



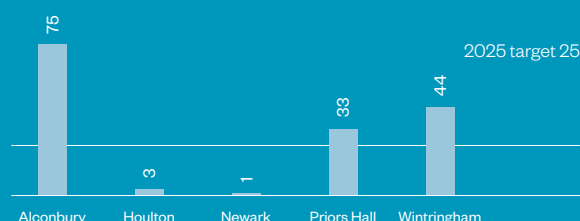
Natural

Objective: Environmental net gain

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.

Action Area 1 – Enhanced landscaping: Connecting people with nature



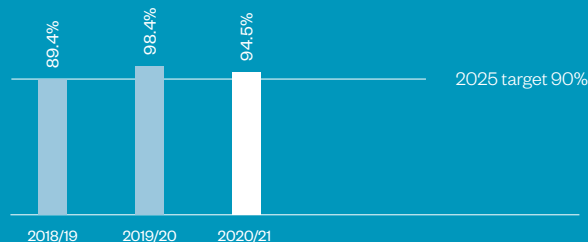
Graph showing number of trees per household each individual site has planted to date

Action Area 2 – Enhanced biodiversity: Net gain on our sites



Graph showing average biodiversity net gain data for each individual site over the 2019/20 and 2020/21 reporting periods

Action Area 3 – Resource efficiency: Championing the circular economy



Graph tracking the total demolition and construction waste diverted from landfill as a percentage of waste generated on all Urban&Civic developments

What we are doing

To achieve this objective, we have identified three action areas to provide a strategic focus for our efforts and commitments: first, to leverage our landscape-led design to deliver environmental net gain with a focus on planting new trees; second, to achieve enhanced biodiversity through the application of the mitigation hierarchy (i.e. avoid and minimise impacts on biodiversity before looking to compensate), avoidance of losing biodiversity that cannot be offset by gains elsewhere, proactive, early engagement with stakeholders, additionality (i.e. achieve nature conservation outcomes that exceed existing minimum obligations) and support for local-level management; and third, to maximise resource efficiency and the resilience of environmental ecosystems. The importance of biodiversity net gain is highlighted through its inclusion as one of our three universal challenges.



Action Area 1: Enhanced landscaping

Minimum standards

2019/20 reporting metric: Provide a minimum of 22m² of safe, accessible and functional public green space per household by 2025 to provide access to nature.

2020/21 new 2025 target: Plant an average of 25 trees for each house occupied by 2025.

As Master Developers, we are responsible for the planning, provision and maintenance of safe, accessible blue and green infrastructure on our sites, and we have a proven track record in delivering.

Development projects are increasingly expected to create broader and more holistic environmental improvements in the context of global megatrends such as rapid urbanisation and associated growing disconnect from nature, climate change and natural resource scarcity.

Last year, our metric tracked the provision of green open space and, despite some variance across our sites, we reported that there was an average of 315m² available per household in 2019/20, exceeding our 2025 minimum target of 22m².

Given strong performance, this year we introduced a new metric for 2025, focusing on the targeted provision of new trees. Trees are one of the most powerful weapons in the fight against climate change, removing carbon dioxide from the air, storing carbon and releasing oxygen into the atmosphere. In addition, they can help to prevent flooding, reduce temperature and pollution, and keep soil rich in nutrients. Providing more of them is also directly linked to addressing two of the three universal challenges we have identified as being relevant to sustainability in the built environment: biodiversity and health and wellbeing.

During 2020/21, an average of 31 trees were planted per household across all strategic land sites, exceeding the 2025 target of 25. Alconbury, Priors Hall and Wintringham all surpassed the target, whilst Houlton and Newark did not due to housebuilding and landscaping cycles. This will be remedied in future years. Waterbeach does not yet have any households in residence so was excluded from the calculation. Overall, Urban&Civic planted 2,950 trees this year. We are mindful, however, that early placemaking and landscaping may lead to this average coming under pressure as the housebuilding on the sites begins. As such, the test for Urban&Civic will be both to retain this positive position and build upon it to attain the ratio required on every single site.

It goes without saying that we will continue to provide a diverse range of blue and green spaces on our development sites, with a minimum target of 22m² per household. However, the new metric we are now reporting on focuses on a specific way in which we can seek to deliver ecological, biodiversity, carbon capture, air quality, health and wellbeing benefits.

In 2020/21, an average of 31 trees were planted per household across all strategic land sites, exceeding our 2025 target.

Action Area 2: Enhanced biodiversity **Minimum standards**

2019/20 reporting metric: Achieve a 10 per cent biodiversity net gain as a minimum on all our sites by 2025.

2020/21 revised 2025 target: Achieve a 12 per cent biodiversity net gain as a minimum overall on all our sites.

Biodiversity net gain is one of the three key objectives that Urban&Civic see as being fundamental to our identity as Master Developer and one which we already measure, monitor and learn from. We have been targeting improvements in this area and we set our target of 10 per cent ahead of any legislative requirement. We are highlighting the importance of biodiversity net gain by including it as one of our three universal challenges.

Our commitment to increasing ecological value on our developments is not new. However, we have redefined our approach to maximise our biodiversity net gain (BNG) for stronger and more resilient local ecosystems.

Over the past 50 years, 41 per cent of species in the UK have declined, with a recent index indicating the UK is one of the most nature depleted countries in the world. The need to reverse this continued trend in biodiversity loss is clear, and developments can contribute to reversing this decline through carefully designed and delivered schemes.

Last year, our target was to achieve at least a 10 per cent BNG by 2025, irrespective of the baseline conditions on our sites, and we set this metric ahead of any legislative requirements. The Environment Act 2021 has since formalised this expectation for all developers, introducing it as a minimum target for all new housing schemes. Given the criticality of this issue, we are now pushing ourselves further and have increased our 2025 target to 12 per cent BNG as a minimum, reflecting our desire to go beyond the mandatory.

Last year, we reported an average of 6.6 per cent BNG across our portfolio, based on data from six sites. In 2020/21, we carried out revised analysis on two further sites – Houlton and Priors Hall – and based on this, the average BNG was 8.7 per cent for the year, an increase of just over 2.1 per cent on the year before. This shows good progress towards meeting the 2025 target of 12 per cent. It is projected that if biodiversity continues to increase across all sites at the current rate, the 2025 metric as an average across all sites will be achieved.

As we have previously acknowledged, each site we bring forward has a different ecological value, baseline conditions and parameters within which we can deliver BNG. We shall continue to review and report on at least two of our developments each year to monitor progress against the desired metric by 2025. The considerable work undertaken over the years by our teams in this area has now given rise to our Biodiversity Toolkit. The Toolkit now forms one of our Challenge Guides, issued in order to illustrate our vision and direction when designing in biodiversity from the outset. We are also engaging leading industry professionals and local nature trusts to develop bespoke and coordinated strategies for each site, and placing emphasis on priority habitats, seeking their optimal site-specific incorporation in design.

In 2020/21, an average of 8.7 per cent biodiversity net gain was delivered across our sites, an increase of 2.1 per cent on the year before.

Action Area 3: Resource efficiency **Minimum standards**

2019/20 reporting metric: Divert from landfill a minimum of 90 per cent construction and 95 per cent demolition waste by 2025.

Revised 2025 target: Divert from landfill a minimum of 90 per cent construction and demolition waste.

According to the UK Green Building Council, construction, demolition and excavation in the UK accounts for 60 per cent of material use and waste generation.

Resource efficiency is of paramount importance to us and we seek to maximise the incorporation of key circular economy principles in our schemes to ensure efficient use of natural resources.

From reclaiming and reusing existing material on our sites, to remediating contaminated land, we are continuing to focus on reducing construction waste from community buildings and infrastructure that we deliver by diverting unavoidable materials from landfill.

This year, we slightly amended our 2025 metric to set a unified goal of diverting 90 per cent of both construction and demolition waste from landfill, recognising that it is often difficult to segregate data and distinguish between the two sources.

In 2020/21, 94.5 per cent of construction and demolition waste by weight from community buildings and infrastructure delivered by Urban&Civic was diverted from landfill, exceeding the 2025 target. Alconbury, Houlton, Newark, Priors Hall and Waterbeach all met or surpassed the 2025 target. Only Wintringham did not and we are committed to understanding the particular challenges at this site in order to improve future performance. In the previous year, an average of 98 per cent of construction waste was diverted from landfill, so we are continuing a high level of recognition for and awareness of environment management.

In 2020/21, 94.5 per cent of construction and demolition waste by weight from community buildings and infrastructure delivered by Urban&Civic was diverted from landfill, exceeding the 2025 target.

Case studies – Natural



Connecting residents with the wildlife around them

Helping people to explore the natural world around them – and bringing residents together to forge social connections – is key to creating communities that are sustainable for the long term.

At our Alconbury Weald and Wintringham developments in Cambridgeshire, we arranged for naturalist and TV presenter Mike Dilger to host ecology days, giving locals the chance to explore the green spaces, ponds, natural habitats and wildlife on their doorsteps.

Urban&Civic teamed up with stakeholders including housebuilders on the sites to invite the local community to take part. At the “Wild Wintringham” event, for example, activities included an early morning search for critters, pond dipping in Bret Pond, a butterfly and bug hunt, and an evening bat walk.

Families were delighted to find a grass snake as well as moths of all shapes and sizes, whilst the pond dippers discovered water stick insects, pond skaters and newts. Following the “Wild Weald” event, Mike also recorded a special ecology-themed episode of the “Alconbury Weald Stories” podcast series.

He said: “Keen to see the wildlife thriving just beyond their doorstep, attendances were really impressive for every event, and I trust everyone from eight months to eighty years old went away having gained a deeper appreciation of the power of nature to excite and inspire.”

For those who were unable to attend the events, extensive wayfinding is installed at our developments with information about the features, amenities, ecology and heritage to help residents explore and connect with nature.