

Interim Chair of Governing Council's Statement

The global pandemic continues to fundamentally change the way we interact with the built and natural environment.

As mindsets have shifted from response to recovery, many began to question how societies might use this moment as a chance to reset and prepare for future challenges.

Of course, leaders around the world have sought to build back better, to use that phrase, by using recoveries strategies that also look to tackle the greatest challenges of our generation. And you just have to look at the agendas of COP 25 and the forthcoming COP 26 that will highlight this evolutionary thinking.

This includes building and adapting places so they can be resilient to the effects and impact of climate change.

This year of course we saw many stark reminders that the built environment remains vulnerable to climate change, with wildfires, floods and hurricanes devastating communities around the world.

But what we also saw was innovation driving change in the way we are constructing new buildings with climate resilience embedded as a core principle.

And there is a greater recognition than ever before that the status quo is not sustainable and we cannot meet our targets without addressing concerns in relation to our existing building stock.

Adaptation, renovation and a more circular economy have risen up the agenda as key tools in the race to meet 2050 net zero targets.

Meanwhile, the way in which people use space within their homes and offices has changed.

Expectations have risen around offices and the role they play in terms of fostering collaboration and offering a quality experience that improves the wellbeing of employees.

Perhaps also the increased amount of time we have spent in our homes over the last few months, has given us a greater appreciation of the natural world and its importance in our lives.

As towns and cities started to re-open and a familiar hum of commercial activity resumed, we all looked for a new sense of acceptable purpose in our built environment.

We were reminded of the critical contribution that commercial real estate makes to resilient and successful communities and economies.

And we have technology playing a greater role in the built environment than ever before and I'm very pleased to tell you that RICS members have been leading and embracing change throughout these challenging times, and this year has highlighted that RICS must be much more resilient and future-focused as an organisation.

Governing Council's decision to commission an Independent Review into historic treasury management issues at the start of 2021, after some initial hesitation, including my own, was undoubtedly the right course of action for us.

The publication of the report and the adoption and implementation of all its observations and recommendations will, we hope, show our members that we are committed to fostering a culture of openness, transparency, fairness, support and example.

RICS has achieved success this year and our oversight of professional and regulatory standards remains as strong as ever.

I would like to express significant thanks on behalf of Governing Council to all those members who have willingly given up their time this year to serve on numerous Committees and Boards or as Assessors or Supervisors.

The stories within this Annual Review highlight just a small number of the exceptional leaders that we have within our profession – and the future leaders who will shape the profession in years to come.

I hope they inspire you in your day to day work, and the next generation of young people who proudly want to use the designation 'Chartered Surveyor'.