our diversity and improving our inclusivity. It is front and centre of how we look at our space.”

*Mitie customer*

## QUESTION FOUR

# Are our spaces welcoming to everyone?

### CERTAIN EMPLOYEE GROUPS ARE MORE RELUCTANT TO RETURN TO THE WORKPLACE

Employees' reluctance to return to their workplaces isn't just about personal flexibility. In some cases, modern workspaces can feel unwelcoming to certain groups of people – despite the best intentions of FM leaders.

According to recent pulse surveys of knowledge workers, flexibility in work location is prized most by female employees, racially diverse employees, and working parents. In fact, 58% of female workers want to work remotely three to five days a week, compared to only 48% of male workers.<sup>7</sup>

As an FM leader, you should engage with diverse groups to develop services and spaces that suit their requirements. There is a corresponding social and economic benefit to your organisation.

The following list details some of the factors that can affect workers' needs:

- Gender
- Religious beliefs
- Physical needs
- Socio-economic status
- Age
- Race/ethnicity
- Physical abilities
- Family situation

### BE PROACTIVE ABOUT INCLUSIVITY

To ensure inclusivity, FM leaders should promote and train in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I). You should also avoid a top-down approach to workplace decisions. Data-oriented analytics-driven measures, together with a bottom-up approach, are both extremely effective for making the workplace more inclusive.

Employee surveys are one way to achieve this. Listening and keeping an open mind about challenges and solutions is crucial when dealing with diverse colleagues and communities who traditionally may not have had their voices heard.

An inclusive workplace is a great way to tempt certain employee groups back. For example, during the Covid-19 pandemic, 250,000 older workers (aged 45-64) prematurely left the UK labour market. ONS reports that organisations could tempt 40% of these workers back with more flexible working arrangements and workspaces.<sup>8</sup>

## Women and disabled workers may not want to commute because they feel unsafe

One reason that women and people with disabilities may not want to return to the workplace is due to safety concerns around their commute.

Recent research from ONS found that 58% of women aged 16 to 34 felt very or fairly unsafe using public transport alone after dark. Similarly, over 40% of disabled people felt very or fairly unsafe after dark in busy public spaces.<sup>9</sup>

Fortunately, there's a lot you can do quickly to start supporting your colleagues' commutes to ensure they can make it to the workplace safely, and comfortably.

Potential solutions could include:

- Improving lighting and safety features around your building and carpark, as well as public transport hubs
- Hybrid working arrangements so that a daily commute isn't always necessary
- Alternatives to public transport, such as shuttles to the workplace



# 5

QUESTION FIVE

## Do our workspaces meet our employees' cognitive needs?



### KEY TAKEAWAY FOR FM LEADERS

Consider workspace planning, acoustics, heating and cooling, and lighting when designing workspaces to accommodate the needs of neurodiverse employees and others.



You need a facilities model that supports neurodiverse workplaces. If a neurodiverse design is not maintained or looked after, it signals you don't care about your workers."

*Mitie customer*



## QUESTION FIVE

# Do our workspaces meet our employees' cognitive needs?

### WORKSPACES SHOULD BE DESIGNED WITH NEURODIVERSITY IN MIND

As a key part of making the workplace welcoming and accessible to all, many FM leaders are now considering how to tailor spaces to employees' different cognitive needs.

Neurodiverse colleagues may have conditions such as Tourette's syndrome, ADHD, dyslexia, and Parkinson's disease, all of which are much more openly spoken about and understood in many workplaces. It is only right that FM leaders are beginning to consider these conditions and others in their workspace designs.

For example, hypersensitive employees tend to prefer predictable environments which are quiet and spacious with natural light. In contrast, hyposensitive people are less sensitive to sensory elements and often prefer additional stimuli such as auditory, visual, and tactile stimulation.

By 2030, workers aged 55 years and older will make up 30% or more of the workforce. Specialists predict around 30% of these workers will need adjustments to their workspaces that protect against mental health and musculoskeletal issues to reduce forced retirement and an inability to work.<sup>10</sup>

Diverse requirements therefore leave a lot for FM leaders to consider when thinking about workspace design.

### FOUR DESIGN ELEMENTS TO BEAR IN MIND

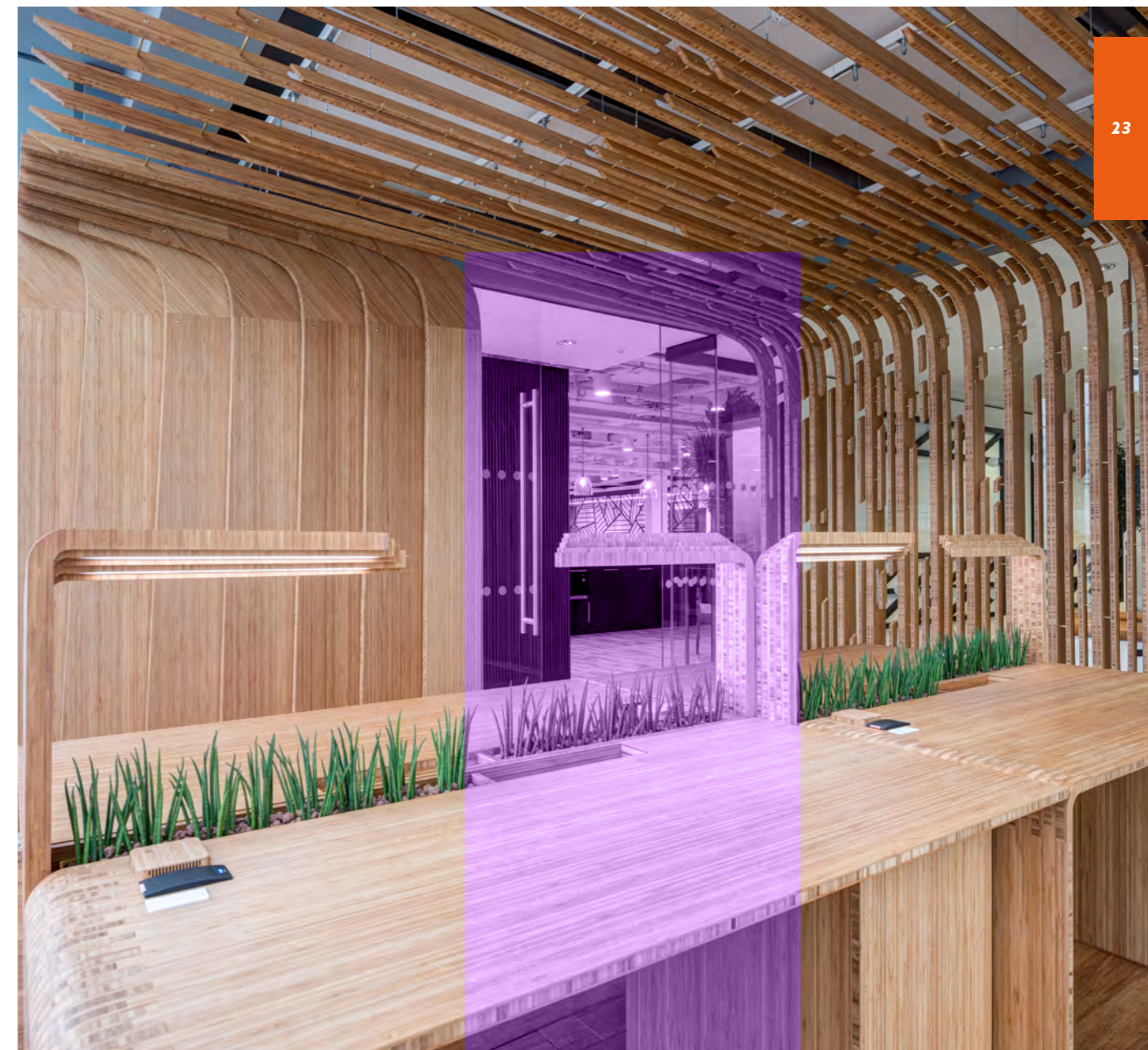
**Workspace planning:** Whatever the environment, it should answer the needs of the workforce with innovative use of space. The different requirements of hyper- and hyposensitive people must be accounted for.

Determining how space is used is the first step in knowing the art of the possible. To do so, Mitie conducts surveys and installs connected sensor technology to reveal footfall and hidden potential. Focal points, including trophy display cabinets, internal planting and feature walls, can also assist with wayfinding and enhance feelings of security.

**Acoustics:** Sound insulation between workspaces helps colleagues remain focused on the job at hand. In open-plan offices, subtle breaks in the layout can also help absorb sound. For example, Mitie Landscapes recommends indoor planting for this purpose.

**Heating and cooling:** In a Mitie workplace survey of over 350 government department workers, temperature and air quality proved critical to employee experience. Smart heating and cooling should be implemented to ensure air temperature remains comfortable and at least 16°C, as set out in Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992. Access to open/shut windows is another way to create a work environment that supports colleague comfort and performance.

**Lighting:** Varying lighting throughout the workspace can have a big impact on colleague wellbeing and efficiency. Desks should be appropriately illuminated, with smart sensors to increase or dim light, depending on the natural light level outside. As natural light has a positive impact on wellbeing, large windows that draw in as much as possible are ideal.



# 6

QUESTION SIX

How do we develop our FM services as our organisation evolves?



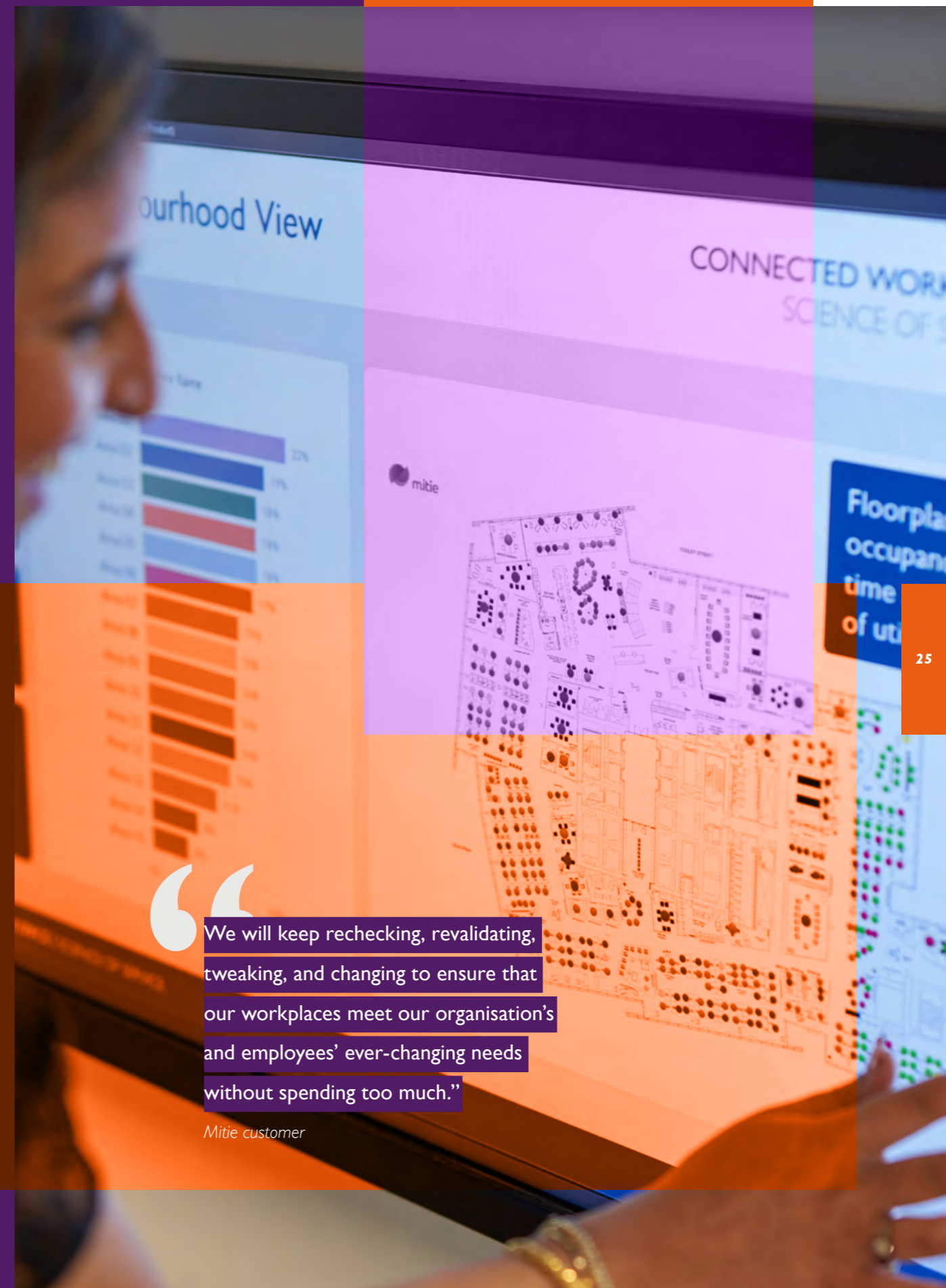
## KEY TAKEAWAY FOR FM LEADERS

Invest time in continuously capturing, processing, and analysing data from your employees and their working environments to understand their needs as they change, how they use their workspaces, and where you can make ongoing, valuable changes to support them.



“We will keep rechecking, revalidating, tweaking, and changing to ensure that our workplaces meet our organisation’s and employees’ ever-changing needs without spending too much.”

*Mitie customer*



## QUESTION SIX

# How do we develop our FM services as our organisation evolves?

### VIEW YOUR WORKPLACE AS IF IT'S IN PERPETUAL BETA

As employees' needs, goals, and ways of working change, the workplace needs to change with them. And that means FM leaders should view their workplaces in perpetual beta – consistently evolving alongside the organisation.

Mitie's Head of Insight, Tina Hobart, recommends that FM leaders continue to ask questions about workspaces and how they are evolving over time. Things to consider include:

- Ongoing collaboration with stakeholder functions that contribute to the workplace
- Any changes in the organisation's purpose, work and teams
- Projects being undertaken and whether the workspace fully supports them
- Long-term workspace transformation

Tina said: "The workplace is in constant flux and evolution. Meanwhile, colleague needs vary not only from day to day, but over the longer term. To ensure workspaces remain fit for purpose, facilities managers must remain abreast of such change and make adaptations, where necessary. Comprehensive workplace surveys, gleaning insight and establishing a baseline to move forward, offer ways to do so."

These points are a useful starting position for understanding how your workplace and its people are changing, and where you need to focus your initial efforts. But to make valuable changes for your employees, you'll need to generate more granular insights into how they work.

### DATA AND ANALYTICS SHOULD GUIDE YOUR WORKPLACE CHANGES

Using the right data and analytics solutions, you can generate valuable insights on how your workspaces are currently used – offering guidance on how you can adapt working environments to meet your employees' needs.

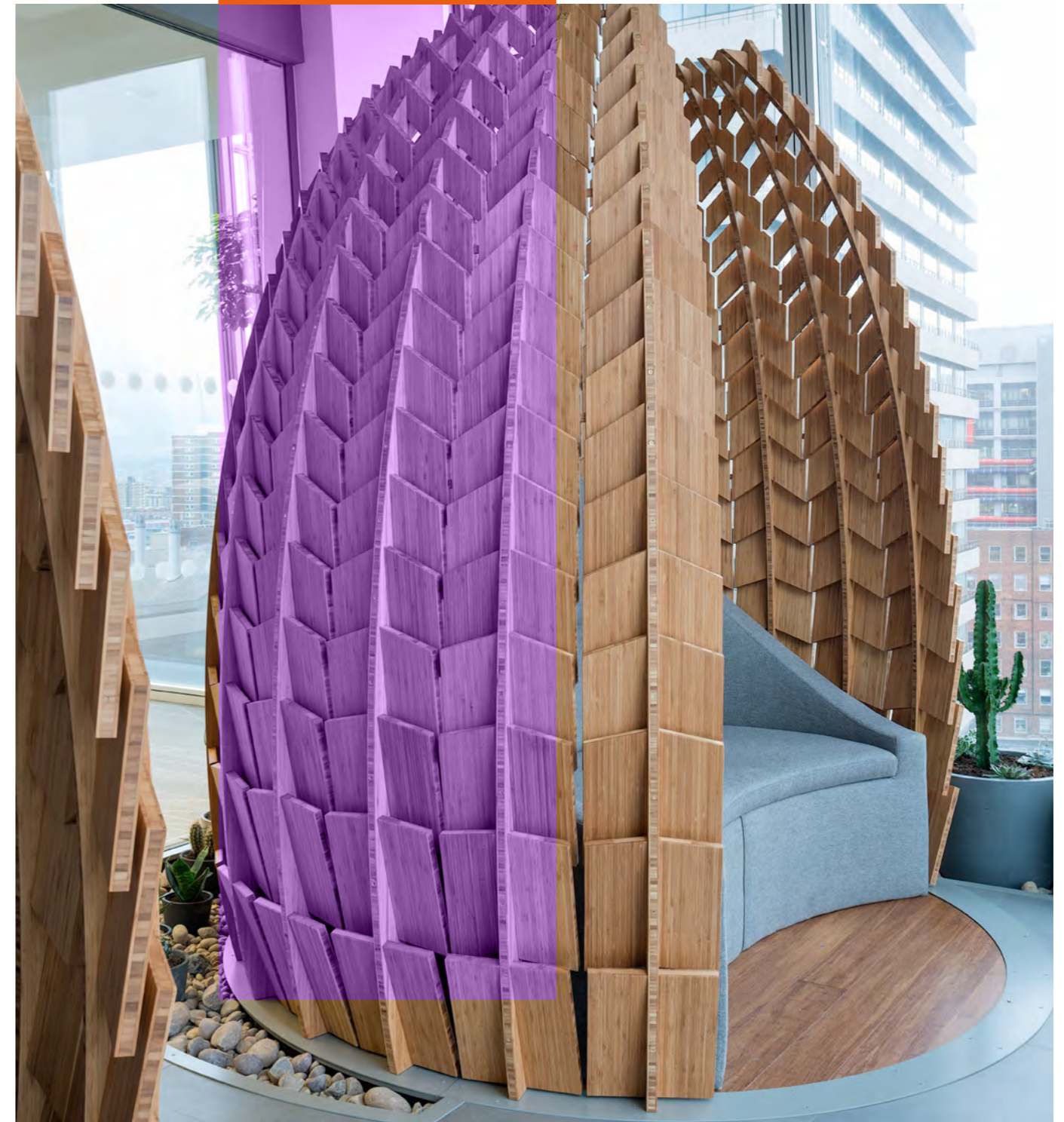
Software as a Service (SaaS) companies use deep, data-driven understanding of their end users to shape their products, and you can do the same with your employees and workspaces.

For example, tools such as footfall sensors, social network analysis, and digital surveys can help generate granular data on employee performance and usage in the workspace. Crucially, you'll need to invest time into capturing, processing, and analysing this quantitative and qualitative data to ensure it's usable.

This isn't a one-time process, either. You'll need to continuously capture and analyse data across your workspaces to ensure they continue meeting your workers' needs as your organisation evolves. The insights generated from your data should shape your budgeting and management plans to help you make ongoing, impactful workplace changes.

“A high-performing workplace changes as the organisation transforms and is in perpetual 'beta'. Facility managers must align organisational development ambitions with deep involvement in granular utilisation data.”

*Jeffrey Saunders, CEO, Nordic Foresight*



# 7

QUESTION SEVEN

## How do we support our local communities?



### KEY TAKEAWAY FOR FM LEADERS

Engage with members of your local community to identify their most pressing issues, and where your organisation can help. Also, look for opportunities for your colleagues to get involved, such as employee volunteering days.





→ QUESTION SEVEN

## How do we support our local communities?

### THE SUCCESS OF YOUR BUILDINGS DEPENDS ON THE WELLBEING OF YOUR COMMUNITIES

As an FM leader, you're well aware that the buildings you manage don't sit in isolation – they're part of diverse, ever-changing communities. And you should make every effort to ensure your organisation and its infrastructure has a positive impact on those communities.

There is a mutual benefit to be gained. With a tighter pinch on the cost of living, residual effects from the pandemic, and environmental degradation affecting many of the areas in which you operate, now is an ideal time to assess your organisation's efforts to support the surrounding neighbourhood. A pleasant area not only positively impacts employee attraction, but also employee retention, thanks to high-quality places and spaces to enjoy both in and out of work.

Engaging with key members of the local community to identify their most pressing issues, and where your organisation can help, is a good place to start. These might include the condition of nearby infrastructure or the local environment. With a clear idea of community issues, you'll be able to deliver more significant and valuable initiatives.

“Our approach is founded on aligned values and sustainable outcomes for communities, and the people within them. It affords us sustainable profit growth – removes risk, adds business continuity, and helps create long-term partnerships. It also helps us attract and retain good people who want to work at Mitie.

Our workforce, now and in the future, are increasingly interested in giving back to their communities – and we offer them that opportunity.”

*Haydn Scarborough, Business Development Director, Mitie Communities*



## → How Mitie supports local communities

Driving community-focused initiatives might involve collaborating with members of your senior leadership team, or in some cases, creating a separate group in your organisation to push them forward.

Our own community-focused initiatives are mainly led by the Mitie Foundation charity, which helps a range of candidates into work through programmes such as Ready2Work. Participants benefit from employment placements, interview skills training, mentoring and more.

It's likely there'll be opportunities in your community for your employees to offer their support. At Mitie, salaried colleagues have an annual volunteering day and are encouraged to give their time to worthy causes.

# 8

QUESTION EIGHT

Do our workspaces benefit from  
and support the circular economy?



## KEY TAKEAWAY FOR FM LEADERS

Look for opportunities to reuse resources when retrofitting or constructing buildings, and consider using material passports to ensure accuracy, transparency, and traceability across your materials.



## QUESTION EIGHT

# Do our workspaces benefit from and support the circular economy?

### A GROWING NEED TO REUSE CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS

Half of the world's raw materials go into the built environment, while construction generates up to a third of global waste and 40% of carbon emissions.<sup>11</sup>

Figures like these are prompting many organisations to consider how they can support the circular economy to reduce their role in this wastage.

Forward-thinking FM leaders are exploring ways to reuse materials from their older buildings in new ones, creating a bank of materials for future construction. And concepts such as material passports are helping them do this more efficiently and accurately.

“Viewing waste as a resource is important to any organisation's approach. Increasing recycling rates is great, but it is also important to cut waste in the first place.”

*Mike Taylor, Managing Director of Mitie Waste*

### HOW MATERIAL PASSPORTS CAN SPEED UP MATERIAL REUSE

Material passports trace construction components such as used bricks, wood, glass, and more, assigning them a market value for recovery, recycling, and reuse.

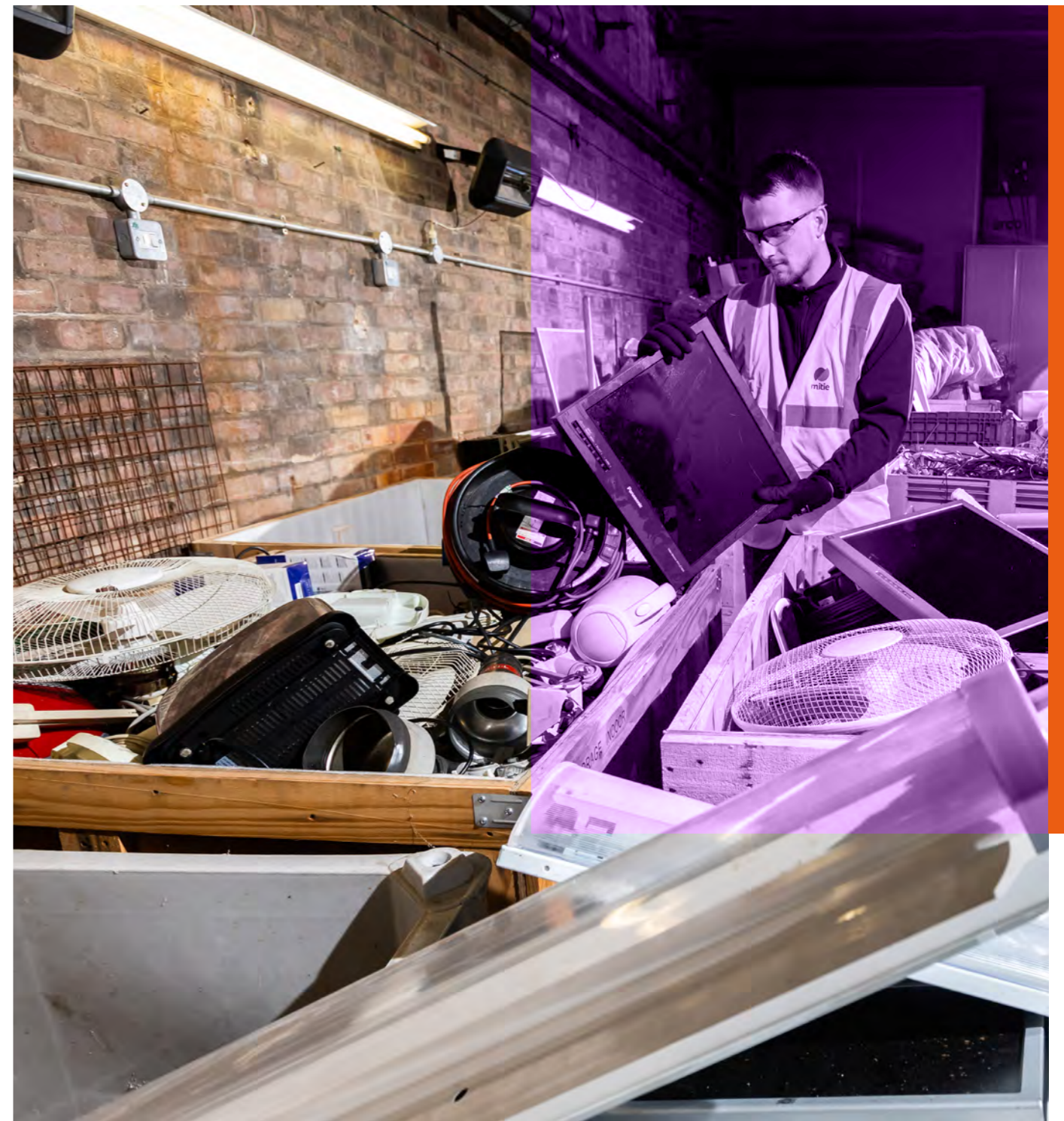
When other organisations come to retrofit their buildings, or develop new ones, they can procure these materials and use fewer virgin resources during their construction.<sup>12</sup> Using material passports, this process is much faster, and there's complete transparency and traceability across all materials.

Emerging platforms and business models such as Buildings As Material Banks and Madaster are even creating passport libraries, digital banks, and mechanisms for evaluating the residual value of materials in a building – creating more options for FM leaders to contribute to the circular economy.

Managing Director of Mitie Waste, Mike Taylor, said: “Viewing waste as a resource is important to any organisation's approach. Increasing recycling rates is great, but it is also important to cut waste in the first place. This can be achieved by thinking carefully about the materials being procured, but also by repurposing them rather than sending them to landfill. Does your organisation compost, for example? Or find new homes for unwanted office furniture? Adopting a 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle' approach not only saves money, but improves environmental performance.”

Where possible, sourcing better quality items that remain functional for longer can be worth the investment, benefiting your organisation's bottom line and the environment.

It is also worth looking out for opportunities to support your organisation's ESG initiatives, such as donating leftover food from your canteen or donating old laptops and furniture to the local community. The positive impact and scope of the circular economy can be considerable.



## → Conclusion

# It's time to rethink your FM services – and we're here to help

The built environment and workplace are changing, along with employees' needs, and organisations' priorities and goals.

But crucially, while there's a lot of change, it's creating opportunities for even more efficient, effective and welcoming spaces.

At Mitie, we've developed a unique technology-led approach to answer strategic and operational FM challenges. We call it the Science of Service - combining innovation with intelligence, we support our customers' direction, whatever the future holds.

The Science of Service is already delivering results for our clients, from maximising productivity and enhancing experiences, to accelerating sustainability and improving hygiene.



**GET IN TOUCH WITH US TODAY**

Talk to one of our experts to explore what's possible with your facilities management strategies – get in contact at [science.of.service@mitie.com](mailto:science.of.service@mitie.com).

And visit [mitie.com/the-science-of-service](https://mitie.com/the-science-of-service) to learn more about our innovative work with leading organisations.

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