

Engaging with the future of FM

In seeking to capitalise on the opportunity for the UK to reindustrialise and remain a world-leading, technology-led economy, Government has made artificial intelligence (AI), and facilitating its development, one of its key objectives. To this end, the Government's UK Industrial Strategy incorporates a dedicated Artificial Intelligence Sector Deal and also places AI and automation at the centre of the equally significant Construction Sector Deal.

The £420m construction deal focuses on transforming the sector through use of innovative technologies such as BIM, which has the potential to revolutionise not just the construction of a building, but - importantly for workplace and FM professionals - its operation and whole life asset performance as well. Integrated approaches like this provide opportunities for FMs to realise the enduring benefits and unlock the value from new tech. Provided the profession can attract and grow a highly skilled workforce which understands and can exploit these new technologies to maximise the performance of workplaces, FMs can leverage real value for the businesses they support and for the wider economy.

IWFEM has shared the profession's views on the likely impact and potential that technology has for productivity and growth by engaging with relevant Parliamentary Inquiries, emphasising the Government's role in educating people to enable acceptance of automation and in ensuring its benefits are optimised across society.

We submitted evidence to the [House of Lords Artificial Intelligence Select Committee](#) inquiry on topics including the technical and societal factors which will affect the rate of AI development, the need for investment in digital skills through lifelong learning, the potential commercial benefits and ethical implications of AI for FM and beyond, how technological advances have the potential to help mitigate the skills gap, and the role that Government should take in the development and use of AI. The Committee's report which followed reflected many of our views and recommendations on the economic and social implications of advances in AI and is likely to provide a blueprint for future Government policy and action.

More recently, a consultation by the [Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee on Automation and the Future of Work](#) looked at the likely wider impact of new technology on UK businesses and the potential it has for productivity, growth and reindustrialisation, as well as considering its impact on workers and the potential benefits and choices for consumers. In our submission we expressed the view that our profession - like others - is approaching a technological tipping point. Automation is set to bring an even greater focus on added value and quality service, challenging FMs to enhance workplace productivity and provide a seamless customer service. Those with the specialist skills and talents required to maximise the potential benefits of advances in technology and automation will become increasingly important and emerge on top.