

INSIGHT

Facilities Management 2035



Contents

Foreword	02
Introduction	03

PART ONE: THE FORCES RESHAPING FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

01	Why Facilities Management Is Becoming More Important, Not Less	05
02	The Workplace Becomes an Ecosystem	06
03	The Rise of Intelligent Buildings	07
04	Artificial Intelligence Becomes Infrastructure	08
05	Sustainability Moves From Initiative to Obligation	09
06	Workplace Experience Becomes a Competitive Advantage	10
07	The Psychology of Future Workplaces	11
08	Organisational Resilience Becomes a Boardroom Priority	12

PART TWO: THE PEOPLE WHO WILL LEAD IT

09	The Future FM Workforce	14
10	AI-Enabled Facilities Management Teams	15
11	Future Skills Every FM Leader Needs	16
12	Data-Driven Facilities Leadership	18
13	The Future FM Director	19
14	Facilities Management as Strategic Infrastructure	20
15	The World of Facilities Management in 2035	21
	Preparing for 2035: An Action Plan	22
	Your 2035 Readiness Check	23
	Conclusion	24
	Key Takeaways	25
	What the Data Says	26
	See It in Practice	27
	About Maxwell Stephens	28

Foreword

Every profession reaches a point that redefines it. For Facilities Management, that point is now.

The next decade will change how organisations operate, how people work, how buildings perform and how leadership is exercised. Much of that change is already under way. Artificial intelligence is moving from experiment to everyday use. Buildings are generating more operational data than ever. Sustainability requirements are tightening, and business continuity has become a board-level concern.

For most of its history, FM worked behind the scenes. Success was measured by what did not happen: no major failures, no disruption, no complaints. That is no longer enough. Organisations now expect Facilities Management to contribute directly to productivity, resilience, sustainability, employee experience and business performance.

The profession is becoming more visible, more influential and more strategic. This report sets out how Facilities Management is likely to evolve between now and 2035, and what FM leaders and the organisations that employ them should do to prepare.

We have recruited Facilities Management, estates and workplace leaders since 2006. Over that time the briefs we receive have changed more than the job titles. This report is our view of where those briefs are heading next.

Introduction

If someone from 2005 walked into a modern workplace, they would notice the change immediately. The technology would be unfamiliar, the working patterns different and employee expectations higher. The role of Facilities Management would look far broader than the one they remembered.

The pace of change over the next decade may exceed everything the profession has experienced so far. The future of FM is not simply about buildings becoming smarter. It is about organisations becoming more dependent on the environments in which their people work.

Facilities Management has traditionally focused on operational efficiency: maintaining infrastructure, ensuring compliance, managing suppliers and supporting day-to-day operations. Those responsibilities remain essential, but they are now only part of the value FM provides. By 2035, the FM function will increasingly shape:

- Organisational resilience and business continuity
- Sustainability and carbon performance
- Employee wellbeing and workplace experience
- Technology adoption and operational intelligence
- Corporate culture and the way people work together

That moves the profession from operational support towards strategic leadership. The next ten years will create real opportunities for FM professionals who are willing to develop, and a meaningful advantage for the organisations that recognise the shift early.

This report is in two parts. **Part One** looks at the forces reshaping the workplace. **Part Two** looks at the people who will lead it: the workforce, the skills and the FM Director of 2035. It closes with a practical plan for preparing now.

FM is
moving to
the **centre of**
strategy



PART ONE

The Forces Reshaping Facilities Management

- 01 Why Facilities Management Is Becoming More Important, Not Less
- 02 The Workplace Becomes an Ecosystem
- 03 The Rise of Intelligent Buildings
- 04 Artificial Intelligence Becomes Infrastructure
- 05 Sustainability Moves From Initiative to Obligation
- 06 Workplace Experience Becomes a Competitive Advantage
- 07 The Psychology of Future Workplaces
- 08 Organisational Resilience Becomes a Boardroom Priority

Chapter 1: Why Facilities Management Is Becoming More Important, Not Less

Every technological shift brings predictions of redundancy. When automation arrives, people assume human involvement matters less. When AI advances, they predict widespread replacement. Some commentators apply the same logic to FM and argue that smart buildings will reduce the need for it.

The opposite is more likely. As organisations become more complex, the function that holds their environments together becomes more valuable, not less. Consider how many systems a modern workplace now depends on:

- Physical and digital infrastructure
- Security and access systems
- Building management systems and environmental controls
- Workplace technology and occupancy analytics
- Sustainability monitoring and reporting
- Compliance and safety frameworks

Each system creates dependencies. Each dependency introduces risk, and each risk needs managing. Technology increases capability, but it also increases complexity, and Facilities Management sits at the centre of that complexity. The modern workplace behaves like a living system, and living systems need leadership.

42%

of IWFM Market Outlook respondents reported an increase in workspace investment, and 33% increased the space they manage.

Source: [IWFM, Market Outlook 2025](#)

The sector is already substantial: IWFM values UK workplace and facilities management at £102bn and 1.2 million jobs. A function that is growing in scope, investment and responsibility is not a function in decline.

Chapter 2: The Workplace Becomes an Ecosystem

One of the most important shifts in Facilities Management is the way organisations think about the workplace itself. Historically, a workplace was a container for activity. People arrived, work was done and people left. That model is fading.

The workplace is increasingly understood as an ecosystem: a set of connected elements that constantly influence one another. Within it sit:

- Buildings and the services that run them
- Technology and the data it generates
- Culture, leadership and behaviour
- Collaboration, wellbeing and productivity

None of these operates on its own. Workplace design affects collaboration. Collaboration affects innovation, innovation affects performance, and performance affects growth. Growth, in turn, changes what the workplace needs to provide.

This perspective changes the FM brief. The question moves from **"How do we manage this building?"** to **"How do we create an environment where people and the organisation perform at their best?"** That is a fundamentally different challenge, and a far more strategic one. It makes FM responsible for orchestrating conditions, not just maintaining assets.

Technology
increases
capability. It
also **increases**
complexity



Chapter 3: The Rise of Intelligent Buildings

Buildings are becoming capable of producing information on a scale that was impossible a decade ago. Sensors, connected devices and integrated platforms already allow modern buildings to monitor:

- Temperature, air quality and lighting
- Occupancy and space utilisation
- Energy and water consumption
- Equipment condition and performance
- Security activity

By 2035 these capabilities will be considerably more advanced. Buildings will continuously analyse their own performance. Maintenance needs will be flagged automatically, utilisation will be tracked in real time and environmental conditions will adjust to occupancy and activity.

30%

average energy and carbon savings delivered by advanced Class A building energy management systems, according to independent analysis cited by the BCIA.

Source: [Building Controls Industry Association \(BCIA\), Government raises the bar on commercial building efficiency: now operational performance must follow, 2026](#)

The commercial case is already visible. The BCIA reports that Class A and Class B building energy management systems typically pay back within four to nine years, depending on building type. Upgrading UK commercial and public sector buildings to advanced controls could save 15 million tonnes of CO₂e between 2026 and 2035.

Technology alone is not the answer, though. Data is only valuable when it is turned into action. The FM leader of 2035 needs to be comfortable in data-rich environments and disciplined about the questions that matter: what is this telling us, what risks are emerging, where can performance improve and what should we decide? Technology will generate the insight. Leadership will decide what happens next.

Chapter 4: Artificial Intelligence Becomes Infrastructure

Artificial intelligence may prove to be one of the most significant technologies Facilities Management has encountered. Its effect will reach well beyond simple automation. Adoption is rising quickly: the Office for National Statistics reports that AI use among UK businesses with ten or more employees has risen from around 12% to around 35% since September 2023.

28%

of organisations worldwide have embedded AI in their FM operations, rising to 46% for organisations with 100,000+ employees (JLL).

Source: [JLL, Global State of Facilities Management Report 2025](#)

Within FM, AI will increasingly support:

- Reporting and compliance monitoring
- Risk identification
- Energy optimisation
- Maintenance planning and forecasting
- Vendor and contract management
- Resource allocation

Routine administration will become faster, information easier to reach and operational visibility better. Three quarters of UK businesses using AI already report improved workforce productivity, according to government research.

There is, however, an important difference between information and judgement. AI can identify patterns, make recommendations and process data at enormous scale. It cannot fully understand the human context behind a decision, and the same research found ethical concerns rated the most significant barrier to adoption. Facilities Management remains a people profession: every operational, workplace and leadership decision affects people.

The FM leaders who succeed in 2035 will not compete with AI. They will work alongside it, and the combination of human judgement and machine capability is likely to become a defining advantage for the strongest FM teams.

Data starts
the
conversation.
Leadership
decides what
happens
next



Chapter 5: Sustainability Moves From Initiative to Obligation

Few forces will shape Facilities Management more than sustainability. Many organisations still treat it as an important objective. By 2035 it is likely to be a basic business requirement, because environmental performance increasingly influences:

- Investor and lender decisions
- Customer and client decisions
- Where talented people choose to work
- Regulatory compliance
- Corporate reputation

Mid-2030s

is when buildings are predicted to become the UK's highest-emitting sector in the Government's trajectory, according to the UK Green Building Council.

Source: [UK Green Building Council, CCC Progress Report 2026: Buildings are now the UK's biggest climate test](#)

Buildings sit at the heart of the problem. Globally, they account for around 30% of energy demand (IEA). In the UK, 25% of emissions are directly attributable to the built environment, and 80% of the buildings that will be occupied in 2050 already exist (UKGBC). Decarbonisation is therefore mostly about the estate organisations already run, which places Facilities Management at the centre of the effort.

Regulation is moving in the same direction. The Government proposes that, from 2031, privately rented non-domestic buildings over 1,000 m² in England and Wales must reach EPC B where cost effective. Future FM leaders will be expected to own:

- Carbon reduction strategies and energy efficiency programmes
- Sustainable procurement and waste reduction
- Environmental reporting and ESG performance metrics

Sustainability is no longer only an environmental issue. It is a commercial one. Organisations that fail to adapt may face higher operating costs, regulatory pressure, difficulty attracting talent and reputational damage. FM leaders who understand that link, and can present carbon performance in business terms, will become increasingly valuable to their boards.

Chapter 6: Workplace Experience Becomes a Competitive Advantage

For decades, organisations treated workplaces as operational necessities. Employees needed desks, teams needed meeting rooms and buildings needed maintaining. If everything worked adequately, success was assumed. That mindset is disappearing.

The reason is simple: people have choices. Hybrid working, flexible schedules and wider talent markets mean employees are far less tied to a single location. CIPD reports that 74% of UK organisations now have hybrid working in place, and UK office occupancy has stabilised above 40%, reaching a new high of 44.1% in late January 2026 (Remit Consulting).

10%

of UK employees are engaged at work, according to Gallup's 2026 State of the Global Workplace data.

Source: [Gallup, State of the Global Workplace: United Kingdom Country-Level Data, 2026](#)

So employers face a new question: why should talented people choose to spend their time in your workplace? The answer depends on the experience you create, and that experience covers far more than aesthetics:

- Comfort, convenience and accessibility
- Technology that works first time
- Spaces that support both collaboration and focus
- Wellbeing, community and culture
- Trust that the environment is safe and well run

Every interaction shapes how people feel about the organisation. Poor experiences create friction, friction reduces engagement and lower engagement affects performance. Facilities Management sits at the centre of that chain, which gives the FM function a direct hand in culture. The best workplaces of 2035 will not simply support work. They will make it better.

The greenest
building is
the one you
already run



Chapter 7: The Psychology of Future Workplaces

Buildings influence behaviour. The idea is not new, yet many organisations still underestimate it. The workplace of the future will increasingly be designed around human psychology rather than operational convenience.

Workplace design has often prioritised efficiency. Large open-plan floors maximised occupancy, standard layouts simplified planning and uniform environments kept costs down. Efficiency does not always produce effectiveness. Leesman's data shows that individual focused work matters to 89% of employees, yet only 27% of corporate real estate leaders cite enabling productivity as a reason for the workplace.

Workplace environments influence concentration, creativity, stress, collaboration, motivation and wellbeing. The pressure on wellbeing is real: the Health and Safety Executive estimates that 964,000 workers in Great Britain were suffering from work-related stress, depression or anxiety in 2024/25, with 22.1 million working days lost.

The future workplace will recognise that different activities need different settings:

- Focused work needs quiet, distraction-free space
- Collaboration needs spaces built for interaction
- Learning needs adaptable space
- Innovation needs room to experiment

Facilities Management will contribute to workplace psychology through environmental design, space utilisation, sensory considerations, workplace technology and the overall user experience. That takes FM beyond operations and into human performance. Organisations that understand the relationship early are likely to outperform those that still treat the workplace as a static asset.

Chapter 8: Organisational Resilience Becomes a Boardroom Priority

The last decade has shown how quickly disruption can arrive: a pandemic, cyber attacks, supply chain failures, energy instability, extreme weather and geopolitical uncertainty. Each one reinforces the same lesson. Resilience matters.

43%

of UK businesses experienced a cyber security breach or attack in the previous 12 months, according to the Government's Cyber Security Breaches Survey 2025.

Source: [GOV.UK \(DSIT / Home Office\), Cyber security breaches survey 2025](#)

Resilience used to sit mainly with risk management. It now sits increasingly with Facilities Management, because workplaces are part of an organisation's critical infrastructure. If the workplace fails, operations suffer, and when operations suffer, so does business performance. Converged building systems also mean that cyber and physical risk now overlap. The Business Continuity Institute finds cyber security is the top five-to-ten-year concern for 63.6% of organisations, ahead of climate risk at 40.7%.

By 2035, FM leaders will be central to resilience planning, overseeing:

- Business continuity planning and crisis preparedness
- Infrastructure resilience and emergency response
- Supply chain risk management
- Operational recovery planning

Resilience will no longer be seen only as disaster preparation. It will be a strategic capability: resilient organisations recover faster, adapt faster and compete more effectively. The FM leaders who provide those foundations will find themselves much closer to executive decision-making than before.

Resilience is
built **before**
the crisis,
not during it



PART TWO

The People Who Will Lead It

- 09** The Future FM Workforce
- 10** AI-Enabled Facilities Management Teams
- 11** Future Skills Every FM Leader Needs
- 12** Data-Driven Facilities Leadership
- 13** The Future FM Director
- 14** Facilities Management as Strategic Infrastructure
- 15** The World of Facilities Management in 2035

Chapter 9: The Future FM Workforce

The Facilities Management workforce of 2035 will look markedly different from today's. Technology guarantees some of that change, but the shift goes beyond automation. The future FM professional will need broader capabilities than any previous generation. Technical expertise remains essential, but on its own it will no longer be enough.

Future FM teams will increasingly combine:

- Technical and engineering specialists
- Data and performance analysts
- Sustainability and energy experts
- Workplace strategists and experience designers
- Technology and systems managers
- Change leaders

As routine administration is automated, the human contribution shifts towards judgement, leadership, problem solving, stakeholder management and strategic thinking.

93%

of UK employers have faced skills shortages in the last 12 months, according to Hays' 2026 salary guide.

Source: [Hays UK Salary & Recruiting Trends 2026](#)

That creates both opportunity and pressure, because FM skills are already scarce: in SFG20's 2026 survey, 51% of organisations reported a shortage of FM staff. Organisations that wait for the market to produce multidisciplinary FM talent will be competing hard for a small pool. Those that develop it, and recruit for potential as well as track record, will be better placed.

The FM workforce of 2035 may be smaller in some areas, but it will be significantly more influential overall. The profession is becoming broader rather than narrower, which is good news for ambitious people willing to keep developing.

Chapter 10: AI-Enabled Facilities Management Teams

Artificial intelligence will not replace Facilities Management teams. It will redesign them. Much of the public discussion about AI focuses on replacement, but the reality in most functions is augmentation: AI adds capacity, speeds up decisions and improves visibility.

By 2035, AI is likely to support routine parts of the FM operating model, including:

- Building performance analysis
- Maintenance forecasting
- Compliance monitoring and risk identification
- Vendor performance management
- Financial reporting and operational dashboards

These are substantial efficiency gains, but efficiency alone does not create value. Value comes when better information leads to better decisions. Leaders will have real-time operational intelligence, problems will surface earlier and resources can be allocated more precisely.

What changes most is the shape of the team. Fewer hours go on collecting and formatting information. More go on interpreting it, managing suppliers against evidence, and explaining performance to the business. Roles that combine operational credibility with analytical confidence will become some of the most sought after in the profession.

Human leadership remains essential. AI cannot build trust, navigate organisational politics, inspire a team or take accountability for a judgement call. The most successful FM functions will combine technological capability with leadership capability. Technology will handle complexity. People will provide direction.

AI will not
replace FM
teams. **It will
redesign
them**



Chapter 11: Future Skills Every FM Leader Needs

The FM leader of 2035 will need a broader skillset than any previous generation. Technical knowledge, operational experience and a firm grasp of compliance will still matter, but they will not be enough. The strongest leaders will be defined less by one area of expertise and more by their ability to connect many. Six capabilities stand out.

01 Strategic Thinking

FM leaders need to understand where the organisation is going and how the estate supports that direction. How does our estate support growth? How does our workplace affect talent attraction? How does building performance influence our sustainability targets? These are business questions, and FM leaders must be comfortable answering them.

02 Commercial Awareness

Energy contracts, maintenance strategies, capital projects, supplier agreements and workplace redesigns all carry significant financial consequences. The best leaders understand that saving money and creating value are not always the same thing. A cheaper option can create higher long-term risk, and a larger investment can deliver stronger long-term performance.

03 Technology Fluency

Not every FM leader needs to be a data scientist. Every FM leader does need to understand enough about AI, automation, IoT and smart building platforms to ask intelligent questions, challenge assumptions and make informed decisions. Leaders who understand technology without being consumed by it will be highly valued.

04 Emotional Intelligence

More complex workplaces mean more stakeholders, more tension and more human expectation. FM leaders will need to communicate calmly, handle conflict professionally, build trust across departments and influence people without always having direct authority.

05 Change Leadership

New technologies, new workplace models, tighter sustainability requirements and shifting employee expectations will arrive continuously. Gartner research found the average employee experienced ten planned enterprise changes in 2022, up from two in 2016. Leading people through that volume of change without unnecessary disruption takes patience, clarity and resilience.

06 Curiosity

The pace of change will make fixed expertise less reliable. What will matter is the ability to keep learning, continuously rather than occasionally.

Many leaders are not being prepared for this. The Chartered Management Institute found that 82% of people entering UK management roles have had no formal management and leadership training. The organisations that invest in developing FM leaders, rather than simply promoting their best technicians, will have a clear advantage by 2035.

Chapter 12: Data-Driven Facilities Leadership

Facilities Management is becoming data-driven, and the shift will accelerate through to 2035. Buildings, systems, suppliers, sensors and workplace platforms already generate huge volumes of information. The challenge is no longer collecting data. It is turning data into better decisions.

25%

of UK businesses that handle digitised data analyse it to generate new insights or knowledge, even though 86% handle it (DSIT, 2026).

Source: [Department for Science, Innovation and Technology \(GOV.UK\), UK Business Data Survey 2026](#)

For decades, many FM decisions rested on experience, instinct, historic patterns and reactive reporting. These remain useful. Future FM leaders, though, will have real-time visibility of:

- How buildings are actually being used
- Where energy is being wasted
- Which assets are underperforming
- Which suppliers are delivering value
- Where compliance risks are building
- Where operational pressure is increasing

Data shows what is happening. It does not explain what should be done. Occupancy data might show that certain areas are consistently underused. A purely operational response would be to cut the space. A strategic response asks why. Is it design, technology, lighting, acoustics, location or culture? Would removing the space solve the problem, or simply hide it? Data starts the conversation. Leadership determines the quality of the decision.

Better data also improves accountability, because supplier outcomes, energy efficiency and maintenance effectiveness become easier to measure. It brings risks too: poorly interpreted data leads to poor decisions, dashboards can create false confidence, and trust, morale and culture do not reduce neatly to a metric.

The strongest organisations will use data to support decisions, not to replace them. By 2035, data literacy will be a core capability of senior FM leadership: knowing how data is collected, what it means, where it may be flawed and how it should influence a decision. Boards expect evidence, executives expect visibility and employees expect responsiveness. FM needs to provide all three.

The future
FM Director
shapes how
the
organisation
works



Chapter 13: The Future FM Director

The Facilities Director of 2035 will be a very different figure from the senior FM leader of the past. Historically, Facilities Directors were judged mainly on operational stability. Were buildings maintained? Were costs controlled? Was the organisation compliant? Were services delivered? Those expectations remain, but they will no longer define the role. The future FM Director will be judged on contribution to organisational performance.

By 2035, the FM Director is likely to influence decisions on:

- Workplace strategy and property portfolio optimisation
- Sustainability performance and smart building investment
- Employee experience
- Risk management, business continuity and resilience
- Operating model design

84%

of FM leaders worldwide identify escalating operating costs and budget constraints as their top concern (JLL).

Source: [JLL, Global State of Facilities Management Report 2025](#)

That places the role much closer to executive leadership, and it demands the language of the boardroom: finance, risk, strategy, people, brand and long-term value. A workplace redesign should not be presented only as a property project. It should be framed in terms of productivity, collaboration, talent attraction, employee experience, sustainability and performance.

The role will also require leading multidisciplinary teams that may include specialists in workplace experience, data, sustainability, smart buildings and change management. Command-and-control management becomes less effective. Collaboration, clarity, influence and trust become more important. When disruption hits, the FM Director will be one of the most important operational leaders in the organisation, responsible for continuity, safety, communication and recovery.

We see this in the briefs we receive. Some senior FM roles now combine property, facilities and sustainability under one leader, with responsibility for balancing day-to-day cost discipline against longer-term environmental investment. The FM Director of 2035 will not simply oversee facilities. They will help shape how the organisation works.

Chapter 14: Facilities Management as Strategic Infrastructure

Facilities Management should increasingly be understood as strategic infrastructure. This may be the most important mindset shift organisations need to make before 2035.

Infrastructure is the system that allows activity to happen. Roads enable transport, digital networks enable communication and Facilities Management enables organisational performance. Without effective FM, workplaces become unreliable, risks increase, costs escalate and productivity suffers.

It provides the operating conditions for the whole organisation, supporting:

- People, culture and productivity
- Technology and data
- Safety and compliance
- Sustainability
- Resilience

This framing changes how organisations think about investment. If FM is seen merely as a cost, the goal becomes reduction. If it is seen as infrastructure, the goal becomes optimisation. Underinvestment creates hidden costs that rarely appear on a facilities budget: poor environments reduce productivity, weak maintenance increases disruption and inadequate resilience planning raises operational risk.

£15.9bn

was the estimated cost to eradicate backlog maintenance across the NHS estate in England in 2024/25 (NHS England Digital).

Source: [NHS England Digital, Estates Returns Information Collection \(ERIC\) 2024/25, 2025](#)

Public estates show where deferred investment leads. Alongside the NHS figure, the Department for Education estimated the condition need of the school estate in England at £11.4 billion. Strategic infrastructure demands long-term questions, and they belong at senior leadership level: what must our workplace enable, what risks must our estate withstand, what experience must our people have, and what capabilities must our FM team build?

FM leaders need to articulate value, not just report activity. The workplace is part of the business, and Facilities Management is the discipline that makes it work.

Technology
changes the
tools. **Not the
purpose**



Chapter 15: The World of Facilities Management in 2035

By 2035, Facilities Management will be more strategic, more technological, more human-centred and more visible than ever. It will still manage buildings, ensure compliance and oversee suppliers, maintenance, safety and operations. Those responsibilities will simply sit within a much broader context, and FM will increasingly influence how organisations compete.

The workplaces of 2035 will be intelligent, adaptive and data-rich. They will monitor their own performance, support hybrid patterns of work, help reduce environmental impact and give far better insight into how people use space. FM teams will be more multidisciplinary, combining operational expertise with sustainability, analytics, workplace strategy, AI and experience design.

Not everything will change. Some principles will hold:

- People will still need safe, reliable and supportive environments
- Organisations will still run on trust
- Leaders will still need judgement
- Teams will still need clear communication
- Buildings will still need care

Technology will change the tools. It will not change the purpose, which is to create environments where people and organisations can perform at their best. The strongest FM professionals will not be the ones who resist change. They will be the ones who understand what should change and what should stay constant.

The next decade will reward organisations that treat FM as a strategic function, FM leaders who invest in new skills, teams that combine data with judgement, and businesses that see the workplace as an ecosystem rather than a cost line. Facilities Management is entering a defining decade, with a real opportunity to move from the background to the centre of organisational strategy.

Preparing for 2035: An Action Plan

The question is whether your organisation will shape these forces or react to them. These actions are a practical starting point.

For FM Leaders

01 Build Your Data Confidence

Learn how your buildings, suppliers and systems generate data, where it is weak and how to turn it into a decision the board will act on.

02 Speak the Language of the Business

Present proposals in terms of productivity, risk, talent and carbon, not only cost and compliance.

03 Own the Carbon Agenda

Understand your estate's energy profile, the regulation coming towards it and the investment case for improving it.

04 Develop Your Team, Not Just Your Systems

Plan the skills your team will need in five years and start building them now, alongside any technology investment.

For Employers and Boards

05 Put FM in the Room

Involve FM leadership early in decisions on property, workplace, technology, sustainability and resilience, not after they are made.

06 Measure Value, Not Just Cost

Track what the workplace enables, including experience, utilisation, resilience and carbon performance, as well as what it costs.

07 Hire for the Role as It Will Be

Senior FM appointments made now will lead your estate into the 2030s. Brief for strategic, commercial and technological capability, and assess for judgement, not only for operational track record.

08 Invest in Leadership Development

Give FM managers formal leadership development before and after promotion, not only technical training.

Your 2035 Readiness Check

Use these questions with your leadership team to test how prepared your organisation is. If several answers are "no" or "not sure", the gap is worth closing before it becomes a risk.

- ☐ Does FM leadership have a regular voice at board or executive level?
- ☐ Can you describe what your workplace is for, in terms the whole leadership team would recognise?
- ☐ Do you know how your space is actually used, and what you would change as a result?
- ☐ Do you have a credible, costed plan for reducing the carbon impact of your estate?
- ☐ Are you clear on the energy efficiency standards your buildings will need to meet by the 2030s?
- ☐ Is AI being used in your FM operation in a controlled, accountable way?
- ☐ Would your business continuity plan survive a combined cyber and physical incident?
- ☐ Do you measure workplace experience, not just service levels?
- ☐ Does your FM team have the data, sustainability and change skills it will need in five years?
- ☐ Is there a succession plan for your most senior FM roles?

Readiness is rarely a technology problem first. In most organisations it comes down to the quality of FM leadership, and to whether that leadership has the authority and support to act.

Conclusion

Facilities Management 2035 is not simply a prediction. It is a call to prepare. Artificial intelligence is already changing workflows. Smart buildings are already producing operational intelligence. Sustainability is already shaping corporate priorities, hybrid working is already reshaping expectations, and resilience is already a board-level concern. The future is not waiting. It is arriving.

For FM professionals this is a moment of real opportunity. Those who develop new skills, embrace strategic leadership, understand data, build trust and communicate value will become increasingly important to their organisations. Those who stay confined to purely operational thinking may find the profession moving on without them.

The same is true for employers. Organisations that keep treating FM as a reactive support function will miss one of the most important levers they have for improving performance, resilience, sustainability and employee experience. Organisations that strengthen FM will be better prepared for whatever the next decade brings.

By 2035, Facilities Management will not simply be about managing buildings. It will be about enabling organisations, shaping workplaces and leading through complexity. The future of Facilities Management is strategic. It is human. And it has already begun.

Key Takeaways

- Facilities Management is becoming more important as workplaces become more complex, not less.
- The workplace is an ecosystem: buildings, technology, culture and performance are connected.
- Smart buildings and AI will change how FM teams work, but judgement and leadership remain human.
- Sustainability is moving from initiative to obligation, and the existing estate is where most of the work lies.
- Workplace experience will directly influence talent, culture and performance.
- Organisational resilience will increasingly depend on strong FM leadership.
- The FM workforce will be more multidisciplinary, and the skills gap is already real.
- Future FM leaders need strategic, commercial, technological and emotional intelligence.
- Data-driven leadership will be essential, but data should support decisions, not replace them.
- The FM Director of 2035 will operate much closer to executive leadership, and FM should be treated as strategic infrastructure.

What the Data Says

The evidence behind the shift: what UK and international data shows about the forces reshaping Facilities Management.

- The UK workplace and facilities management sector is worth £102bn and 1.2 million jobs to the UK economy.
Source: [IWFM, Market Outlook 2025](#)
- 51% of organisations surveyed by SFG20 in 2026 reported a shortage of FM staff.
Source: [SFG20 State of FM survey, reported by TWinFM, 2026](#)
- 28% of organisations worldwide have embedded AI in their FM operations, rising to 46% for organisations with 100,000+ employees.
Source: [JLL, Global State of Facilities Management Report 2025](#)
- Independent analysis found advanced Class A building energy management systems deliver average energy and carbon savings of around 30%.
Source: [Building Controls Industry Association \(BCIA\), Government raises the bar on commercial building efficiency: now operational performance must follow, 2026](#)
- Upgrading UK commercial and public sector buildings to advanced controls could save 15 million tonnes of CO₂e between 2026 and 2035.
Source: [Building Controls Industry Association \(BCIA\), The Warm Homes Plan must go further: why smart building controls for non-domestic buildings are essential, 2026](#)
- By the mid-2030s, buildings are predicted to become the UK's highest-emitting sector in the Government's trajectory.
Source: [UK Green Building Council, CCC Progress Report 2026: Buildings are now the UK's biggest climate test](#)
- 80% of the buildings that will be occupied in 2050 already exist, making decarbonising existing stock a major priority.
Source: [UK Green Building Council, Climate Change Mitigation](#)
- From 2031, the Government proposes that privately rented non-domestic buildings over 1,000 m² in England and Wales must reach EPC B, where cost effective.
Source: [GOV.UK \(Department for Energy Security and Net Zero\), Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards \(MEES\) in the non-domestic Private Rented Sector: interim response, 2026](#)
- 86% of UK businesses handle digitised data, but only 25% of those analyse it to generate new insights or knowledge.
Source: [Department for Science, Innovation and Technology \(GOV.UK\), UK Business Data Survey 2026](#)

Sources were checked in September 2026. Select a source to open the original research.

See It in Practice

Director of Property Services & Sustainability for Poundland & Dealz

Poundland & Dealz, one of Europe's leading value retailers, engaged Maxwell Stephens to recruit a Director of Property Services and Sustainability. The role combined store development, facilities management, procurement, utilities, waste and environmental performance across a large UK and Ireland estate. The challenge was finding a leader who could balance value retail's tight cost discipline with sustainability programmes that need investment and a longer payback horizon. We ran a targeted executive search and assessed candidates on estate strategy, FM leadership, sustainability delivery, commercial performance and change capability.

It is a clear example of the converged, board-facing FM leadership role this report expects to become the norm by 2035.

[Read the full case study at maxwellstephens.com](https://maxwellstephens.com/resources/case-studies/poundland-dealz)

Related Reading

- **Smart Buildings and the Future of FM Operations**
maxwellstephens.com/resources/smart-buildings-the-future-of-fm-operations
- **The Future of AI-Enabled FM Teams**
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- **The Modern FM Director**
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- **FM as Strategic Infrastructure**
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About Maxwell Stephens

Maxwell Stephens is a specialist Facilities Management, estates and workplace recruitment consultancy. Since 2006 we have helped organisations across the UK and Europe identify, attract and appoint Facilities Management professionals, from operational specialists to Facilities Directors.

We have completed more than 450 client engagements, and 95% of the candidates we place remain in role one year after appointment. We have more than 50,000 FM professionals in our network across the UK and Europe.

We understand how the demands on Facilities Management are changing, and why the leaders organisations appoint now will shape their workplaces into the 2030s. To discuss a senior FM, estates or workplace appointment, contact us at info@maxwellstephens.com or on 0207 118 4848.

Talk to Maxwell Stephens

Planning a senior FM, estates or workplace appointment? [Contact us](#) for a confidential conversation, or [browse our case studies](#).



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