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Urban&Civic’s commitment to sustainability permeates through everything the business does and critically, to deliver great places that meet the ambitious sustainability goals that are set in the Sustainability Framework.

RICHARD QUARTERMAINE —  
HEAD OF SUSTAINABILITY

# Formalising our approach to sustainability

## Doing the right thing, responsibly

During the last 12 months we have been able to move our corporate sustainability strategy from governance and structure planning into direct and impactful implementation. Underpinning our approach to sustainability is the need to respond to the interrelated universal challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and improving health and wellbeing in society coupled with addressing the UN Sustainable Development Goals at the local level. We operate and subsequently report performance in accordance with our established five sustainability Capitals – Physical, Social, Economic, Natural and Human – where we have set an overarching objective for each. These Capitals ensure that we address sustainability in its broadest sense within everything we do at U&C and that objective setting provides us with the confidence that we will help deliver additional long-term value for the business, our stakeholders, wider society and the planet.

Our approach to sustainability took a significant step forward in 2021/22 in two notable ways. Firstly, we publicly launched our Sustainability Framework which formalises our long-term strategy and commitments against which we will demonstrate our performance on an annual basis. Secondly, we appointed U&C’s first Head of Sustainability, Richard Quartermaine, who is providing the dedicated lead on the implementation and evolution of the Sustainability Framework and will continue to embed sustainability even further throughout the business. An introduction to our new Head of Sustainability and key priorities for the role are explored through the Q&A on page 43.









## OUR SUSTAINABILITY APPROACH CONTINUED

### Doing the right thing, responsibly continued

This year we have undertaken extensive analysis to further understand our impact and improve performance against our universal challenges. As more evidence of a changing climate is presented, both in the UK and globally, understanding our carbon footprint and how we reduce it has continued to be a critical focus. This has been amplified by the necessary contribution that we need to make

to reduce our energy consumption and improve energy security for all in response to the European energy crisis and increased cost of living affecting our residents and tenants. We have made great strides in understanding the positive impact we can bring in restoring biodiversity and have started to empirically measure our contribution to health and wellbeing across our development sites. This work is showcased on the following pages.

We have taken a different approach in our reporting this year in that much of the analysis and discussion of performance is set out on our website (<https://www.urbandandcivic.com/sustainability/>) with only the key highlights and core focus areas contained here. We have again ensured the data and our performance against each metric has been independently validated and confirmed.



## SEEING IS BELIEVING

### The launch of our new Sustainability Framework

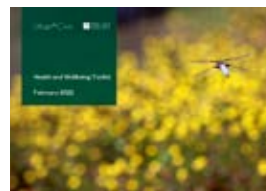
We were proud to publicly launch our Sustainability Framework in June at Houlton. The framework formalises our commitment to sustainable business practices and continuous environmental and social improvements across our portfolio. It provides a set of minimum standards for the business to meet and set out our long term ambition to achieve sustainable excellence. An initial five-year horizon with targets set for 2025 will enable the evaluation of our strategic sustainability performance and an important step towards our long-term goals.

Journalists were treated to a tour of Houlton, including the award-winning Houlton School, to see how the Sustainability Framework is being delivered. This brought to life how we are responding to our universal challenges of climate change, biodiversity and health and wellbeing and demonstrated the ways in which we are fulfilling our ambitious commitments under each. See the following pages for further insight into these commitments.

We also formally launched our three sustainability “toolkits” which provide detailed design and delivery guidance for our teams to help meet our universal challenges. The Carbon, Biodiversity and Health and Wellbeing Toolkits reflect both wider best practice and our more specific experience to date, using our historic successes and lessons learned to support our development activities going forward. The toolkits set the standard we expect to see in the development of our sites and act as an immediate guide for our employees, consultant teams,

contractors and other stakeholders. The toolkits aren't intended to be static and will evolve to capture future innovation and technology to enable us to maintain our high quality approach to sustainable development. Whilst the toolkits are not public documents, they are issued to our consultants, contractors and others who we are working with.

The launch was coupled with the ‘go live’ of the revamped sustainability section of the website which provides a clear, distilled summary of the Sustainability Framework and reports progress against each Capital and corresponding Action Area. The website provides a detailed account of performance for each sustainability metric in 2021/22 and is intended to be complementary to the results presented here.



Download the full report at:  
<https://www.urbandandcivic.com/sustainability/>

# Q & A



## with our new Head of Sustainability

SEEING IS BELIEVING

**Sharing sustainability knowledge at Houlton**

[www.urbandoivico.com/media-library/case-studies/sharing-sustainability-knowledge-houlton/](http://www.urbandoivico.com/media-library/case-studies/sharing-sustainability-knowledge-houlton/)

This year saw the appointment of Richard Quartermaine as the Head of Sustainability at U&C. We posed some questions to him to get his insights into this new position for the business and the journey ahead.

**Q. After a number of years working in the commercial sector, why did you decide to work in the residential sector?**

**A.** I switched sectors because I am passionate about the need to build good quality homes and communities that are also sustainable environmentally, socially and economically. It is essential to do this if we want to meet global and national climate goals and the needs of society. I therefore wanted to apply my skills and experience to make a difference in this sector.

**Q. What attracted you to join U&C?**

**A.** U&C are the leading master developer and have demonstrated an impressive record to date of delivering long-term sustainable developments. With the formulation of the Sustainability Framework and Toolkits and bold future commitments, it was a great opportunity to lead the realisation of these ambitions with the backing of a business dedicated to doing the right thing.

**Q. What key challenges and opportunities does the sustainability agenda present to U&C?**

**A.** U&C have already identified the universal challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and the health and wellbeing crisis as being material risks to the business, the residential industry and wider society.

There are also future challenges we need to be cognisant of such as water availability and climate resilience, which we are addressing and mitigating their potential impacts. Our approach to sustainability is another way we can demonstrate our commitment to delivering high quality

places and this in turn adds value to what we do at a number of levels. In addition, our approach to low carbon design and resource efficiency does offer us the opportunity to help rationalise infrastructure provision and reduce energy demands meaning there is a financial advantage too.

**Q. What are the key aspects of your role?**

**A.** U&C have already put sustainability firmly on their agenda and developed an ambitious long term strategy. It's now about delivering sustainable residential development based upon the corner stones the business have already put in place. Although I will be directing and leading the delivery against the U&C commitments, everyone in the business will be required to contribute and my role is to support this from a technical, behavioural and cultural perspective. In addition, horizon scanning for new industry best practice and disseminating it across U&C is also key to ensure we are continuously stretching ourselves and being ambitious and innovative.

**Q. How are you working with U&C's partners and housebuilders?**

**A.** Engagement on sustainability is critical with our partners, local authorities, supply chain and housebuilders to deliver our committed outcomes. An example of this is working with our consultant teams and contractors to help develop our carbon management framework during the past year, because we recognise they will be a critical part of the implementation process and will provide the data we need to assess and report against our carbon footprint.

Working with housebuilders to understand mutual challenges and how we can work

together to achieve better outcomes is also important. We are therefore hosting a housebuilder sustainability forum every six months with some of our key housebuilding partners to understand progress being made and to explore how we can help them move faster on this agenda.

**Q. What are your priorities for the year ahead?**

**A.** U&C recognise the severity of the climate challenge and therefore we are developing a plan towards being a Net Zero business by 2040 (Scope 1, 2 and 3). This requires significant action to reduce our carbon emissions. We have undertaken a lot of work in the past year to measure our carbon footprint across all sites, set that benchmark and then determine how we can reduce it. We need to further embed this work in the business and ensure it's reflected in all decision making. This includes looking at how resilient U&C are to the physical and transitional risks posed by climate change on our sites and within the wider business strategy.

Another priority is to continually engage employees and our supply chain to develop the culture of sustainability so that it becomes second nature in everything we do, akin to our health and safety culture. We will do this through the establishment of sustainability champions across the business, regular performance updates and including sustainability in project business plans and business unit performance reviews.

Now that we have launched the Sustainability Framework we need to continue working towards our 2025 targets and that will be a focus for the year ahead.



# Our sustainability performance: a review

Our Sustainability Framework is structured around Five Capitals that are the key opportunity areas for the business to potentially make a positive difference on society. The Capitals were developed following deep analysis of our core business values, objectives and risks, our engagement with key stakeholders and our approach to community engagement. The Capitals model promotes a holistic and interdisciplinary approach to sustainability by the business and our supply chain.

Each Capital sets a headline objective relevant and critical to U&C and which steers us in our strategic approach to sustainability. This is explained opposite. Beneath each objective sits three specific Action Areas which represent both opportunities and challenges for us and are supported by detailed performance targets and metrics to enable ongoing measurement, reporting and validation which in turn leads to lessons learned and continuous improvement. Headline performance against the targets is reported here with further analysis and commentary on our website.



Read more on our approach to sustainability and environmental outcomes via our website: [www.urbanandcivic.com/sustainability](http://www.urbanandcivic.com/sustainability)

## Physical

### Objective



The Physical Capital relates to the community and commercial buildings as well as green, grey and blue infrastructure that we retain and manage.

#### Action areas

- Carbon footprint
- Resilience
- Connectivity

#### Why it matters

'Net zero' is reached when the amount of greenhouse gas released into the atmosphere is no more than the amount removed. In response we have put a strong emphasis on reducing the whole life carbon footprint of our Strategic Sites in line with a Net Zero approach by 2040. This will be achieved through the minimisation of embodied carbon in the design and construction of infrastructure and buildings, a flexible energy strategy prioritising highly efficient sources to reduce operational carbon and the deployment of renewable energy to future-proof our sites. Our visionary design guides for the physical works we obtain planning consents for support this objective by focusing on increased sustainable transport and water resilience through our master planning design activities.

#### Key highlights

**5%**

**2025 target 35% -7% per annum**

reduction in absolute Scope 1 and 2 emissions as per SECR reporting compared to 2020/2021 data

**134**

**2025 target 90**

litres of water consumed per person per day in all new properties constructed from October 2021

**99%**

**2025 target 100% – reducing to 95% in 2022/23 to reflect absolute nature of target difficult to achieve in practice**

of all occupied buildings constructed within 200m of a high-quality cycle way as specified by SUSTRANS

## Social

### Objective



The Social Capital relates to the networks of relationships amongst people and the role of placemaking in the integration of our communities.

#### Action areas

- Placemaking
- Engagement and consultation
- Community investment

#### Why it matters

We believe communities at home or at work are the building blocks of a lively, interconnected network of services and relationships that enable places to thrive. As Master Developers, our ability to create self-sustaining communities and to nurture a culture of community citizenship is an indicator of success which we believe is as important as reducing our environmental footprint.

Our vision for creating vibrant communities begins with the master planning and the embedding of social space within the built form and delivering health and wellbeing opportunities from the outset. This is continued through the building phase by baking in a set of measurable goals that we expect all our contractors to respond to and then validating our effort with those who pick up the baton of the community from the time of occupation.

#### Key highlights

**85%**

**2025 target 100% – reducing to 95% in 2022/23 to reflect absolute nature of target difficult to achieve in practice**

of homes are within 300m linear distance (five minutes' walk) of a publicly accessible green and blue space which is at least 2 hectares in size

**42**

**2025 target 39**

average scored by contractors employed by Urban&Civic under the Considerate Constructors Scheme (CCS) scheme, representing "excellent"

**100%**

**2025 target 100%**

of sites have a live post-planning written consultation and engagement strategy informed by local socio-demographics and agreed with key local stakeholders



## Economic

### Objective



The Economic Capital relates to the long-term viability of our organisation and the Strategic Sites we retain and operate.

#### Action areas

- Good quality employment
- Economic inclusion
- Promotion of local economic growth

#### Why it matters

We believe that a successful project seeks to create economic value not just for Urban&Civic, its partners and customers but also for wider society. As such, a fundamental element of our approach is to leverage our investment, skills and engagement to enable a demonstrable return for all stakeholders, while ensuring a "just transition" that improves lives and livelihoods and avoids deepening any existing inequalities.

Within our metrics, we have chosen to focus on key areas including the generation of good-quality employment, contracting with local and regional contractors, collaboration with local small and medium-sized businesses and promotion of agile innovation.

#### Key highlights

# 100%

#### 2025 target 100%

of contractors directly employed by Urban&Civic and housebuilders employed under licence paid the Real Living Wage

# 47%

#### 2025 target 80%

of the total value of direct contracts was placed with principal contractors whose offices are within 25 miles of the site – increasing to 40 miles in 2022/23 to reflect more realistic one hour travel time

# 97%

#### 2025 target 100%

of Strategic Land Sites in delivery have implemented Urban&Civic's six initiatives to actively promote local businesses and start-ups

## Natural

### Objective



The Natural Capital relates to the protection and enhancement of the environment, both within the local context and through contributing to wider climate and biodiversity challenges.

#### Action areas

- Enhanced landscaping
- Enhanced biodiversity
- Resource efficiency

#### Why it matters

We invest not only in quantity but in quality of the green and blue infrastructure we provide. We seek to incorporate nature at the core of all our development sites, preserving existing features of value and capturing every opportunity to enhance the environment, enabling people and nature to flourish collectively. The re-use and re-purposing of the land we develop seeks at all times to provide environmental net gain for the communities we create.

This includes early tree planting to maximise sequestration potential and improve health and wellbeing attributes within our sites, creating usable and sustainable green landscape, effective surface water management and the responsible use of natural resources.

#### Key highlights

# 32

#### 2025 target 25

average trees planted for each house occupied to date

# 9.2%

#### 2025 target 12% – increasing to 25% in 2022/23 using Defra 3.1 metrics

average biodiversity net gain score across all our sites

# 100%

#### 2025 target 92% – increasing to 95% in 2022/23 to be more stretching

average construction and demolition waste diverted from landfill

## Human

### Objective



The Human capital relates to the application of a people-centric approach considering the diversity of human experiences to create a culture of inclusivity and balance.

#### Action areas

- Wellbeing
- Health & Safety
- Commitment to lifelong learning

#### Why it matters

Our aim is to create distinctive spaces that enhance physical and mental health, improve quality of life and cultivate successful communities. Starting with land acquisition and consolidation through planning and delivery we always operate with human needs in mind.

This translates into key areas of action including the delivery of opportunities for leading an active lifestyle and supporting healthy eating habits, whilst continuously monitoring and seeking to improve the manner in which we deliver health and safety on our sites, both through our direct and indirect contracts. We also invest in learning and training opportunities for our employees to ensure they feel empowered, supported and proud to be working for Urban&Civic in the long-term, strengthening our business longevity and resilience.

#### Key highlights

# 75%

#### 2025 target 100%

of sites with over 200 homes occupied have a robust biannual survey in place which records residents' sense of quality of life and health and wellbeing

# 4.2

#### 2025 target 2.0 – assessment method to change to be a more realistic measure of performance

average safety logs per dwelling recorded for housebuilders across all our sites

# 75%

#### 2025 target 100% – reducing to 95% in 2022/23 to reflect absolute nature of target difficult to achieve in practice

of employees undertaking non-mandatory company provided or sponsored learning, training or professional study



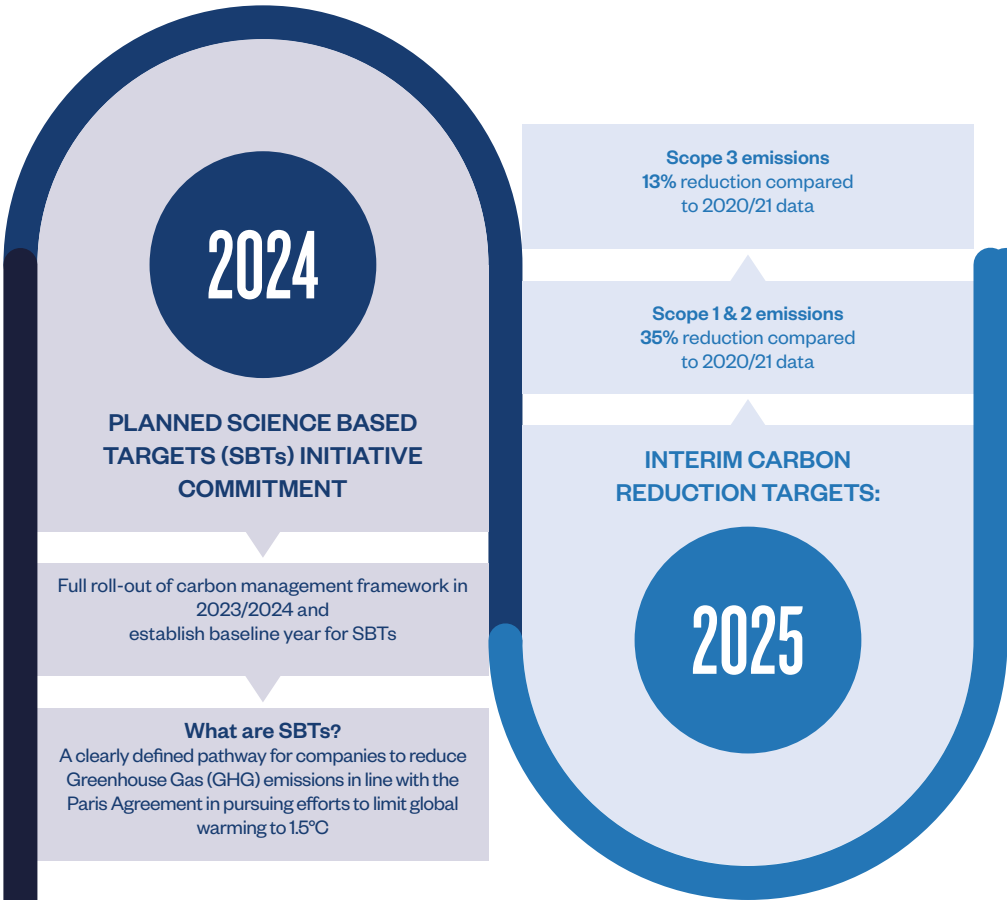
# Our map towards Net Zero

The climate crisis we are currently facing now more than ever reinforces our strong belief that any new residential-led development must make every effort to minimise its carbon footprint, quickly and decisively. Arguably, the impact of one tonne of carbon released now will be greater than one realised in 10 years, so immediate action is therefore required.

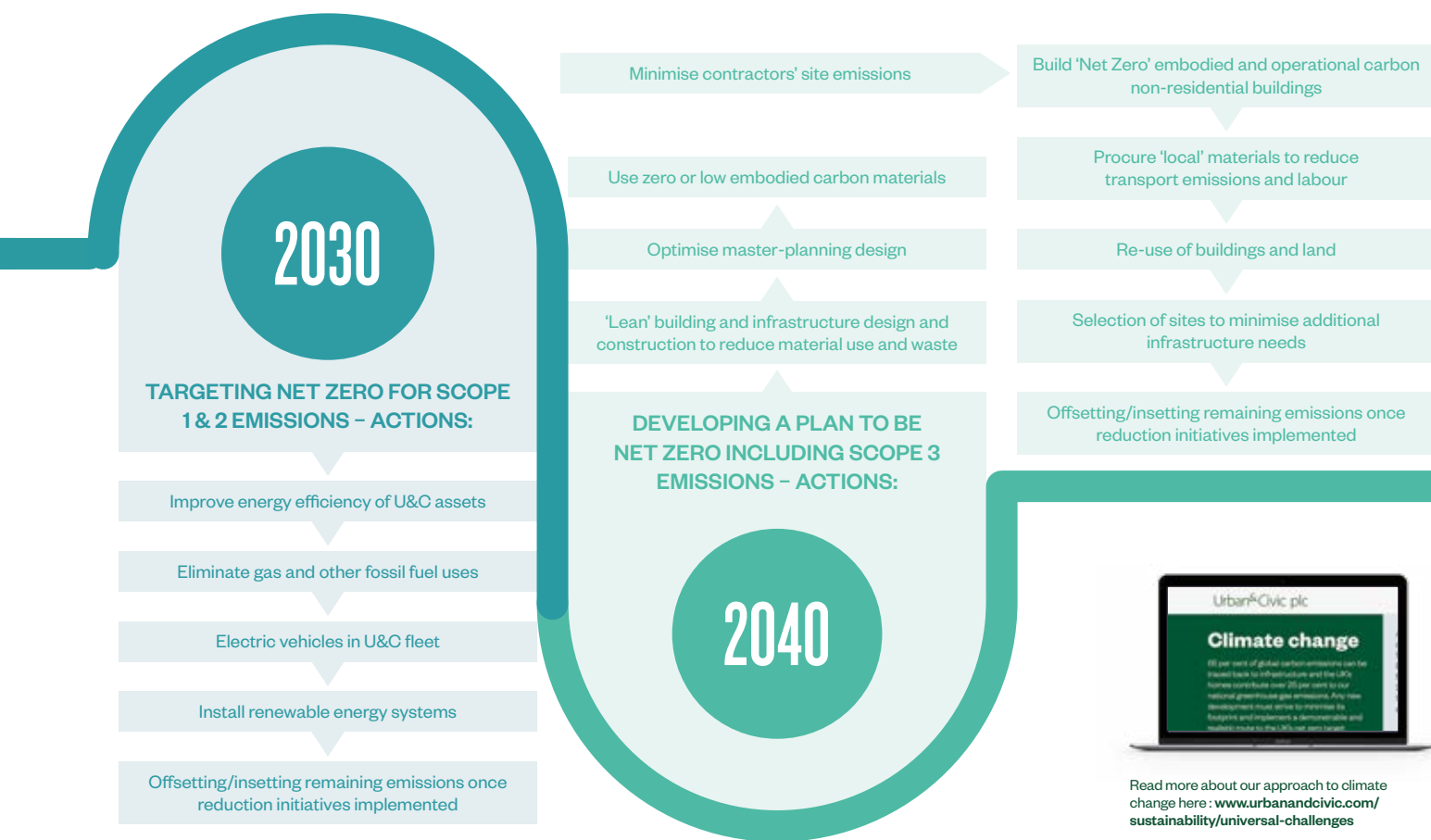
That is why we are working towards becoming Net Zero for both our direct and indirect carbon emissions which is embedded within our Sustainability Framework. Our current targets are:

- 1. by 2030, to be Net Zero for the emissions from U&C controlled sources such as office facilities and vehicles (Scopes 1 and 2); and
- 2. by 2040, aiming for Net Zero for the indirect emissions in the U&C value chain by significantly reducing the embodied carbon in buildings and infrastructure built by U&C (Scope 3). Carbon offsetting and insetting will be considered for remaining emissions.

Achieving Net Zero is not only about the outcome but also the journey. We won't get there without engaging all our stakeholders on what we need to do and by when. We are developing the 'Urban&Civic Map to Net Zero' to support and communicate this both within the business and externally. The Map sets out the headline actions we as a business need to implement along with our value chain to achieve both the long-term targets and also the nearer term 2025 and then 2030 interim targets.

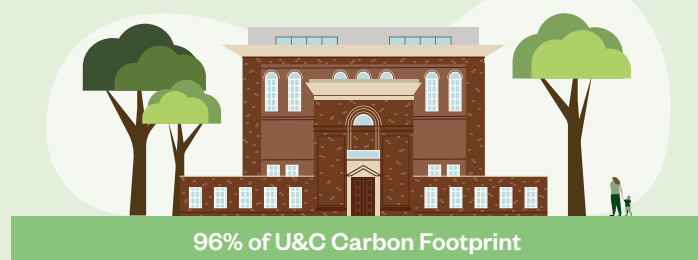






### SCOPE 3 (INCLUDED):

Indirect emissions in the U&C value chain such as embodied carbon in building and infrastructure built by U&C and operational energy used by those assets



### SCOPE 3 (EXCLUDED):

Housebuilders embodied carbon and resident's emissions however working collaboratively to influence and reduce where possible







# Striving to minimise our carbon footprint

To reduce our carbon footprint, we must over the short-term comprehensively assess our carbon impacts across the business and implement a robust and rigorous management framework for collecting, analysing and reporting carbon performance data going forward. We will then understand the likely impact of our planned carbon reduction actions.

Once we have undertaken this footprinting and targeting work, we will look to commit to the Science Based Targets Initiative in 2024. This will formalise and externally verify our direction of travel and reporting processes.

Throughout the year we made substantial progress towards meeting these short-term objectives highlighted as follows.

## Carbon baselining and budgeting

We have assessed what we would need to do to reduce our direct and indirect carbon emissions by in order to achieve our Net Zero ambitions. This was calculated across all three scopes with reference to a detailed analysis of one site, Houlton, and extrapolated for the whole portfolio out to 2050. This work set a 'carbon budget' for the business that we would need to stay within as we develop our Strategic Sites in order to align with a carbon reduction pathway to limit global warming to 1.5°C. The emphasis is therefore on not exceeding the available carbon budget as

we build out our sites rather than the target date to achieve Net Zero.

During the past year we have been developing a carbon budget for each of our Strategic Sites in delivery with reference to baseline 'business-as-usual' emissions and the overall carbon budget for the business. Each project team now has a clear carbon budget, akin to a financial budget, that each development needs to work to and measure performance against. This work also identified where the carbon 'hotspots' in each element of the development were, whether buildings, roads or other infrastructure, and the key actions required to ensure the element is delivered within 'budget'.

The annual carbon expended at each site will be measured and compared to their respective carbon budgets, which in aggregate will determine if U&C are on track to sufficiently reduce emissions to achieve our Net Zero ambitions.

## Carbon management framework

The Carbon Management Framework (CMF) was developed to provide guidance for U&C and our value chain partners to work collaboratively to stay within the carbon budget for each Strategic Site. It describes the carbon reduction process and requirements within each design and construction stage, and the role and responsibilities of the relevant value chain partner. The framework is based on four pillars:

- **Engage & Collaborate** – multidisciplinary design approach and early engagement.
- **Low Carbon Design (Optimise & Innovate)** – integrate carbon as an essential and early design consideration alongside cost, quality and time.
- **Measure & Monitor** – regular carbon design reviews and robust monitoring and reporting of construction activity.
- **Feedback & Influence** – create feedback loops to ensure progress and knowledge is shared across all sites and project teams.

The CMF will be embedded across all U&C sites during 2022/23 as the 'trial year' in order to upskill project teams and address any lessons learnt ahead of the expected full roll-out in 2023/24. Tools, procedures and guidance will also be developed during the trial year to support the implementation of the framework enabling all parties to take action.

## Other initiatives

Other carbon related initiatives developed in the past year by the business included:

- The carbon storage and sequestration benefits of the retained, planted and proposed trees across the sites were assessed together with the impact of soil disturbance during earthworks. The results of the study will inform our landscape strategies and how we may minimise loss of sequestered carbon in soil through our Biodiversity and Carbon Toolkits as these are updated.



- In 2021/22, we recognise that we were only able to reduce our Scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions by 5% which falls short of our 7% per annum reduction target. To ensure we stay on track to meet our 2025 target and beyond, we have included a number of carbon reduction actions in the 2022/23 business plans for all Strategic Sites. This also includes a target to develop site specific plans to achieve Net Zero for Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2030. We'll continue to implement the energy saving opportunities as outlined in our ESOS (Energy Saving Opportunity Scheme) Phase 2 compliance report and will prepare for our

ESOS Phase 3 submission in 2023 by undertaking detailed energy audits. Specific reduction actions will include:

- Adopt more energy efficient behaviours in our occupied spaces
- Replace building services with more energy efficient equipment when end-of-life
- Phase out gas and other fossil fuel uses
- Continue transformer consolidation at Alconbury
- Install renewable energy systems where viable to do so.

- During 2022/23 we will update our plan for the business to fulfil its Net Zero ambitions (encompassing Scope 3) including the expected initiatives we'll need to implement.
- Continue our detailed assessment of the resilience of the business to future climate change scenarios with a view to publicly reporting against the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures framework.



## SEEING IS BELIEVING

### Collaboration to slash CO<sub>2</sub> emissions

U&C and contractor Buckingham Group Contracting Ltd agreed an innovative, collaborative cost sharing agreement for the additional cost of using 1 million litres of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) instead of diesel for this season's earthmoving at Priors Hall, Corby.

Buckingham is delivering the bulk earthworks for the second phase of Priors Hall over several seasons. Having successfully completed seasons 1, 2 and 3 totalling circa 3,000,000 m<sup>3</sup> of earthworks, the planned volume of works in 2022 was circa 1,500,000 m<sup>3</sup>. The plant on site includes six 50-tonne primary movers, and at peak production we will be moving more than 100,000 m<sup>3</sup> per week.

For such a major project, it was imperative for both parties to work together to save carbon associated with plant movements on site. The use of responsibly sourced HVO at Priors Hall was an obvious way to do this in that it would eliminate circa 2,750 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e representing a 90 per cent saving compared to using red diesel. This saving is not just a great example of how on-site direct Scope 1 emissions can be cut for a contractor such as Buckingham but also benefits Urban&Civic in the reduction of wider value chain Scope 3 carbon emissions. Sharing the additional cost of switching fuel types was critical to ensure that the initiative was taken up rather than either party solely carrying the additional cost.

Urban&Civic recognise that collaborating and partnering with our value chain can unlock a range of solutions to drive down carbon emissions to help achieve our Net Zero goal and this is something we can start doing immediately.

#### Link to values:



Partnership



Innovation

#### Link to sustainability capitals:



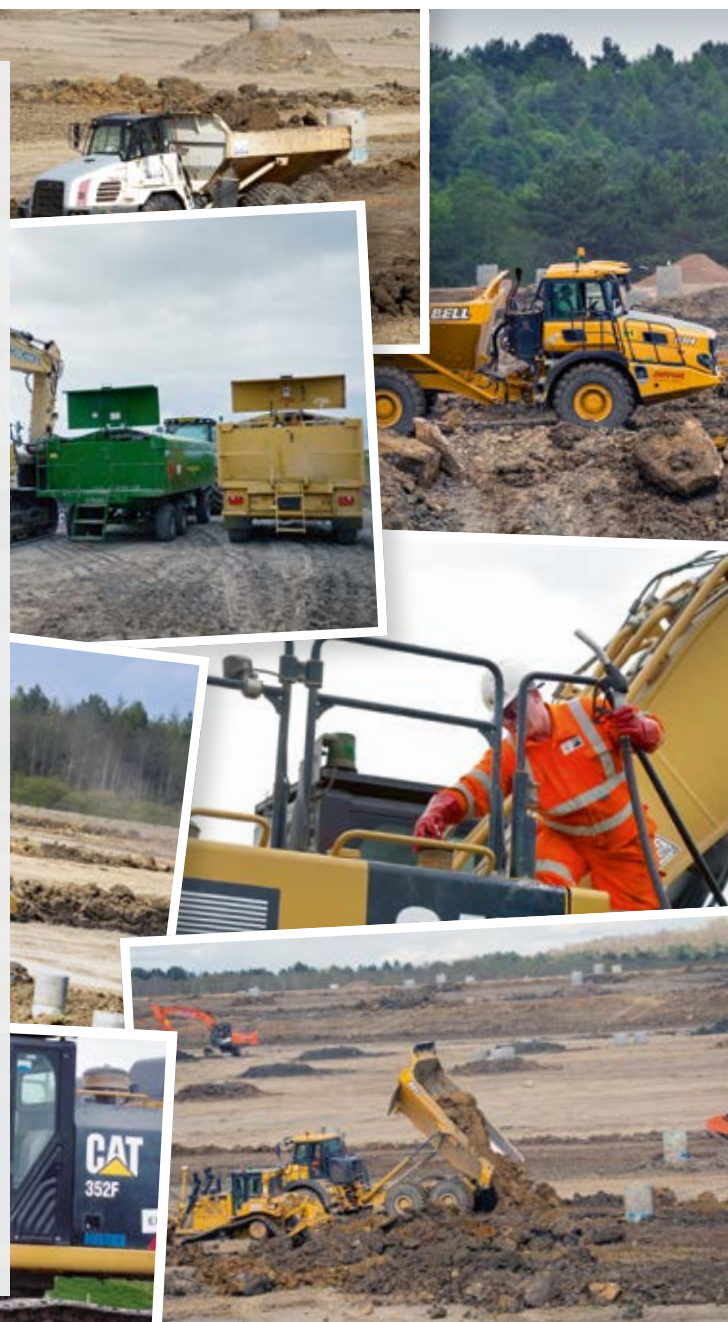
Physical



Economic



[www.urbandocivic.com/media-library/case-studies/uc-and-buckingham-collaborate-slash-co2-emissions/](https://www.urbandocivic.com/media-library/case-studies/uc-and-buckingham-collaborate-slash-co2-emissions/)







# Understanding the importance of health and wellbeing

Urban&Civic aim to create distinctive places with high ecological and social value emdedded within which also serve to enhance physical and mental health and improve quality of life for all. Health and wellbeing is one of our universal challenges and last year we introduced a 2025 target to ensure that Urban&Civic comprehensively measures achievement of this aim.

Our journey to ensure our new communities support and drive health and wellbeing can be traced back to early engagement with Sport England on Active Design principles for Alconbury Weald and Houlton; and developed as NHS England reviewed the learnings from the Healthy New Town pilots. Lockdowns during Covid also powerfully proved the point of how layout and design influences people's levels of physical activity and more resilient mental health.

Urban&Civic were keen to set out a strategy to embed this into the delivery of our sites and with health and wellbeing such a clear priority within national and international frameworks, it was established as one of three universal challenges within the Sustainability Framework. Delivery is then supported through the setting of the Quality of Life metric.

### Quality of Life

Working with the Quality of Life Foundation, the Urban&Civic Communications, Communities and Partnerships team, developed a pilot to support the community to reflect on aspects of their day to day lives which forms part of the Quality of Life metric. The measures developed by the foundation break down into the following themes:

- 1 Control

2 Health

3 Nature

4 Wonder

5 Movement

6 Belonging

The pilot involved Quality of Life Resident Review Surveys in three of our more developed communities – Alconbury Weald, Houlton and Priors Hall. The survey has been developed with both 'core' and 'additional context' questions, with ONS benchmark questions included against each theme to enable a comparison with the national average. Another key strength of the foundation's approach is the analysis of the survey by both statisticians and sociologists who compare the results with the benchmarks and develop recommendations and priority areas.

The process was supported by the local Communities teams and included:

- online and face-to-face surveys;
- flyers, incentives, social media targeted ads, attendance at community events; and
- community team promotion and endorsement.

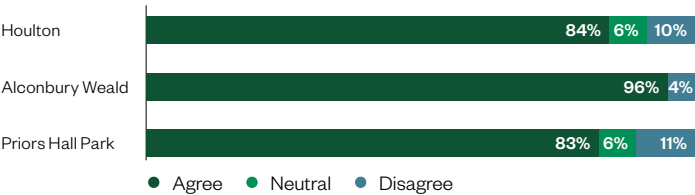
It was a great endorsement that each development surveyed marked above ONS on all standards, bar one, which given the early stage of the developments studied, was highlighted by the Foundation as "a phenomenal achievement".

Other key areas highlighted by the survey findings for Urban&Civic to take forward included:

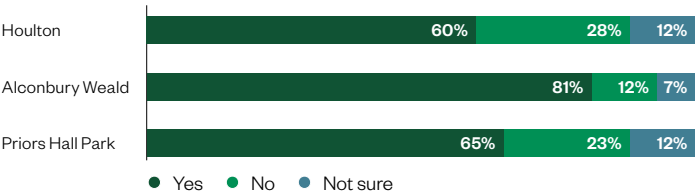
- greater public transport connections and active travel initiatives;
- understanding cost and quality that goes into ongoing maintenance of local green spaces;
- intergenerational provision of play and community space, especially for teenagers and older people;
- opportunities for residents to influence decisions in the local area; and
- increased provision of shops and services, which residents acknowledged would come in future phases of the developments.

The detailed findings of the surveys have been analysed by the Urban&Civic project teams and a commitment made to develop an action plan for each site and share with residents to respond to some of the issues raised. This is part of our commitment to building a continued engagement cycle with residents, shaping and influencing the development around them and ensuring we continue to improve our places and put the community at the heart of that process. We have also committed to repeating the surveys every two years to ensure we can continue to monitor the outcomes, and create truly empowered, sustainable and healthy communities.

I have access to an adequate amount of public or shared green space close to my home



Are you happy with the standard of green space in your area?







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# Developing stronger and more resilient ecosystems

## Delivering Biodiversity Net Gain

Urban&Civic have had a long-term commitment to improving the ecological value of our sites, recognising the benefit this has in terms of the resilience of local ecosystems, the prevention of species decline, benefits to human health, carbon sequestration and high quality placemaking for local communities.

We've been measuring Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) to demonstrate the positive impact we have through our investment in green infrastructure on our sites for a number of years. There have been a number of differing metrics used for gauging the BNG potential for any development, and Urban&Civic have to date used the Warwickshire County Council (WCC) metric to achieve uniformity of comparison across our portfolio.

Following the publication of the draft Environment Act 2021, the Government consulted on implementing a proposed BNG regulation and measuring it using the biodiversity accounting tool known as Defra 3.1, therefore making all previous metrics redundant.

Throughout the year Urban&Civic embarked on a conversion of all previous BNG assessments undertaken for the Strategic Sites using the Warwickshire County Council metric to Defra 3.1. The two calculation methodologies are not comparable and so in effect the remeasured BNG scores have reset the baseline for each site.

In 2020/21, the predicted average post development BNG score for six Strategic Sites was 8.6 per cent, below our current 2025 target of 12 per cent. Following the conversion to the Defra 3.1, the equivalent average is 21.2 per cent, the substantial difference reflecting the calculation tools used and not changes to the biodiversity approach across the sites.

Last year we committed to reporting on progress on at least two sites. In 2021/22 detailed Reserved Matters Applications (RMA) were developed for the first Key Phase at both Waterbeach and Wintringham which enabled a comparison with the 2020/21 position.

To ensure direct comparability, the pre and post RMA position was measured using both Warwickshire and Defra 3.1 metrics and the impact on all site averages are presented below.

Sites	WCC Metric		3.1 Metric	
	Sept 2021 Pre RMA	Sept 2022 Post RMA	Sept 2021 Pre RMA	Sept 2022 Post RMA
All site average	8.6 per cent	9.2 per cent	21.2 per cent	23.0 per cent

There was a significant improvement in the BNG scores for both sites under both metrics once the detailed RMAs had been factored in. The improved scores can be attributed to the close attention paid to the inclusion of biodiverse habitats in the design of the RMAs and the detailed habitat information available to measure from rather than making broad habitat assumptions. For example, known quantities and species of urban trees can be picked up, which contributes to the overall net gain for the site.

Over time, we expect that as further RMAs come forward across the sites, the BNG scores will trend upwards. Given the average score for all sites measured using metric Defra 3.1 significantly exceeds our 12 per cent target, Urban&Civic will set a more challenging 2025 BNG target of 25 per cent to ensure biodiversity remains a key focus during the detailed design of our developments.



### SEEING IS BELIEVING

#### Gulley opening unlocks nature trail for residents



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