Healthy cities and sustainable communities: What are the opportunities for the property sector?

Our third breakfast for the property sector took place in the City of London, and brought together representatives from a range of developers, investors, occupiers and planning consultants. The presentations at the event came from BRE’s Cathy Crawley, who spoke about the development of a Healthy Cities Index. This has been created by BRE working with the government of Dubai, and will be launched in the early part of 2018. It provides an assessment of global cities against a set of indicators that measure the impact of the urban environment on health and wellbeing. It is an agenda setter for cities, governments and planners identifying their unique health challenges and priority areas for action.

Martin Gettings, Head of Sustainability for Canary Wharf Group, then spoke about their vision to create places that are healthy, thriving, sustainable and future-ready. The Canary Wharf development equates to a small city, similar in numbers of people to the city of Oxford. It is, however, a development that contains a few things that you might not expect, including a now diverse mix of tenants & occupiers from the financial & technology sectors, along with residential development, a university and media organisations with a surprising level of biodiversity for an urban location. The underlying feature of all this is quality placemaking, with 100% renewable energy, responsible sourcing and health & wellbeing at the core.

Attendees then broke off into discussion groups and here are some of the key comments and discussion points.

- Using a common language of metrics to quantify the benefits of good building and community design.
- Breaking down the silos between health and built environment professionals and integrate design and planning measures known to support health and wellbeing into policies and projects.
- Being clear on the causal evidence of the impact of policy, design and development choices in the urban environment on health.

More information
For more on BRE’s services for the property sector go to www.bregroup.com/sectors/property
For more on Canary Wharf’s vision for sustainable placemaking go to www.canarywharf.com/corporate-responsibility