

## March 2023: Driving Change

Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023 – Teknion showroom

### Core Team:

Harsha Kotak, WOD; Joanna Knight, WOD;  
Ella Fathi, Oktra; Georgia Elliott-Smith, Element 4

### Collective Members:

Angela Dapper, Grimshaw; Laura Wardrope, JLL; Asif Din, Perkins & Will;  
Rhiannon Laurie, Gensler; May Fawzy, MF Studio / BIID;  
Dicky Lewis, White Red Architects; Lucy Bagshaw, TP Bennett; Emily King, BDP;  
Gurvinder Khurana, M Moser; Natasha Hewlett, Peldon Rose;  
Ana Rita Martins, Woodalls Design; Nigel Tresise, Align; Deepak Parmar, MCM;  
Jennie GreenWalker, MAA Architects; Dom Pegram, Salt & Pegram;  
Jennifer Russell, Bureau Group; Matt Davies, The Furniture Practice;  
Anja Schellenbauer, Conran and Partners; Fiona Edwards, JPA Workspaces;  
Sarah Audsley, Knight Frank; Alison Grant: HLW; Simah Aslam, Abrdn.

**Supporters:** Shaw Contract; Steelcase; Sedus UK; Solus Ceramics; Milliken;  
Orluna LED; Teknion; Workplace Insight

### Purpose:

A 'think tank' group committed to acting as a collective within the workplace design community to identify developments and 'best practice' relating to sustainability.

This report highlights some of the points raised during the discussion. The meeting was shorter than usual to provide time for planning for the forthcoming SDC Forum and Awards on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2023, Crypt on the Green, Clerkenwell.

## OPEN DISCUSSION

*What are our responsibilities and what are the compromises? – A SDC open debate.*





## PROJECTS:

*“Social benefit is a red line for us because the reputation risk is too great.”*

*“Clients may have different credentials and standards but in most cases there’s an opportunity for effecting change.”*

*“We will reject projects if the award/evaluation process is based solely on price.”*

*“We are actively seeking like-minded clients as well as showing them the potential for cost savings through, for example, waste reduction.”*

*“We won’t work with any company making significant investments in fossil fuel exploration.” Counter argument: “But is it better to try to effect change from the inside and be a part of the change?”*

*“We all draw a line somewhere – such as chemical weapons – but we all still use fossil fuels.”*

*“As an industry we need to be showcasing ‘best practice’ and this will help promote change.”*

*Continued/...*

## PRODUCTS

*“There is a growing tendency for green hushing” (the practice of ‘saying nothing for fear of criticism’).*

*“Some companies will only show me (as a Sustainability Manager) their ‘green’ solution whilst they do actually also produce a less environmentally-sensitive product as well.”*

*“Pure transparency is the most important thing. We recognise the difference between ‘perfection and momentum’.”*

*“It is not our remit to judge – but to encourage change.”*

*“We should be talking to manufacturers and suppliers beyond their products – we need to understand the corporate approach to carbon reduction and social value.”*

*“We recognise the cost implications of EPDs and other production certifications. Many big corporates are now aiming for building certification standards. We can include smaller, innovative suppliers by integrating their products into areas which are less impactful to the certification points system.”*

## PEOPLE

*“We do have internal responsibility. Are we doing enough to educate our staff and designers? It can be difficult due to the pressure of work.”*

*“There has to be a ‘top down’ commitment from senior management otherwise the business model can prohibit change.”*

*“There needs to be more than a published ESG statement. It must be embedded and understood throughout the business – not just a statement on the web site.”*



## **OUTCOMES:**

### **SDC Magazine:**

As part of its mission is to work collaboratively to share knowledge and 'best practice' to inspire and influence the workplace design sector, SDC will be launching a digital publication. The ambition is to provide a platform for views, opinions, and projects within the office workplace sector.

### **SDC Courses:**

SDC will be launched the first of a series of online courses specifically designed for designers working within the workplace environment.

### **SDC Forum: 25<sup>th</sup> April 2023, Crypt on the Green, Clerkenwell**

An interactive event for workplace designers, manufacturers, and suppliers to share knowledge and learn about efforts towards greater sustainability. It will provide the opportunity for networking and purposeful conversations as well as presentations and discussion panels.

### **FOOTNOTE:**

The Sustainable Design Collective meets every two months. Each meeting addresses different initiatives designed to tackle the impact on our environment.

A summary document will be published after each meeting which is hosted on the Sustainable Design Collective's web site – an example of knowledge sharing.

We welcome comment and contributions from the office design sector.

[www.woduk.com/sdc](http://www.woduk.com/sdc)