



BCIS[®]

**ENGAGING CLIENTS
AND FUNDERS ON THE
IMPORTANCE OF WHOLE LIFE
CARBON ASSESSMENTS
(WLCAs)**

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While the industry awaits a carbon mandate, clients and funders will ultimately decide to what degree whole life carbon is considered on a project, if at all. It's therefore no surprise that quantity surveyors we've polled see them as both the biggest potential blocker to assessments, but also the biggest opportunity for change.

By raising WLCAs in early discussions with clients and funders, quantity surveyors can help projects set meaningful carbon reduction targets and prepare for future regulation, while also strengthening cost confidence and transparency.

Key steps to engage clients and funders

Start the conversation early:

Raise carbon alongside cost at feasibility or concept stage. Design and specification decisions made now will lock in most of the project's lifetime emissions and costs.

Frame carbon alongside cost:

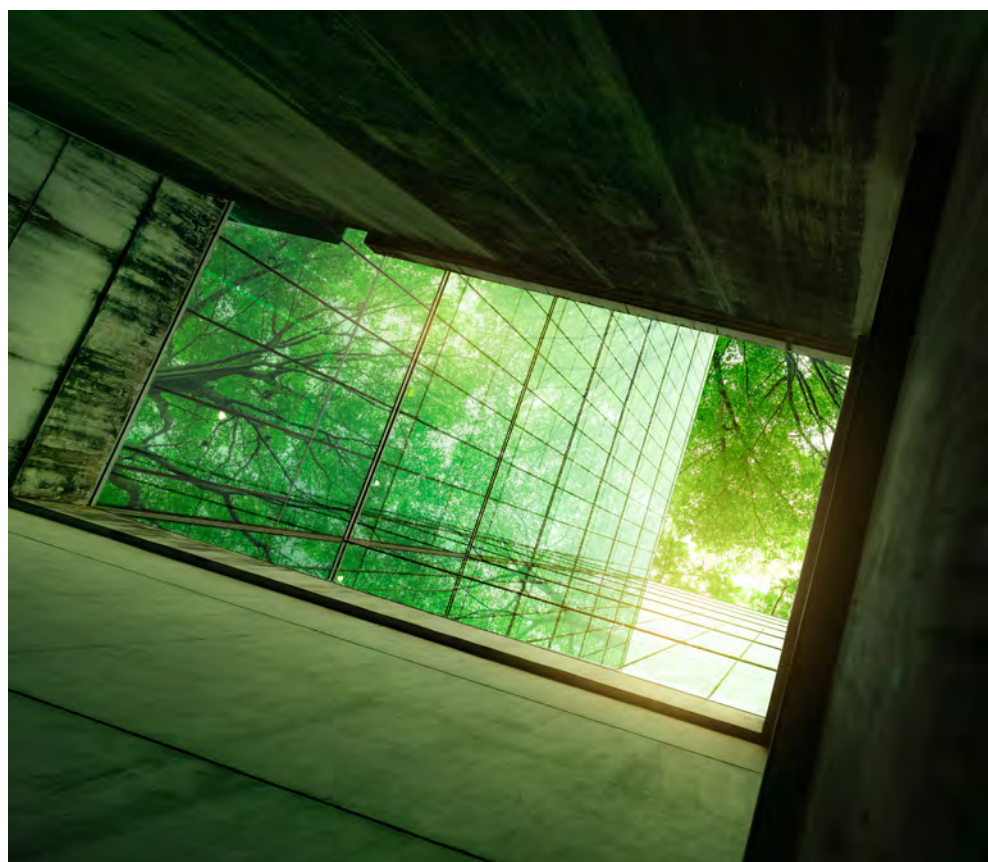
Position WLCAs as part of the same decision-making process that manages budgets, rather than as a separate or additional task.

Explain the process simply:

Show how a WLCA tracks carbon across construction, operation and end of life, linked to familiar cost decisions.

Use evidence, not just principles:

Present examples where projects have used carbon data to unlock savings, improve design, or secure planning or funding approvals.



Set a starting point:

Suggest a straightforward internal reduction target, such as aiming for 10 to 15% lower embodied carbon than a typical benchmark, while recognising that formal targets are still developing.

Highlight risk management benefits:

Show that having carbon data now helps avoid expensive retrofits, supports future compliance, and reduces exposure to regulatory change.



Bring trusted tools and standards:

Use recognised methodologies, like the RICS whole life carbon assessment (WLCA) for the built environment standard, and tools such as **BCIS Life Cycle Evaluator** to give credibility and a defensible audit trail.

Link to long-term value:

Explain that reducing carbon often aligns with durability, efficiency and lower running costs, creating better whole life value for clients and funders.

Speak their language:

Tailor discussions to what matters most to them, whether that's increasing cost certainty, ESG commitments or planning milestones – or all of these.

Encourage collaboration:

Show that their data and engagement help build a stronger carbon knowledge base for everyone.

Position as futureproofing:

Highlight how WLCAs prepare projects for upcoming regulatory requirements, such as those expected under the Future Homes Standard and a future mandate.

Show planning advantages:

Demonstrate how robust carbon data can support planning submissions and meet local authority expectations.

Link to recognised benchmarks:

Position targets against established guidance (e.g. LETI, RICS) for added credibility.

Emphasise iteration:

WLCAs can be updated through design and construction to track improvements and inform lessons learned.

Show commercial value:

Reducing carbon can mean using fewer materials and/or improving efficiency, delivering cost benefits over time.

Ultimately, engaging clients and funders on WLCAs isn't just about meeting future regulation, it's about building trust, unlocking value and reducing risk today. By presenting carbon alongside cost in a clear, evidence-based way, quantity surveyors can position WLCAs as a practical tool for smarter investment, helping clients and funders make decisions that deliver both financial and environmental returns.