

CASE STUDY: WILLMOTT DIXON

OUR APPROACH TO SUSTAINABILITY

Willmott Dixon is one of the UK's largest privately-owned construction, housing and property groups. We believe there is a clear link between being commercially successful and being sustainable; cutting carbon and reducing waste boosts the bottom line and increases competitiveness, and our commitment to sustainability starts right at the top of our organisation. Our Group Vision states:

“We will build on our history and reputation to add value to clients and shareholders by maintaining a leadership role in the built environment, undertaking our activities in a sustainable and responsible manner and contributing to society as a whole.”

“Sustainability is a huge and complex challenge for all of us. But if we are positive and proactive, we can grow our business, and at the same time, make a huge difference.”

To ensure that we can deliver against this vision Willmott Dixon has developed a Sustainable Development Strategy. “Transforming Tomorrow” sets out how we will use our influence and example to become an even greater force for good within the wider society. We have a headline aim to be a “Leader in Sustainable Development” and the Group’s three key targets are:

- To reduce carbon emissions intensity by 50% per million of turnover by 2020 from a 2010 baseline.
- To reduce construction waste intensity by 60% per £100k of project value by 2020 from a 2012 baseline.
- To enhance the life chances of 10,000 young people by the end of 2020 from a 2012 baseline.

We also have targets for our Considerate Constructors’ Scheme scores, waste diversion, life cycle costing, water use and responsible sourcing. These are measured at project level through our 10 Point sustainability Plan.

WHY DOES WILLMOTT DIXON SEE A NEED FOR THE HOMES SUPPLY CHAIN SCHOOL?

As a founding member of the Supply Chain Sustainability School we are very supportive of the new Homes Supply Chain School.

480 companies within our strategic supply chain have joined and embraced the principles of the school which provides a clearer understanding of:

- the industry’s sustainability challenges and
- the drivers for their clients (who are generally the partners of the school).

It is clear that we will need a radical re-think across our value chain fully realise future opportunities. We believe that the nature of the school provides a strong platform for more focussed discussion, learning and collaboration to inspire the industry and deliver new sustainable solutions.



THE BENEFITS FOR OUR COLLECTIVE SUPPLY CHAIN BEING INVOLVED WITH THE SCHOOL

Willmott Dixon spends around £3.8m a day on goods, works and services. Our reputation is inextricably linked to our suppliers, so it is important that we and our supply chain have the knowledge and expertise to deliver on our sustainable development ambitions and targets, and build better buildings. We will not achieve our aims and ambitions without a fully committed and skilled supply chain working with us and pulling in the same direction.

Through our approach to sustainability we have reduced our environmental impact, increased efficiency. As a result we have seen tangible financial benefits. We want to work more closely with our specialist supply chain and continue this journey together to ensure that we all fully maximise the business benefits of this agenda.

WHAT DOES WILLMOTT DIXON SEE AS THE KEY SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGES IN THE HOMES SECTOR?

Over the past decade or so the sector has built dwellings at all levels of Code for Sustainable Homes as well as Passivhaus and other environmental standards. Part of the challenge is to consolidate our knowledge and experience into learning that will deliver better outcomes and more sustainable dwellings. We must increase the sectors understanding of the performance gap and overheating within our supply chain, so that they can be part of the solution.



The industry as a whole has significant challenges ahead in continuing to provide for society and deliver against the targets in the Industrial Strategy 2025. These include reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the built environment by 50%, reducing costs by 33% and reducing the overall time, from inception to completion, by 50%. Specifically, the current government has tasked the sector with delivering 1,000,000 new homes by the end of this parliament (2020). This provides the house building sector with a great opportunity to deliver higher performing sustainable homes more efficiently.

HOW WILL THE HOMES SCHOOL ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES?



One of the strengths of the Supply Chain School is that it drives a consistent approach across the supply chain which is common to many of the key clients. Networking and a collaborative approach stimulates positive engagement with a diverse audience. The Homes Supply Chain School has the right balance of partners to identify and develop specific awareness and knowledge to guide the house building industry towards the delivery of more sustainable solutions and products.

HOW HAS WILLMOTT DIXON BEEN INVOLVED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HOMES SCHOOL?

The Groups in-house sustainability consultancy 'Re-Thinking' has supported and helped shape the school's direction since its launch in 2012.

Our regional Supply Chain Managers from our Housing business engage directly and promote the school to their supply chain partners and obtain feedback for improvements. We understand the importance of our visibility at school events to demonstrate our leadership and commitment ensure consistency of message, support other partners and to fully endorse the school. We look forward to hosting and co-hosting many future events with the partners of the school.

WHAT DO WE BELIEVE WILL BE THE IMPACT OF THE HOMES SCHOOL ON THE SECTOR?

We have already seen some impressive innovation from the Construction Supply Chain School as a result of suppliers' involvement with the school. More often than not this innovation evolved from a simple question, observation or thought that resonated with others at one of the supplier events.

Our supply chain is incredibly important to Willmott Dixon. The school aims to inspire and provoke thought for change. We want attendees to leave events enthused to make a difference, realise the significant business benefits of sustainability, create innovation, improve competitiveness, and win more work.



