

Why is making progress on Net Zero important to your business?

The Clarison Group understands that a building's facade represents a considerable share of a building's total embodied carbon and has a significant impact on the building's operational carbon over its lifecycle. The facade is one of the first building systems to be specified and procured, and it may also be refurbished or replaced multiple times before the end of its design life or the life of the building. It is therefore essential for us to consider low-carbon options early in the procurement process to ensure that the embodied and whole-life carbon of the facade systems are minimised. We aim to lead the way in measuring and reducing Embodied Carbon in facades through investment, innovation, and engineering.

The facade also significantly influences the heating and cooling needs of the building and, as such, intelligent design in areas of shading and thermal insulation can massively influence the operational carbon, which is typically several multiples of the embodied carbon.

As a market leading facade contractor in the UK and Ireland, we have a responsibility to be a thought leader in sustainability and innovative solutions to achieve net zero.

Which of the 9 priorities are more relevant to your business and clients and why?

Priorities 1, 2, 6, 8 and 9 are currently most relevant to The Clarison Group companies.

Priority 1: Accelerating the shift of the construction workforce to zero emission vehicles and onsite plant.

Where electrical machinery cannot be used on site, we are working with plant hire providers that offer vegetable oil fuelled machinery. This is relevant because it is something that the more thought leading Tier 1 contractors are requesting.

Priority 2: Maximising use of Modern Methods of Construction and improved onsite logistics, reducing waste and transport to sites

Our customers are looking to source from major providers of facades that are based in the UK and Ireland rather than from European or global providers. The transport of facade products and materials represents 20% of embodied carbon and therefore the distance travelled has become more relevant than ever before.

Priority 6: Enhancing the energy performance of new and existing buildings through higher operational energy efficiency standards and better building energy performance monitoring

In the facade sector, increasing standards of energy efficiency in the design of facades has been of high importance for many years. With the introduction of various new (and differing) net zero targets set by our customers, the emphasis in energy efficiency has never been so important. It is also increasingly important, in the adaptation to climate change, to consider the shading and cooling needs of buildings to avoid summer overheating and the creation of higher levels of operational carbon from increasing use of HVAC cooling. This is important because carbon saved now is significantly more important than carbon saved in 10, 25, or 50 years time.

Priority 8: Become world leaders in designing out carbon, developing the capability of our designers and construction professionals to develop designs in line with circular economy - reducing embedded and operational carbon, shifting commercial models to incentivise and reward measurable carbon reductions.

As well as implementing carbon measures, we are developing the capability to measure the Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) in the products we design and produce and to create Life Cycle Assessments (LCAs) for each of our major contracts. In this process we offer carbon engineering options that provide our client and the end user with the ability to choose more carbon efficient and innovative methods of reducing carbon. This is relevant to our clients because it is the specialist sub-contractors, like the Clarison Group Companies, that have the knowledge, experience and expertise to design out carbon in facades.

Priority 9: Support development of innovative low carbon materials (prioritising concrete and steel), as well as advancing low carbon solutions for manufacturing production processes and distribution

We support a number of solutions to address embodied carbon such as the use of highly recycled aluminium in our projects. But in this aspect I think we need to consider whole life carbon accounting and the trade-off between operational carbon and embodied carbon. This trade-off should take into account the distribution costs of imported products and the carbon created outside of the UK market. It is also important that the whole life is evaluated over the correct expected life of a building. A low carbon material with a short life expectancy may be more damaging in terms of whole life carbon than the higher embodied carbon material it is replacing.

What are you doing to make progress against the relevant priorities (of the 9) in the short and long-term? (Could include targets or milestones)

Short Term

- Established a Groupwide Collaboration Project on sustainability with a Steering Group, Charter and Project Leader and communicated this via our employee engagement platform.
- Measuring our carbon footprint in each of our five facilities.
- Prioritising our own carbon initiative across our group at the highest levels.
- Implementing a one click platform to allow us to provide LCAs.
- Switching to materials that are ethically sourced and have a high recycled content.
- Training our staff to measure EPDs and LCAs.
- Electric car charging points installed in all sites across the Group.
- Enabling more home working and thereby reducing travel.
- Utilising technology to attend meetings and meet clients virtually therefore reducing unnecessary travel.

Long Term

- Having established approaches to measure our carbon footprint, set out a roadmap to get to net zero.
- Set a preference for reducing our own carbon footprint rather than using offsetting measures.
- Sourcing our energy from green providers.
- Reducing our waste in our fabrication facilities through efficient buying, planning and scheduling.
- Changing our car policy to electric bias.
- Prioritise the reduction of carbon in all our design processes.
- Set a preference for sourcing domestic materials which have lower transport miles.
- Explore the use of innovative, new, low carbon materials to use in our façade solutions.

How have you helped your supply chain understand what is required against the 9 priorities?

We have aligned with our main suppliers to understand their own capabilities, collate EPDs and align our values and policies.



As a business leader what do you think the biggest challenge is and how are you working to overcome it?

The biggest challenge is providing the most efficient carbon end product whilst balancing the commercial viability, given that carbon is not currently priced in the commercial evaluation. We find that many Tier 1 operators understand the value of carbon efficient methods and materials. But, the journey to net zero is not yet shared by all and this will slow down progress in our sector. Therefore, the biggest challenge is getting everybody on board. I think leading by example is key to overcoming this.

In your view what is the one innovation or change that is going to have the biggest impact on carbon or progress in our industry?

Net zero targets becoming legislation, being driven through planning/BREAM conditions and/or a price for carbon are likely to have the biggest impact in my opinion. In my experience there are five reasons why businesses might take action to be more sustainable:

- The first is they have altruistic leaders who just want to be innovators.
- The second is they realise that doing so can improve their bottom-line profit.
- The third is that their customers ask for it.
- The fourth is moral pressure from employees and shareholders.
- The final reason is legislation and compliance.

Different industries change for different reasons, but I think in the construction industry most of the business will not change until there is legislation. What I am pleased to see is an increasing number of customers demanding change.

Questions to the emerging leader: Mark Oliver - CEO, The Clarison Group

What do your peers and wider employees within your company think about the businesses' approach to Net Zero?

Our employees engage in the company's activities to address key issues effecting the industry, particularly in Sustainability. Our efforts impress on our staff and partners that we care about our social and economic responsibilities as a leader in what we do. Staff across our group come together in cross functional teams to participate in these topics, harnessing the power of our collective expertise.

How are the younger generation within your business engaged in this?

Our younger generation have been proactive in engaging with the low carbon agenda because they see it as being important to them. They were early adopters and acted in advance of direction from management by setting up a Greens Committee to educate colleagues on how to 'be more environmentally conscious both in the workplace and in their personal lives'.

What more do you think your business could be doing against the 9 priorities?

As with every Continuous Improvement Project (CIP), we see progress towards net zero and our sustainability and carbon objectives as being ongoing and part of our business agenda. Also, as a leader in our sector The Clarison Group wishes to drive change and encourage others to embark on the same journey.




A Youth Voice COP climate is being organised in Milan to bring together young people globally- what would be your key issue to raise?

I would raise the need to move to a global price for carbon to be built into the cost of goods and services wherever they are made. If the right fiscal and tax frameworks can be established to reward low carbon goods and services, then that will drive the commercial attractiveness of the solutions. If it can be achieved, I think carbon accountancy and carbon budgeting would be preferable to setting targets. This would avoid sectors and countries being set against one another. Reducing carbon emissions in the UK by switching sourcing from countries that emit more carbon (e.g., because their electricity has a high proportion of coal generation that the UK no longer has) does not help.

What do you do in your daily life/job that makes a difference?

I believe in leading by example, but I also fundamentally believe in reducing my own personal carbon footprint. I have been an early adopter on this front. For example, I got my first hybrid car in 2008 and I have been driving a 100% electric car since 2016. When renovating my house, I invested in triple glazed roof lights despite reluctance from my builder to follow my specification. But, I can see that they make a difference as when we get snow falling on the roof, it does not melt on the glass.

I also believe in empowering colleagues within our businesses and seeking to influence others outside of the business. In terms of outside influence, I was a launch partner for the Carbon Trust Standard in 2008, whilst leading a business that reduced its carbon footprint by more than 2.5% per annum in three successive years. I also served on the Government's Green Construction Board from 2011 to 2015.



Mark Oliver
CEO
The Clarison Group

