

MIPIIM 2025

# Technology is Transforming Real Estate

**IWG**

International  
Workplace  
Group





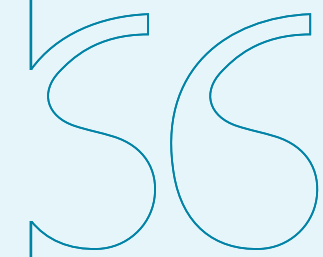
# Introduction

Cities are changing and evolving as a response to shifting work patterns, rapid urbanisation, climate change and new living habits. How the real estate sector is responding to these changes and what else needs to be done was one of the key themes of this year's MIPIM, the leading annual exhibition, conference and networking event for the world's real estate professionals.

In this white paper, we explore the main topics under discussion in Cannes, which also included a continued emphasis on ESG and AI, and the ongoing rapid rise of platform working.



# The changing face of cities



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**Mark Dixon**

Founder and CEO,  
International Workplace Group plc



In a keynote speech at the event, Torben Klitgaard, CEO of BLOXHUB, a Nordic hub for sustainable cities, declared that entire urban systems need to be rethought, with sustainability embedded in how they are designed, built and funded: “We need more viable solutions to secure a long-lasting future for the planet,” he said.

The rapid rise of hybrid working is providing a powerful impetus for urban transformation. As more and more people choose to reduce the number of times they make a long, daily commute to a city centre office, cities are evolving.

“The role of cities is changing forever,” said Mark Dixon. “Places like London, whose

economy has been geared to meet the needs of millions of itinerant office workers, will need to evolve to become hubs for collaboration and entertainment.”

BLOXHUB and ULI Europe organised a roundtable event at MIPIM to discuss practical ways of building more sustainable cities in the future. The panel of city leaders, architects and investors concluded that artificial intelligence would play a major role. Cities are already leveraging AI for predictive modelling, design optimisation, and citizen engagement, and it is a potential game-changer for the way that cities will develop in the future – as long as concerns about data privacy, bias and transparency are properly addressed.



# The implications of RTO

In recent months, headlines have been dominated by discussions around Return to Office (RTO) mandates, and the debate continued at MIPIM. But as Dixon highlighted, while the trend is unmistakably taking place, the subject is more nuanced than many realise.

"It's not just a binary choice between working from a traditional city centre office and from home," he said. "There's a third option: working out of a local co-working space or office, near to home, with other like-minded people. Most white-collar employees are working from a combination of all three of these locations and this is driving excellent growth in the sector."

Dixon added that the strongest increase in demand across International Workplace Group's global network is in suburbs and local communities: "Ultimately our vision is to have a centre serving every community, so we and our partners can empower businesses and individuals to work flexibly and productively from anywhere in the world."

The strongest increase in demand for workspaces is in the suburbs.





# The rise of mixed-use

Another trend currently changing cities worldwide is the rise of mixed-use developments, and a large number of city leaders and developers were present at MIPIM to raise interest and funding for major projects. The cities represented included Madrid, London, Cardiff, Brussels, Riyadh and Milan.

Paris, where five million square feet of office space are currently obsolete, is a pioneer when it comes to urban regeneration via mixed-use developments. It once again showcased the huge projects currently taking shape around its periphery, described as “redefining urban living and working”.

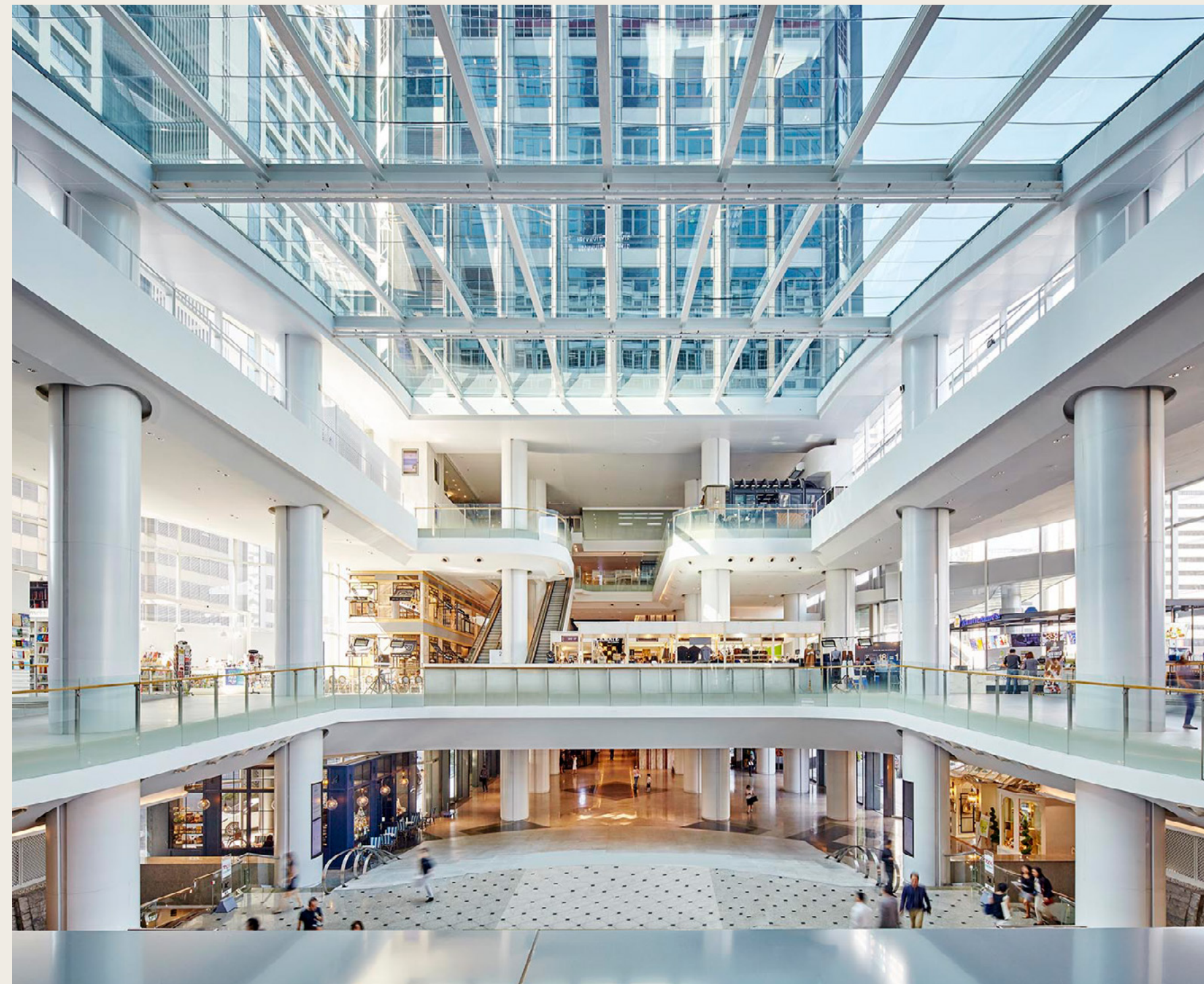
Bringing homes, workspaces and local amenities close together is the

goal of the 15-minute city concept that is growing rapidly around the world. “What’s happening in Paris is just a taste of what’s to come,” said Dixon “In the future, communities will increasingly become self-sustaining, with local flex spaces allowing people to do their jobs close to where they live.”

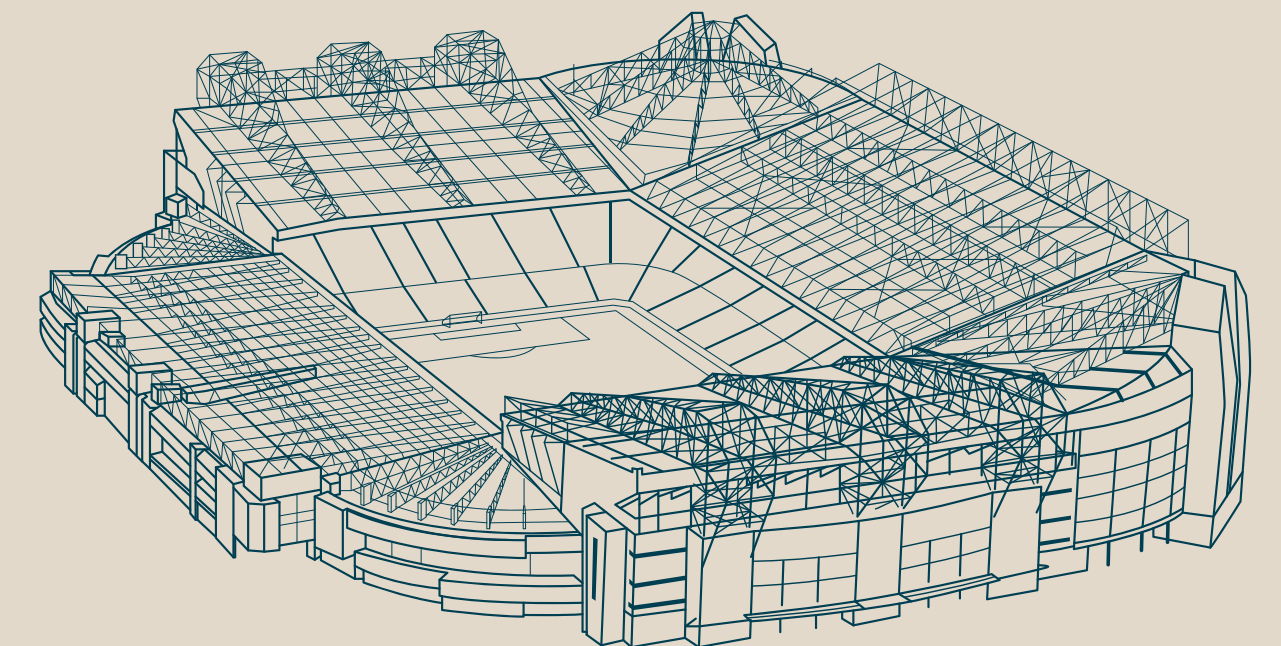
Flexible workspaces will be key to the success of creating these new 15-minute cities, and International Workplace Group has partnered with Perial Asset Management to create high-quality co-working spaces in the Paris region and beyond. Known as Factories, they aim to “mesh the outskirts of major metropolises”. The first two locations have already opened – at Le Bourget to the north-east of

Paris and in Saint-Priest, the fourth largest suburb of Lyon. Many more are planned.

In London, redevelopment of the famous Olympia exhibition halls is currently underway, and it will see the creation of an arts, entertainment, events and creative business quarter. International Workplace Group has signed an agreement to deliver a range of workspaces across an entire floor of the One Olympia building, including private offices, co-working and creative areas, recording studios and podcast rooms.



Of all the cities in attendance at MIPIM, Manchester drew the most headlines, with the announcement of Manchester United’s proposed new Old Trafford football stadium. The development forms part of a major regeneration project described as “a mixed-use miniature city of the future” by architect Sir Norman Foster.





# The ESG conversation

In his opening keynote speech, economist and former Italian Prime Minister Dr Mario Draghi stressed that decarbonisation is crucial to the future of Europe. And the real estate sector can play a major role: the built environment currently generates 42% of global greenhouse gas emissions, with 27% coming from the operation of buildings and 15% from building materials and construction processes.

Radical new approaches are now addressing this challenge. The Stockholm Wood City project, which was showcased at MIPIM, takes the concept of sustainable materials to new levels: the world's largest urban wooden construction project will include 7,000 office spaces and 2,000 apartments.

Another innovative approach to sustainability can be found at

International Workplace Group's Spaces The Cradle in Düsseldorf. The stylish, hi-tech flex space is housed in a building designed according to the Cradle to Cradle principle, in which materials are reused indefinitely or serve as 'nutrients' for new products.

As the demand for sustainable buildings grows, developers face increasingly rigorous demands from regulatory authorities – as well as the world of finance. In a session hosted by ULI and PwC on emerging trends in real estate, it was revealed that investors are now looking for clearer returns on sustainability initiatives. "The industry must not only meet environmental targets but also demonstrate the financial upside of resilience and decarbonisation strategies," the session concluded.



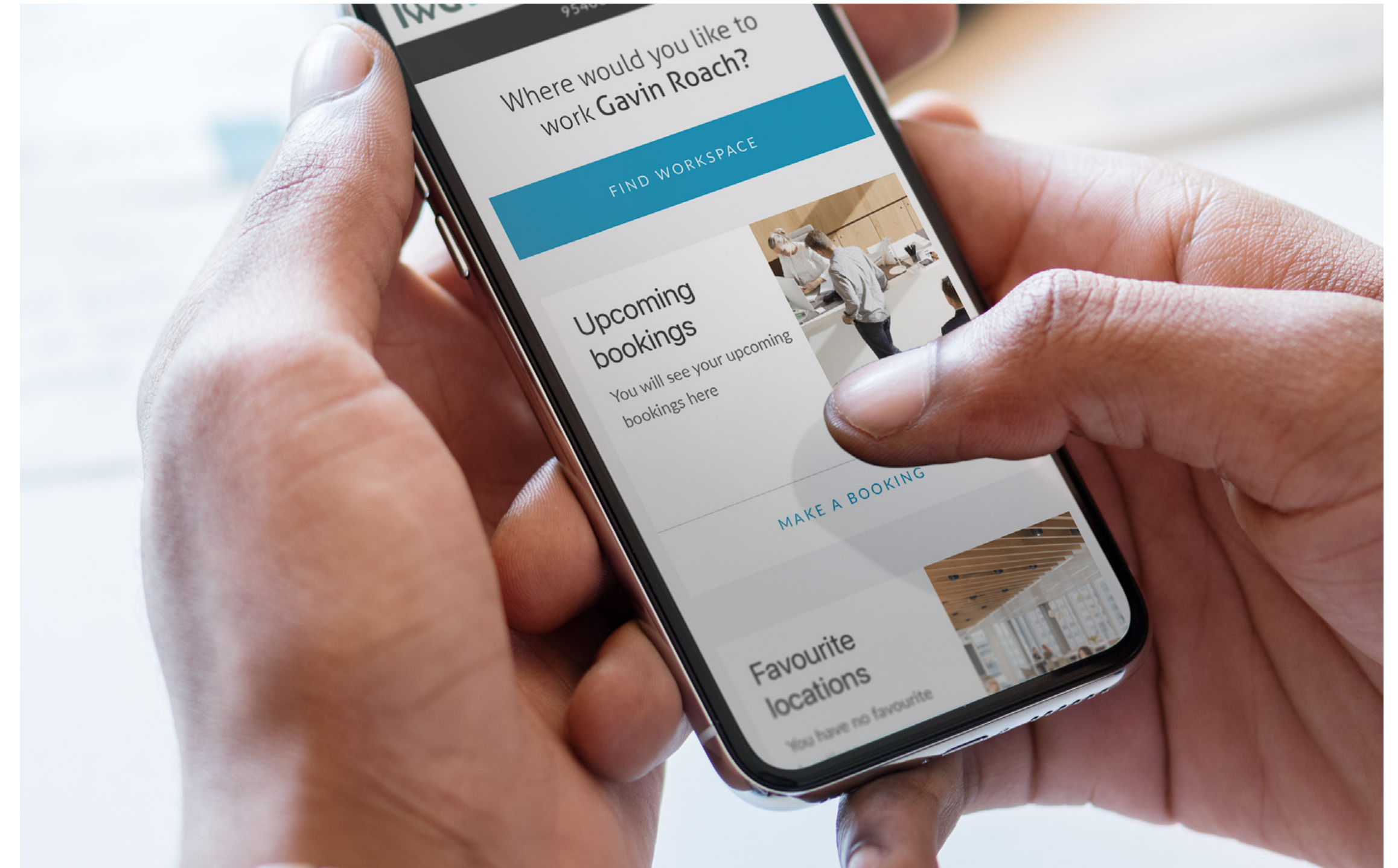
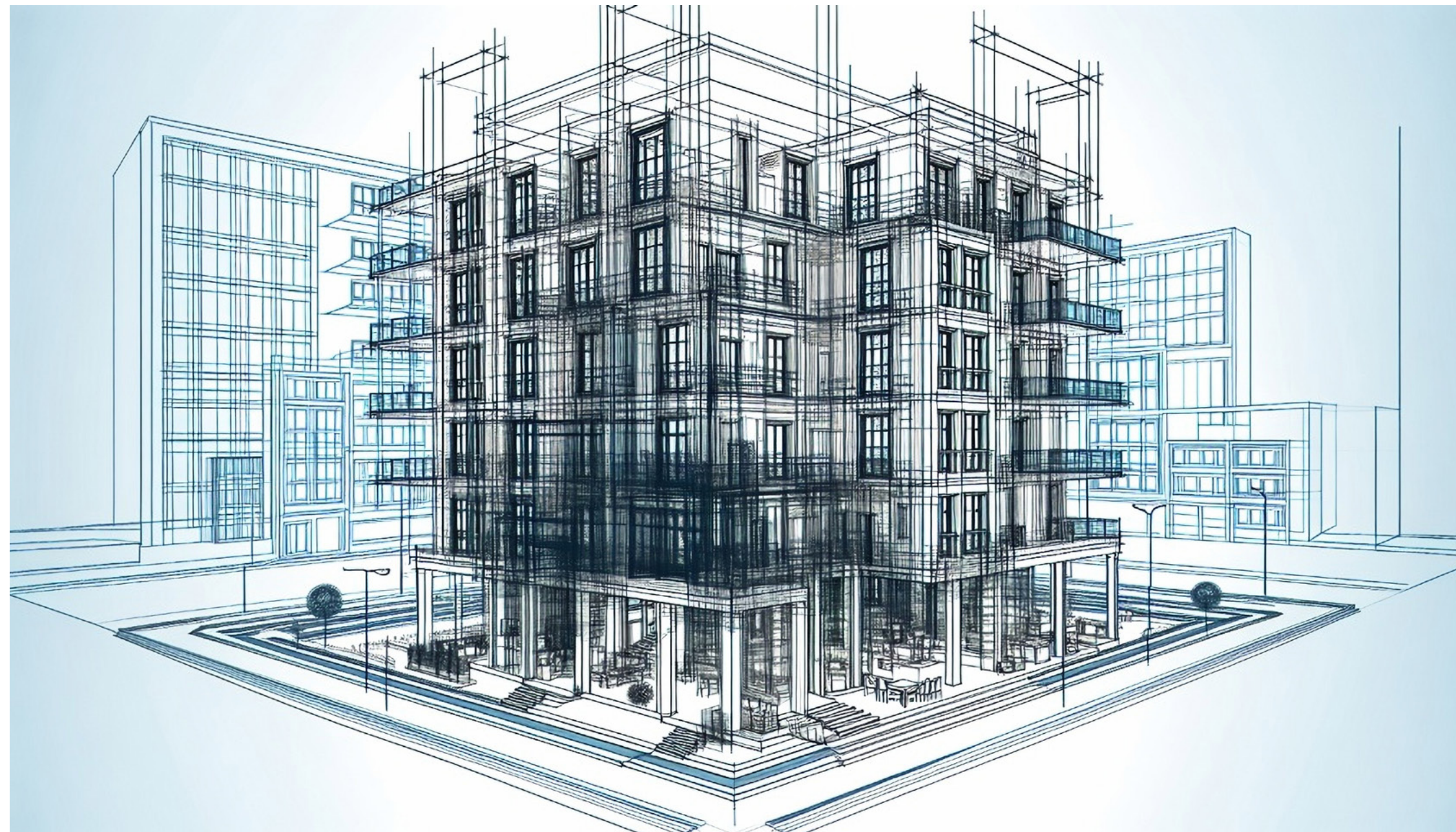
## Local flex spaces support sustainability

As the world increasingly shifts to hybrid and more flexible ways of working, the reduction in emissions enabled by cutting down on long, daily commutes can have a major positive impact on the environment. A landmark study by International Workplace Group carried out with Arup, a global leader in sustainable development, measured the environmental impact of hybrid working on six cities across the US and UK. Its key finding was that enabling people to split their time between a local workplace and home has the potential to reduce an employee's work-related carbon emissions by between 49% and 90%.





# The rapid rise of AI and ‘platform working’



There was plenty of talk at MIPIM about the ways in which technology – in particular AI – is radically transforming the real estate sector and the way that workspaces are used. Companies are increasingly investing in tech tools that can provide real-time data insights to inform operational decisions, including workspace utilisation optimisation, and energy and customer satisfaction reporting. International Workplace Group currently uses sophisticated AI tools to design its spaces in an optimum way for companies and their employees.

The on-demand platform model that has boomed in other sectors such as travel and

accommodation is also showing rapid growth in the commercial real estate sector. Companies are enabling their people to work across multiple locations simply by booking a location through an app on their phone. International Workplace Group offers the largest platform for work in the world, with thousands of workspace locations globally – and an array of products, services and amenities that can be chosen on-demand.

“With 1.2 billion white-collar workers globally, the workspace sector has a total addressable audience valued at more than \$2 trillion – and platform working is set to become the norm for many of these employees,” said Dixon.



# A world of change

Traditional notions of urban life are being challenged as never before.

This was the message that rang out loud and clear at MIPIM. New developments, both within cities and further afield, are focused on a holistic sense of bringing home, work and play together, as hybrid working predominates, the 15-minute city continues to become more widespread, and the mixed-use trend booms.

“The office isn’t dead, it’s just moved location to a much more convenient one, closer to where people actually live,” said Mark Dixon.

As the geography of working life shifts and the long, daily commute becomes a thing of the past, a question arises: how will we most efficiently organise our working lives? The answer lies in technology. This was the other loud message from MIPIM. AI is fundamentally changing the world of real estate, boosting sustainability and optimising both working patterns and workspace design. And ‘platform working’ is becoming the norm for millions, allowing them to choose a location for work simply by tapping on an app on their phone.

The future for cities – and for working – is already here. The companies that grasp the many opportunities that it offers will be the most likely to thrive.



Find out more about our world-leading flexible work solutions and products at [iwgplc.com](https://iwgplc.com), or to discover how you can capitalise on the flex space revolution by partnering with us, go to [iwgplc.com/develop-a-location](https://iwgplc.com/develop-a-location).