

## Mark Kowal becomes BCO President in major year for office sector

3 years ago



Mark Kowal, Partner at Sheppard Robson, has been elected as President of the British Council for Offices (BCO) with immediate effect.

Two months after the UK Government lifted Plan B restrictions and WFH guidance, Mark's appointment comes at a crucial moment for the office industry. Under his presidency, the BCO will demonstrate how the office is meeting the challenges of our era, from enabling hybrid working to adopting sustainable practices, to providing a unique environment that fosters conversation, collaboration and learning. This year, the BCO will also issue revisions to both the BCO Guide to Specification and the Fit Out Guide.

Mark Kowal is Chairman of this year's [BCO Annual Conference](#) in Manchester, which will bring together professionals who design, build, manage or occupy office space and focus on reimagining the modern workplace. Following the disruption of the past two years, the conference will seek to reset the role of the office in our lives, define what is to come for the sector and address the challenges presented by a new era of openness, agility, and flexibility, as well as ever-increasing environmental challenges. Speakers at the event include the Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, the MSP for Edinburgh Central, Ruth Davidson, and the Director of the Institute for Government, Bronwen Maddox, alongside senior industry figures from Bruntwood, Cushman & Wakefield and U+I.

Mark has more than 25 years of experience across all aspects of office design, including speculative and headquarters buildings, covering both new-build and refurbishment solutions. Mark's recent projects include [245 Hammersmith Road](#), a £115m flexible office and retail development that creates a prominent architectural addition to a sequence of new public spaces in the Hammersmith's Business Improvement District Building, and the [Siemens Middle East Headquarters](#) in Abu Dhabi. Within the BCO, he has held the

role of Senior Vice President and has been part of the judging panel for the BCO National Awards.

Kowal succeeds Robin Brodie Cooper, Equity Partner and Director at Gleeds.

Mark Kowal said: “The past two years have enabled us to pause and reset our ambitions for the office. With UK businesses facing a range of challenges, from the environmental to the diverse and evolving needs of the modern workforce, I know our membership will help their tenants not only overcome such challenges, but thrive as a result. As we look to the future, the entire sector has an important role to play in providing buildings and work environments that are better for workers and for our planet.

“The BCO membership and other thought leaders are positioned to help shape what is to come, enabling us all to unite and to innovate in an increasingly agile environment. This is our time to use our expertise, to be open-minded, to be innovative. Our time is now.

“I am certain that the BCO will remain a guiding light, leading the sector through a period of great disruption and change. I am proud to be taking over the Presidency and thank Robin for his diligent and valuable work during a very challenging period.”

Richard Kauntze, Chief Executive of the BCO, said: “I am delighted to have Mark as our President for the coming year, and as the Chairman for the return of our in-person BCO Annual Conference after the disruption of the past two years. His expertise, insight and ideas will be invaluable to the BCO and its members during his Presidency. I also offer my sincere thanks to Robin for his exceptional hard work and good humour in a very challenging year. Robin’s Presidency and stewardship of the BCO during the most trying of times leaves a vital legacy.”

Robin Brodie Cooper said: “It has been an honour to be President and I thank the BCO and its Board of Management for all their support. During my Presidency I have worked with the BCO membership to guide the industry through a period of great change. In 2021 we worked to address the essential and urgent challenges and opportunities presented to the office sector as it sought to adapt to a world changed by the pandemic, whilst also ensuring the built environment sector continued to progress towards a net zero carbon future.

“As we emerged from restriction in January, we saw both businesses and employees celebrate the to return their workplaces. The sceptics who predicted the end of the office have been proved wrong and the role of the office as a space for people to convene, collaborate and create remains unmatched. I look forward to watching Mark take this positive momentum forward into a new chapter for the office and the BCO, using his invaluable wealth of experience and insight taking the sector from strength to strength.”