

BCO's Andy McBain on future of offices; Valouran adds partner; Manchester office agency expert moves on

Hires, promotions and other personnel changes in UK and European real estate



(from left): Andy McBain, Charles Leigh and Mark Cooke.

BCO's Andy McBain talks future of offices in bonus podcast

"There's no magic wand here, people will want great experiences when they come in," says Andy McBain, senior vice-president at the British Council for Offices.

In a bonus episode of CoStar News' [Top CREdentials podcast](#), McBain, who is also head of future of workspace and design at NatWest, discusses the direction of travel for offices and how they are playing a bigger role in staff recruitment.

Fresh from the BCO's annual conference in Edinburgh, McBain also discusses the key takeaways from the session and explains what the organisation is doing to "stay relevant", with a healthy number of NextGen members on its books.

The offices expert also talks about the challenges of keeping abreast of the latest developments in office design, the end of "earn the commute" and technology's influence on workspaces over the decades.

Valouran adds to leadership team with partner promotion

Global property developer Valouran has made **Charles Leigh** a partner, bolstering its leadership team. The firm described him as a "driving force behind" its sales operations since joining as sales director around three years ago. He has overseen disposals across its portfolio of nine major sites, including more than £4 billion worth of assets comprising 2.7 million square feet in London. Over a 30-plus-year career, Leigh has held senior leadership roles at major London real estate firms and consultancies, serving as senior director and head of international sales and consultancy at CBRE, and head of prime development at Knight Frank as partner.

Graham and Sibbald hires Manchester office expert

Manchester office agency expert **Mark Cooke** [has joined](#) Graham and Sibbald from Avison Young after 11 years as part of a number of partner hires. His new employer describes him as a "highly experienced office agency specialist" with two decades' experience advising major occupiers and landlords, such as the AA, Bruntwood and the NHS. Cooke is recruited alongside **Cameron Mitchell** and **Alexander Pyle**, who join the residential team in Kilmarnock and the South valuation team in London respectively. Calum Campbell, chief operating officer at Graham and Sibbald, said: "Each of them strengthens our expertise in key locations and service lines."

AEW appoints a director of investor relations for Europe

Real estate investment firm AEW [has hired](#) **Bianca Kraus** as director of investor relations for Europe, effective 1 July 1, 2026. Based in Munich, she will report to **Vanessa Roux-Collet**, AEW's chief executive for Europe. Kraus joined AEW in 2019 as director of investor relations for Germany. In 2023, she took over as head of investor relations for the DACH region. She was responsible for developing relationships with institutional investors and real estate stakeholders in Germany, Austria, and German-speaking Switzerland. Before joining AEW, she worked at BNP Paribas REIM Germany, where she served as head of customer and fund relations.

CBRE's UK head of living sector moving on

CBRE's head of its UK living sector team **Jason Hardman** is [leaving the business](#) just over a year after taking up the role. Hardman was promoted to head of CBRE's UK living sector on 1 June last year, with **Paul Hubbard-Brown** announced as head of its financial and professional services sector. The duo both reported to **Irvinder Goodhew**, who had recently joined CBRE as managing director of UK sectors. Hardman said in a LinkedIn post: "After 20 years, the time has come for me to leave CBRE. It's been a great ride, plenty of highlights, too many to mention here." Hardman has worked for CBRE for 20 years, holding various positions in its valuation business.

Newmark appoints European debt and structured finance MD

Newmark [has appointed](#) **Akbar Tajani** as a managing director based in London working in the European debt and structured finance team. The listed global broker said Tajani has 20 years of experience investing in real estate private credit and private equity, capital markets and portfolio management. He will work with leaders of Newmark's debt, equity and structured finance business in the UK and Europe, including **Matthew Featherstone** and **Charlie Foster**, supporting "property-level financings and equity capital raisings, and broader corporate finance and M&A advisory for European and US-based clients seeking capital solutions across the region".

Cushman & Wakefield promotes 51 in the UK

Cushman & Wakefield [has promoted](#) 51 staff in its UK and Ireland business. They include 30 to associate and associate director level and 21 to senior surveyor, spanning service lines including capital markets, leasing, valuation, project and development service, professional services, sustainability and asset services, as well as its business in Ireland. **Ben Cullen**, chief executive, UK and Ireland, Cushman & Wakefield, said: "I'm delighted to see talented people from across our UK and Ireland platform take the next step in their careers and I thank them for their dedication and commitment, which continue to shape our firm and drive our future success."