



Orbit Group

SUSTAINABILITY ANNUAL REPORT

For the year ended 31 March 2023




Maintaining our communal green spaces




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INTRODUCTION FROM OUR GROUP CHAIR

The last few years have seen unprecedented disruption on a global scale - from the lasting impact of the pandemic, the devastation of the war in Ukraine, to a global energy crisis.

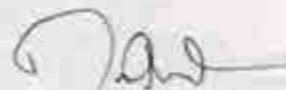
In the UK alone we've seen rapid increases in energy prices and significant cost-of-living pressures; strikes and industrial action, and supply chains struggling with labour and resources shortages; and extreme weather with droughts, storms, unseasonal heat, intense cold and flooding. Securing a sustainable future - environmental, societal, and economic - is critical to the ongoing success of the UK and the broader community, and this has never been more apparent.

As a socially driven, commercially minded organisation, sustainability is rooted in our mission and values. Our vision for creating sustainable, socially diverse, and economically viable communities is at the heart of all we do and sets us apart from conventional businesses. As a not-for-profit, we invest directly back into our homes, our services to support customers, and our communities, all to create positive social and environmental impact.

The health and wellbeing of our colleagues continues to sit at the core of our business. Our #ThisIsMe wellbeing programme has continued to go from strength to strength, providing access to a range of multimedia resources and support tools, as well as our Healthy Mind First Aiders and Employee Assistance Programme.

Whilst sustainability has been intrinsic in our work since we began, it has only been formally reported on in the last three years with the launch of our Sustainability Strategy, but we are already making strong progress on the commitments made.

In the last twelve months we have shared our Biodiversity Approach, which commits us to the Global Biodiversity Framework's 30 by 30 target, launched our Sustainable Finance Framework and embedded sustainability performance throughout our operations. Much work is still to be delivered as we maintain our strong momentum, and I am proud to share with you the results of the last twelve months of work delivered by all Orbit colleagues.



David Weaver
Group Board Chair and Chair of Treasury Board



INTRODUCTION FROM OUR SUSTAINABILITY STEERING GROUP CHAIR

This is our third annual sustainability report, and I am proud with the positive progress we have continued to make.

As an organisation, we have reduced Orbit's carbon footprint by 38.5% since recording its baseline in 2018-2019; launched our Sustainable Finance Framework and agreed our first sustainability-linked financing facility, both of which are aligned to our commitment to delivering social value for our communities and achieving our net zero carbon targets.

Supporting our people agenda, we have launched a new, updated Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and a comprehensive programme of activity to narrow our gender and ethnicity pay gaps.

As our customers have faced increasing financial pressures, our teams have supported over 9,500 people to remain in their homes; helped customers to manage a combined total of £1.5 million of debt; made over 5,000 positive interventions through our Better Days programme, providing access to health and wellbeing and financial, digital and employment services; and delivered an extensive cost-of-living support programme including advice events, food and fuel vouchers, digital support and partnerships with National Energy Action and Citizens Advice to help those who are really struggling.

Amidst all of this, we have achieved ISO 14001:2015 Environmental Management System accreditation by the British Standards Institute (BSI). Achieving this is the culmination of more than 18 months of work and a strong endorsement of our environmental management approach.

We have collaborated with colleagues, customers, and partners to revise our Sustainability Strategy and begin work on a new Sustainable Supplier Charter for our supply chain. The Charter will outline our commitments in the areas of ethical business conduct, environmental sustainability, human rights, diversity and inclusion and social value along with our expectations of our suppliers.

I believe this is a tremendous result and am proud to see the continued commitment of all at Orbit as we work to achieve our sustainability and net zero goals.

But, as ever, we must maintain our momentum. So, for the year ahead, we have identified three priority areas to focus on which will see us continue to progress achieving our long-term Sustainability commitments:

- Continuing our work towards transitioning to a circular business model where resources are sourced, produced, used, and disposed of sustainably, we will be developing our Waste Strategy and targets.
- Embedding our Sustainability Strategy to ensure we are all delivering upon our commitments.
- And, whilst we already have a robust approach to risk management and business resilience, over the next twelve months we will be working to achieve certification ISO 22301 in Business Resilience Management Systems to ensure best practice in the protection, prevention, preparation, response, and recovery from disruptive incidents if they arise.

All Orbit colleagues have contributed substantially to the implementation of our Sustainability Strategy, and the progress that we have made reflects the clear leadership of the team and the passion and commitment of all our colleagues in reducing our environmental impacts and becoming a more responsible business.



Afzal Ismail
Group Director of Corporate Services



OUR SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

Our Sustainability Strategy aligns with our corporate vision and strategy to lead in building thriving communities. For us, this is about meeting people’s needs now and, in the future, whilst playing our part in the global response to climate change.

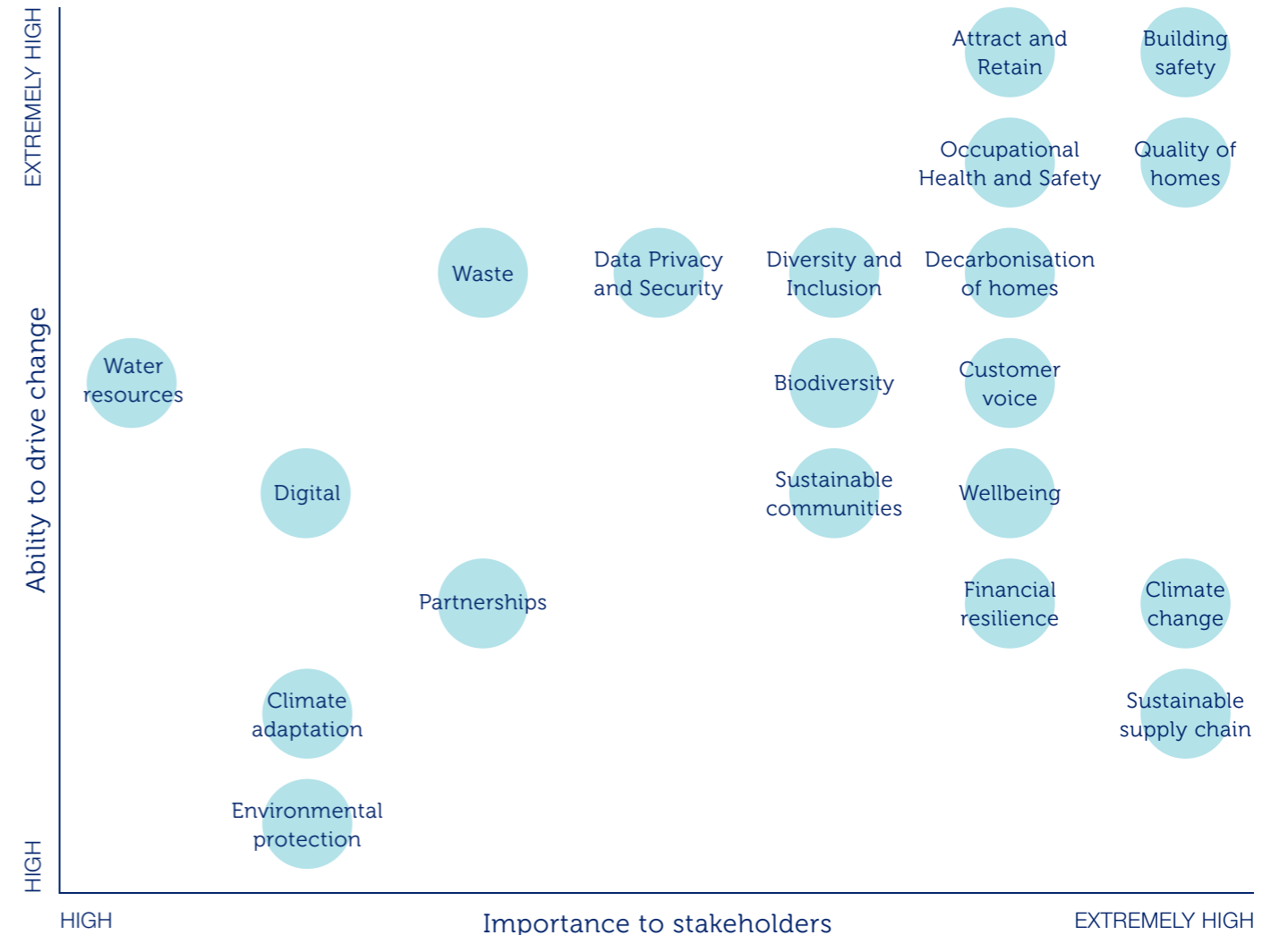
We recognise that this is not a finite task and since publishing our Sustainability Strategy in 2021 much has changed. Events such as the UN Climate Change Conference COP26 (Conference of the Parties) and the UN Convention on Biological Diversity COP15 have increased the focus worldwide on the issue of climate change and the challenge we all face to keep 1.5 degrees within reach. Our updated Sustainability Strategy has been developed in partnership with our customers and colleagues to ensure that everything we do maximises our positive social and environmental impacts and provides an accurate reflection of our ambition to drive real change.

To help refine our updated Sustainability Strategy, we have produced a new materiality assessment through a series of workshops with colleagues and customers. The purpose of the materiality assessment is to identify topics that are important to all of us and where we can have the greatest influence in delivering progress. This helps ensure our targets within our Sustainability Strategy has a meaningful impact upon the needs of our internal and external stakeholders.



Volunteer planting in our green spaces to help biodiversity

Materiality map



Click here to view our Sustainability Strategy



Our strategy comprises four themes, each of which sets out our key objectives and is underpinned by a conscious approach to our supply chain:

			
<h3>Our Customers</h3>	<h3>Quality Homes and Places</h3>	<h3>Our Planet</h3>	<h3>Our People</h3>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with our customers to shape our services and involve them in the decisions that affect their homes and communities • Support our customers to maintain their tenancy and fulfil their potential • Invest into our communities to deliver social value 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide high quality, affordable homes • Invest in the decarbonisation of our homes • Provide safe, healthy places to live • Create sustainable living environments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental stewardship to drive positive change • Climate action to become net zero carbon • Enhancement of outdoor spaces to promote biodiversity • Sustainable consumption to achieve a Zero Waste, circular model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create inspiring leaders and maximise our colleagues career satisfaction • Provide high quality, safe working environments • Create a diverse and inclusive workplace

Our targets

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with 1,000 customers across strategic Your Voice activities by 2025 • Implement 90 improvements from strategic Your Voice activities/projects by 2025 • Achieve 15,000 customer support interventions through Better Days services by 2025 • Ensure 80% of customers achieve a positive outcome through our Better Days services annually • Deliver £100 million in social value for our customers and communities by 2025 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building 4,210 new affordable homes by 2025* • 100% of our properties to be EPC C or above by 2030 • Implementing International standards ISO 22301 and 19650 by 2025 • Net Zero Carbon in our homes before 2050 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To become Net Zero Carbon in our own operations (Scope 1 and 2) by 2030 • To become Net Zero Carbon in our housing and supply chain (Scope 3) before 2050 • For 30% of our outdoor spaces to be enabling nature's recovery by 2030 • To reduce avoidable waste generated by 15% per direct build plot by 2030 • To send zero non-hazardous waste to landfill or incineration by 2030 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To reduce our gender pay gap by 15% against a 2021-22 baseline by 2030 • Ensure our colleagues share our values, remaining above 75% in our employee engagement survey for 'purpose' • Ensure our colleagues have confidence in our leadership, working towards 75% or above in our employee engagement survey for 'leadership' by 2030 • Colleague satisfaction to remain above 75% in our employee engagement survey • RoSPA level 5 quality and safety audit by 2027
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*Reduced from an initial target of 4,429 in response to market changes and economic climate


2022/23 Performance tracking

2020/21 2021/22 2022/23

<h3>Our Customers</h3>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with 1,000 customers across strategic Your Voice activities from 2022 to 2025 New target Implement 90 improvements from strategic Your Voice activities/projects by 2025 New target Achieve 15,000 customer support interventions by 2025 Ensure 80% of customers achieve a positive outcome through our Better Days services annually Deliver £100 million in social value for our customers and communities by 2025
<h3>Quality Homes and Places</h3>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building 4,210 new affordable homes by 2025* 100% of our properties to be EPC C or above by 2030
<h3>Our Planet</h3>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To become Net Zero Carbon in our own operations (Scope 1 and 2) by 2030 For 30% of our outdoor spaces to be enabling nature's recovery by 2030 To reduce avoidable waste generated by 15% per direct build plot by 2030 New target To send zero non-hazardous waste to landfill or incineration by 2030 Baseline 93%
<h3>Our People</h3>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To reduce our gender pay gap by 15% against a 2021-22 baseline by 2030 Baseline 19.4% Colleague satisfaction to remain above 75% in our employee engagement survey Baseline 86% Ensure our colleagues have confidence in our leadership, working towards 75% and above in our employee engagement survey for 'leadership' by 2030 Baseline 55% Ensure our colleagues share our values, remaining above 75% in our employee engagement survey for 'purpose' Baseline 78%

*Reduced from an initial target of 4,429 in response to market changes and economic climate

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

 Click this icon on the below highlights for further information



MAKING NET ZERO CARBON REAL FOR OUR CUSTOMERS

We continue to invest in the energy efficiency of our homes and have committed that 100% of our existing homes will be EPC band C or above by 2030. We have already made good progress against this target with 83.54% of our homes rated EPC C or above. All of our new homes currently deliver an EPC rating of B or above.

This year we completed work on a £3.6 million pilot decarbonisation project to upgrade the energy efficiency of 69 homes in and around Stratford-upon-Avon which had an EPC rating of D or below, via a whole house retrofit approach. The scheme was part of the government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Demonstrator project and received £1.45 million in government funding, which was combined with a further £2.2 million investment from Orbit.

Each of the homes was retrofitted to a high standard, making homes more comfortable, warmer and affordable for customers, in addition to generating carbon savings. The Demonstrator project has also enabled us to develop a clear understanding of both the high level and practical challenges of whole house retrofit decarbonisation projects and the costs of achieving net zero carbon.

Following the success of the Demonstrator we have begun work on a further £6m project to upgrade the Energy Performance of 136 properties across the West Midlands after securing funding from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Wave 1. Working in partnership with the West Midlands Combined Authority and Stratford-on-Avon District Council, we are utilising £1.4m of Wave 1 funding, along with our own further investment of £4.6m, to deliver warmer homes for tenants, reduce fuel bills and significantly lower carbon emissions.

We have also secured funding from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Wave 2.1, which will enable us to improve the energy performance of an additional 212 properties.

We are committed to continuing to monitor performance to inform our future works and ensure customers remain happy with the works that have been completed.



[Click here to view our Net Zero Carbon report](#)

2,500 Days

We partnered with CIH to produce *2500 Days - Navigating the path to net zero carbon homes with our customers*, our follow up report to *Working with customers to make net zero carbon a reality*. The report reveals the challenge of driving the behavioural changes to achieve net zero carbon goals at a time when residents are focused on the current cost-of-living crisis.

From talking to over 700 hundred households, it is clear that awareness and understanding of net zero carbon has not increased significantly among social housing residents since Orbit's inaugural report.

The report sheds light onto the creep of fuel poverty in the UK, with a greater proportion (80%) spending more than 10% of their income on energy costs compared to 71% in 2021. There has also been a 50% increase in the number of customers going without heat to save money in the past 12 months.

Just one in four respondents (26%) said they were clear on what net zero means compared to 22% in 2021. However, concern regarding climate change has increased, with 38% saying that they were 'very concerned' compared to 30% in 2021.

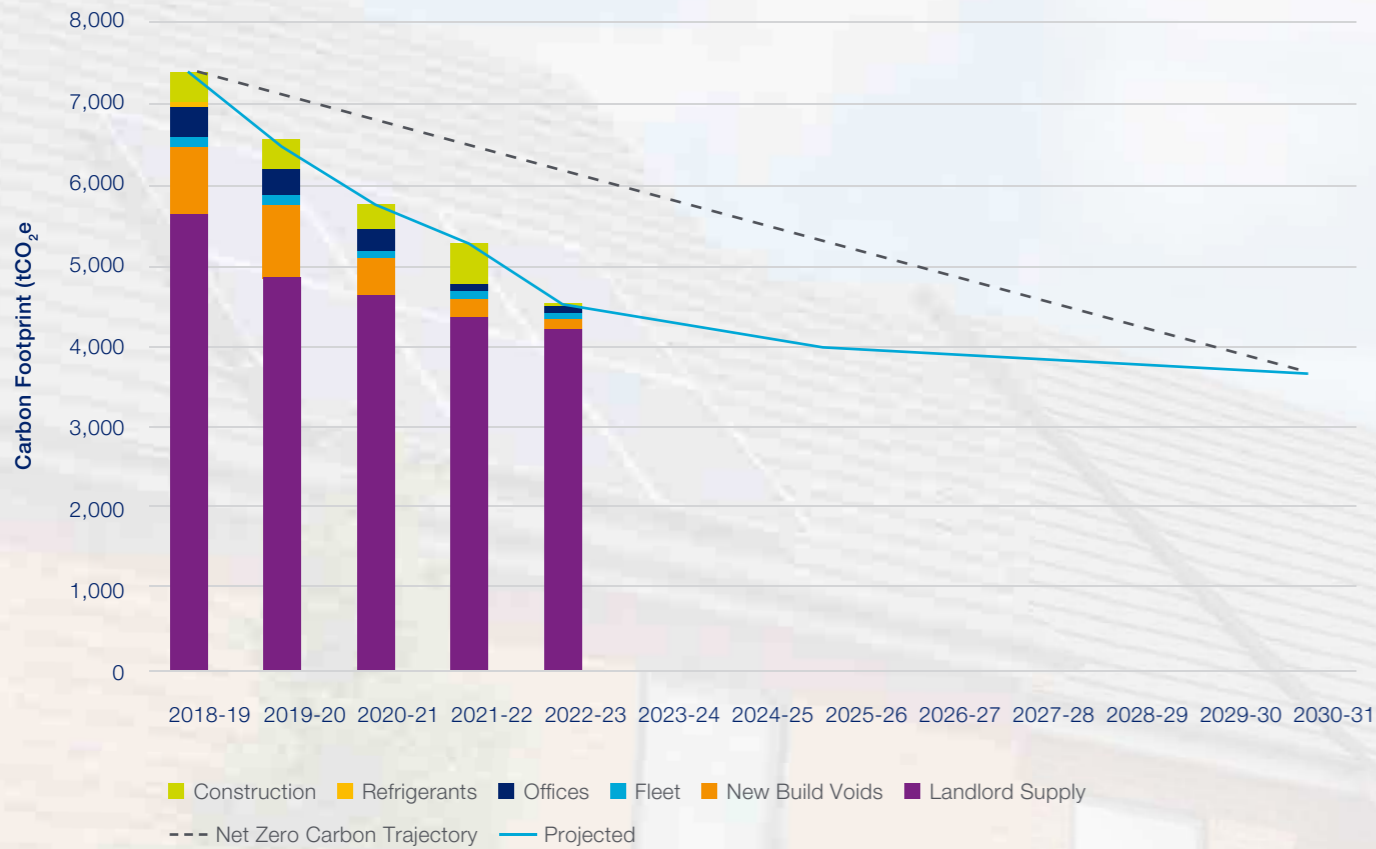
Gavin Smart, chief executive, Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH), adds: **“With 20 per cent of UK carbon emissions linked to the residential sector, the current cost-of-living crisis is a stark reminder of the need to move to net zero carbon as fast as possible, retrofitting homes so that they are no longer leaking energy. The best way to reduce the amount people must spend to heat their homes, now and in the future, is to invest in energy efficiency measures. The findings and recommendations in this report offer excellent insight into how housing providers can effectively work towards decarbonisation action plans with residents. CIH are pleased to be involved in this important work by Orbit Group. As the professional body for housing, it's our role to help make a positive difference across the sector and help to provide everybody working in housing with the skills and knowledge needed to deliver on decarbonisation goals to ensure that everybody has an affordable, warm, safe place to call home.”**

Orbit customer and Demonstrator participant, John, commented:

“The work started with the loft being insulated, windows and doors being changed, and rendering being put on the outside. It literally did feel warmer as soon as it was done. Hopefully it will be cheaper on my pocket. If anyone is approached to have it done, I would tell them to go for it”



Decarbonisation journey 2018-2030



Further improving energy efficiency

In 2022-23, Orbit's total carbon footprint was 4,545 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e), which captures our total scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions from our offices, fleet, landlord supply and new build voids, as well as our construction activities. In the past year we have reduced our carbon footprint by 14%, with a 38.5% reduction on our 2018/19 baseline year.

This further reduction has been driven primarily by the transition from red diesel to hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) in our direct build operations and minor energy efficiency improvements in

our communal areas. This builds upon the reduction generated by agile working, procurement of REGO-certified (Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin) electricity and colleague engagement through our Orbit Earth environmental programme.

We are also rolling out a range of projects to further improve energy efficiency for our customers including LED lighting replacements and solar PV (Photovoltaics) installations at several of our extra care and sheltered schemes, and a programme of energy awareness seminars.



Energy efficient, solar powered homes at our Erith Park development in the London borough of Bexley



Case study

We recently upgraded all the communal lighting at our Ladywell Court Independent Living scheme, which has 36 units. The previous lighting lacked controls, was illuminated 24 hours a day, and used inefficient fluorescent lighting. The new lighting utilises more efficient LED technology and has integrated sensors that detect occupancy and natural daylight. As a result, the electricity use for communal lighting has been reduced by 85% and we are able to further support the cost-of-living for these customers via a reduction in their service charge.



Cost-of-living crisis

Our sector-leading Better Days programme has been developed and commissioned by behavioural insight and marketing specialists, along with our customers and colleagues, to ensure that we understand the day-to-day lives of our customers. The programme offers services which are available to every customer and designed to support financial inclusion, mental wellbeing, employability and skills and digital support.

We have seen first-hand the real-life impacts that the continual cost-of-living crisis has had on our customers and have made it our focus to listen to and act upon the challenges that they are facing. We've been able to respond with agility to these issues as they have emerged and develop immediate and long-term improvements to our services. Last year, more than 5,000 Orbit customers, alongside a cohort of non-Orbit customers living in and around our Orbit communities, accessed our Better Days services, and some of the extra measures we introduced to further support customers through the cost-of-living crisis included:


- A new Welfare Benefits Advice service with the capacity to advise customers who are most in need, reducing financial exclusion and increasing customer income
- A new online 'cost-of-living hub' includes information about government and local council support, lowering energy usage and energy support, debt advice, budget planning, payday loans (loan sharks), cost of living scams, food affordability and employability upskilling
- In partnership with National Energy Action we offered specialist energy advice and our new 'Winter Warmth' packs to help keep customers warm, safe and well this winter. Alongside customers receiving specialist energy advice phone support
- Launching Skillzminer (an employability and skills portal) on our customer hub website to help people increase their skills and job quality leading to financial stability and moving people into higher paid roles to keep up with the rising cost-of-living
- Working with new and existing customers to test a new package of grants for essentials such as furniture, furnishings, digital connectivity and household appliances, to help bring them out of furniture poverty and support energy efficiency


Led by our customers, people will get the support they need to gain skills and knowledge such as financial numeracy, confidence with money and a sense of control over short and long-term money management, empowering them to be resilient to both expected and unexpected life events and changes in circumstances.

Our Customer Promise includes a pledge to work with our customers to help them to have a 'Better Day. In practice, this means being there for our customers when they need us and helping them to access a raft of measures to help them through the challenges they are facing now – and tomorrow.

Providing affordable housing is a core purpose of Orbit. Across all our property types (room with shared facilities to 4 bedroom properties) our customers on average save 46.9% compared to private renting and an average of 30.6% less than the Local Housing allowance ensuring our customers can afford their rents no matter what their situation.

“ I didn't know Housing Associations could be like this – I made one phone call and they've stepped in with support. I feel looked after – it's a bizarre feeling ”

 [Click here to view our cost of living hub](#)

 [Click here for more information on grants](#)

“ You've taken a huge weight off my shoulders. I don't think you realise what a difference you make ”



Supported **5,059** Customer Support Interventions via Better Days



Provided **635** vulnerable customers with telephone energy support via our partnership with National Energy Action



Distributed **698** support packs (containing items to help keep customers warm and well) through our programme of Winter Warmth engagement events



Saved customers a collective potential total of **£242,642** via our Energy Advice Service and Winter Warmth packs



Generated an estimated average energy saving of **£382** per customer supported via our partnership with National Energy Action



Supported **194** customers identify **£1,258,955** of unclaimed benefits and grants



£51,106 uptake in fuel and food vouchers



Supported **676** customers with debt advice from PayPlan, helping customers to manage a total debt of **£1,493,745**



Delivered **180** webinars to frontline colleagues to raise their awareness of simple energy-saving measures and the grants and support available to both themselves and our customers

“ I couldn't afford to put food on the table before I spoke to PayPlan ”



Increasing engagement

Our Customer Engagement Strategy, Your Voice, is focused on collaboration and co-creation with customers to shape our services and on the issues which matter to them.

This year we founded our 'Customer Engagement Strategic Committee' to enhance our governance and ensure the voice of our customers is truly embedded in our decisions and actions going forward.

To ensure we are capturing underrepresented voices, we have introduced a number of diversity groups such as LGBTQ+, disability and future voices. Customers work with us to feedback on the services they receive, complete equality assessments and help to prioritise our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion programme.



Performance

- **89** service improvements identified with action plans in place to implement
- **78** Customer Engagement activities delivered
- Increased the number of customers we engage with by **62%**
- Average Net Promoter Score of **61** (up 4 points from last year). The Net promoter Score (NPS) is a customer experience tool to measure the strength of a customer's loyalty to a business. The results are scored on a scale ranging from -100 on the low end to +100 on the high end.



Customer giving feedback on the retrofit works that have been undertaken in their home



IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF OUR CUSTOMERS' HOMES AND OUTDOOR SPACES

Our environmental sustainability programme works to actively enhance our environment by creating and improving places for our communities to thrive.

In support of this goal, we have published our Biodiversity Approach which sets out our commitment to manage 30% of our outdoor green spaces for nature by 2030 and has been developed with the support of the Wildlife Trusts to align with their vision to protect at least 30% of our land and sea to allow for nature's recovery by 2030 – making more space for wildlife to recover and thrive again. These improved green spaces will provide enhanced opportunities for our customers to have access to nature and enjoy areas for play and recreation.

The improvements we are making include simple but impactful initiatives like planting hedgerows, shrubs, and wildflowers to benefit wildlife whilst provide seating and other means of allowing customers to use green spaces. Our approach is scientific and practical, and we make sure customers are engaged throughout our biodiversity journey.

To date, we have improved eight estates with plans to continue scaling up the programme moving forward. Currently 18.5% of our outdoor green spaces meet the supporting nature's recovery criteria.



[Click here to view our Biodiversity Approach](#)



Green Spaces Advisory Board

We are proud to be a co-founder of the Green Spaces Advisory Board, a pioneering cross-industry collaboration of seven housing associations and a leading grounds maintenance provider, aiming to unlock the potential of green spaces through actions, thought leadership, and stimulating collaboration. Under this we have conducted workshops and other engagements that have reached hundreds of practitioners across the built environment, sharing learnings from our approach and best practice around its focus on nature, people and scale.

Green Plaque

We were also delighted that our Orbit Homes Melbourne Avenue development in Ramsgate became the first new build homes development to be awarded the national 'Green Plaque' environmental accreditation in partnership with WW Martin, a property developer. The accolade was presented in recognition of the homes' demanding sustainability standards that demonstrate environmental and sustainability best practice within the construction industry.

Homes for all the community at Mill View

Our new Orbit Homes development, Mill View in Dereham, has homes for all people and wildlife too, with hedgehog friendly fencing and 'Hedgehog Highways', bat tubes and bird boxes, as well as two log piles underneath hedgerows to provide hedgehogs with day nests and potential hibernation opportunities for reptiles and amphibians. In addition, we are undertaking nearly a mile of improvement works to the footpath along the public right of way behind the site, so that the route can be used by the wider community to enjoy the surrounding trees and natural grassland.

Building Buddies

Launched by Orbit Homes in early 2023, our exciting new 'Building Buddies' educational programme gives primary school children first-hand insight into how homes are built.

As part of the initiative, children aged 7 to 11 are invited to experience a hands-on site visit, where they can develop their knowledge and skills by safely exploring the site, speaking to our development team, learning the importance of health and safety, and discovering how brand-new houses are constructed and the exciting careers in housebuilding. Children also have the opportunity to build a home of their own, with a special 3D model house, whilst teachers can also download a support pack and classroom resources.



Orbit Homes recruits Building Buddies for new educational programme





Case study

St Marks Court in Rugby is an Independent Living Scheme, designed exclusively for older adults, which had large areas of open and unused grass spaces, with clear areas for improvement.

We added wildflower areas to two sections of unused grass, which reduced mowing regimes, enhanced raised beds, installed climbing plants, and incorporated coppicing ash and elder young trees, which were then used to create a log pile in the existing woodland area.

We also held a workshop in partnership with The Wildlife Trusts where residents were able to make their own willow fat ball feeder and help install bird boxes and insect hotels.

23% of St Marks Court green spaces were categorised as helping to enable nature’s recovery during its baseline assessment. This increased to 56% following our improvements. Not this benefit the local wildlife, but it also helped enhance the wellbeing of our residents and encourage social interaction, which was particularly important following the pandemic.

“ Due to the changes on the estate my health condition has improved ”



Volunteering to help the Wildlife Trusts in improving our green spaces and biodiversity



HEALTH & SAFETY

We're proud of our strong culture of health and safety and the rigorous approach colleagues take to governance, risk and compliance.

Our new Building Safety Strategy , details our plan to keep our homes safe for our customers. Implementation is well underway and we are on track to meet the requirements of the new Building Safety Act by the due dates. We also remain in regular conversation with government officials about developing policy in this area.

We remain the only national affordable housing provider to have achieved BS9997 British Standards in Fire risk management systems and were this year awarded a Merit for the second consecutive year for our commitment to customer and property safety by the British Safety Council in its globally recognised International Safety Awards.

Furthermore, Orbit achieved a Gold Medal Award from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) for the fifth consecutive year in recognition of its ongoing commitment to health and safety excellence.

This year we also invited RoSPA to carry out a Quality Safety Audit (QSA) of our Health and Safety Management System applied across the Group.

The final QSA scores show that Orbit achieved an overall Health and Safety Performance Rating (HSPR) of 82.2% and a level 4 audit score. This is an excellent score given level 5 is the highest QSA score achievable and a significant improvement on our level 2 score in 2019 QSA. The Health and Safety Team will work closely with colleagues across Orbit to implement the recommendations to take us to a level 5 over the course of next 3 to 5 years.

Meanwhile, our newly launched Building Safety Communications Strategy, including a new internal podcast is helping to improve awareness and understanding of colleagues across the organisation.



Awards

- British Safety Council International Safety Award 2023: Merit
- RoSPA Gold Medal Award
- RoSPA Health and Safety Team of the Year Award 2023: Highly Commended
- Most Innovative Property Service' Award from the National Housing Maintenance Forum (NHMF) as well as 'Delegates Choice Award'



Health & Wellbeing

The health and wellbeing of our colleagues is essential to not only provide a consistent service to our customers but also to ensure our colleagues are getting the most from their career with Orbit

Our #ThisIsMe wellbeing programme provided a series of talks and webinars which saw us partner with organisations including Henpicked, Mind and Aviva to discuss, raise awareness and provide support on subjects such as menopause, mental health, and the challenges presented by the cost-of-living crisis. In addition our Healthy Mind First Aiders and Employee Assistance Programme have supported our colleagues with mental wellbeing and financial advice.

Additionally, all colleagues are eligible for our private medical cover, and we also offer a free, private, online GP service accessible any time. This is incredibly valuable for colleagues in the current context and the pressure on the health system.

We know planning in life is extremely important and to offer peace of mind, should the worst happen, our colleagues are all eligible for a life assurance benefit as well.

With the additional support we are offering, we have seen a reduction in colleague sickness days per employee from 7.5 days to 7.1 days annually.



We have also taken specific steps to support our colleagues through the cost-of-living crisis by:

- Introducing a scaled pay review in April 2022
- Giving colleagues a £100 Christmas gift card
- Launching a colleague communications campaign to offer support including financial wellbeing webinars
- Increasing business mileage rates to ensure we are aligned to HMRC recommended rates and changes to our business travel policy to address the increased cost of fuel
- Providing retail discounts available through Stars in Orbit

Customers receive a Winter Warmth support pack at an energy advice event



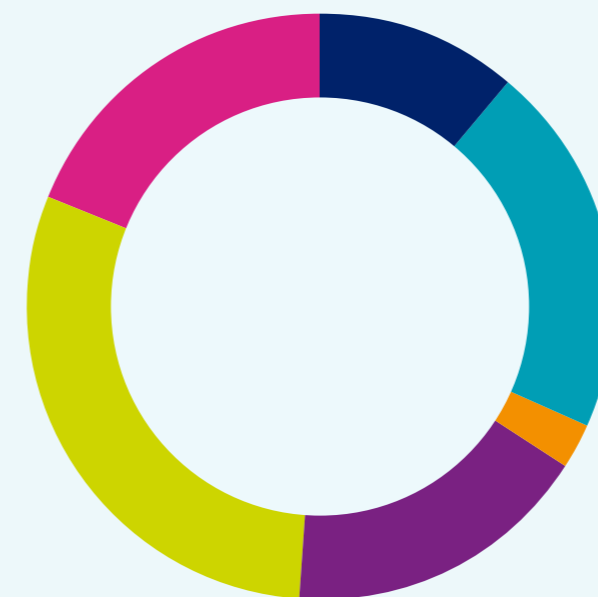
Delivering social value

Social value enables us to measure the financial value for each improvement we make for a customer or a community. We calculate this value for all our services using industry recognised social value tools including the Social Value Bank (HACT) and National TOMS. This approach allows us to understand the

positive impact we are generating and monitor progress towards our target of delivering £100 million in social value by 2025. We also monitor the Social Return on Investment of our services to ensure they continue to provide value for money for customers.

During 2022/23 we generated a social value of **£19.2 million**. As part of this our tenancy sustainment team supported **312** customers into employment or volunteering and **1,027** customers were supported into training. This generated a total of **£2.5 million** in social value for our customers.

Social value outcomes



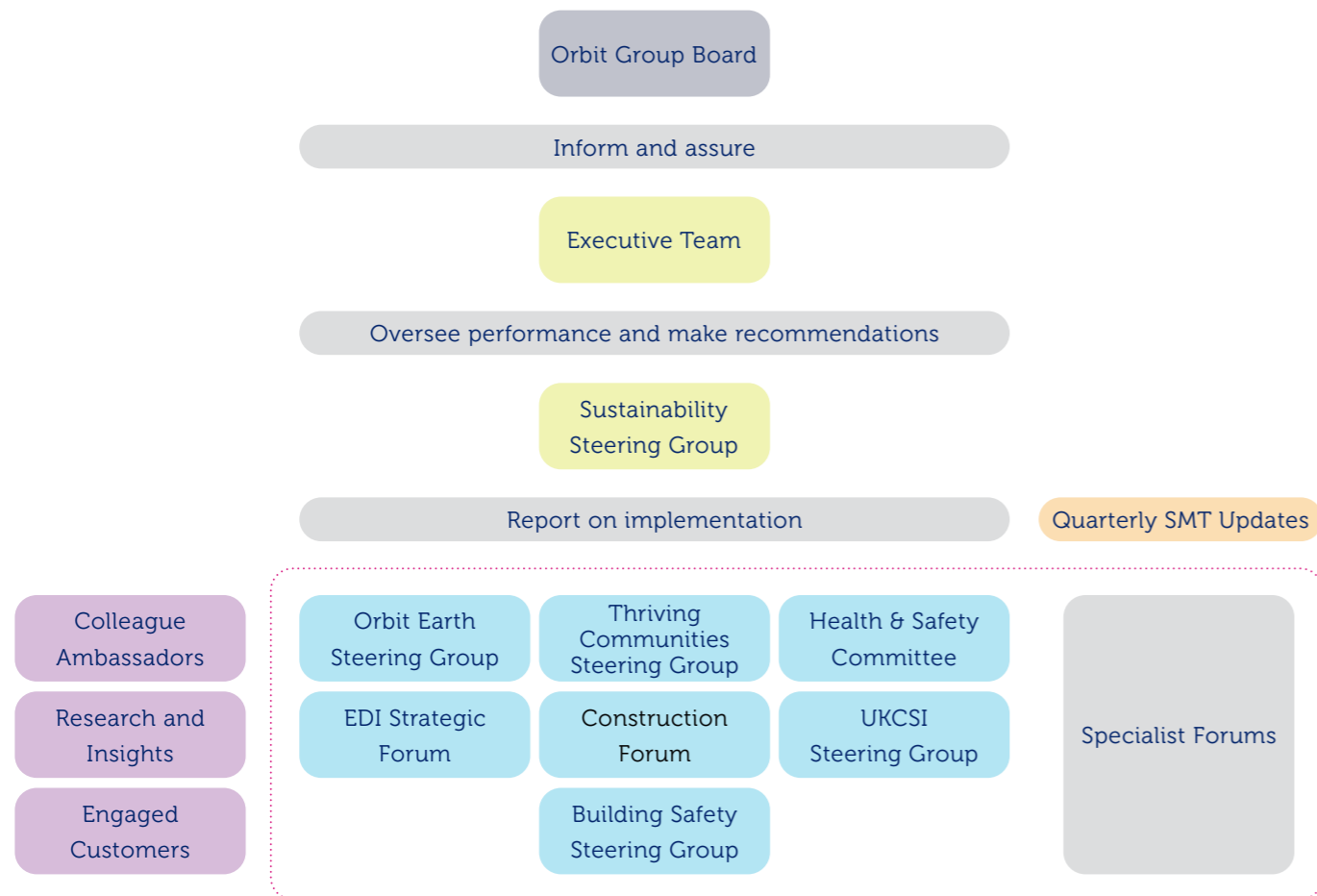
- Homelessness **£2,149,000**
- Employment and training **£3,926,000**
- Youth **£491,000**
- Financial inclusion **£3,230,000**
- Health and wellbeing **£5,758,000**
- Neighbourhoods **£3,560,000**



EMBEDDING SUSTAINABILITY

Our sustainability commitments adhere to our robust performance management framework and are overseen by both our Executive team and Orbit Group Board to ensure we maintain a strategic approach. This is also supported by our Sustainability Steering Group that regularly reviews our Sustainability Strategy to ensure it evolves alongside our vision and values, stakeholder expectations and the external environment.

Regular engagement with our stakeholders and specialist forums, such as our EDI Strategic Forum, Carbon Forum, Health & Safety Forum, continue to evolve our commitments to ensure they remain relevant and sector leading, and to provide input and oversight of our Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing (SRS) and Business in the Community submissions.



Empowering colleagues

Support from our colleagues is key in achieving our sustainability aims, and providing them with knowledge, training and support is a key part of our sustainability approach.

- **125** colleagues completed Orbit's Environmental Sustainability Skills for Managers training. Developed by the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA), this training provides a broad understanding of environmental sustainability principles and the skills needed to implement positive environmental change as individuals, in their teams and the wider organisation
- Over **150** colleagues completed energy awareness training in partnership with Act on Energy and National Energy Action
- **560** colleagues completed Orbit Earth e-learning, 45% of the total workforce

Sustainability Reporting Standards

We are one of 37 housing associations who signed up to be an early adopter of the Sustainability Reporting Standards (SRS). Developed by the Good Economy with input from several housing associations, housing sector specialists and investors, the SRS is a standardised approach for reporting on sustainability across the sector and is made up of core and enhanced metrics for those housing associations who want to report in more detail.

In addition to reporting our performance in our Sustainability Report, we also report on our SRS results on an annual basis.



[Click here to view our supplemental report aligned to the Sustainability Reporting Standard](#)



2023/24 FOCUS

Whilst we have made strong progress against our targets, we recognise there is still much work to be done. Over the next 12 months, we will be focusing on the following:

Embedding our Sustainability Strategy

To further embed our sustainability strategy within the business and ensure it helps to inform business decision-making, we are developing a 'Sustainability Impact Assessment' (SIA) tool, which will be used throughout the business to help colleagues recognise both the social and environmental impacts of their delivery and manage them accordingly.

We need to maintain momentum in engaging with our customers and colleagues and build upon the work we have done together on our sustainability strategy and second net zero carbon report, 2,500 Days, to enable this we will be developing and implementing a sustainability communication plan to ensure our key stakeholders are a part of our sustainability journey.



Two thirds of our greenhouse gas emissions originate in our supply chain, which makes it vital that we work collaboratively to support and challenge our suppliers to reduce their emissions. We have committed to ensuring all of our top suppliers have set out their own net zero carbon commitments by 2025. More than 60% of supplier spend is already covered by a net zero carbon commitment.

Social value

Further embedding social value into the business and capturing relevant data will remain central to our approach going forward and will play a key role in the creation of our 'Social Value Framework' in collaboration with colleagues. This framework will outline how social value can enable the business to make more informed decisions when it comes to sustainability, including:

- where to invest money to have a greater impact on our customers and communities,
- how to effectively align our supply chain social value to have greater impact
- how to better evaluate programmes or projects to determine value-for-money
- how to use social value as a key metric in determining performance throughout a project or programme lifecycle, to enable revaluation of impact if required and shape future delivery

Green spaces advisory board

Orbit is a co-founder of the Green Spaces Advisory Board, created to unlock the potential of green spaces through actions, thought leadership and collaboration. This year, we will conclude the Board's 2-year mission with the publication of our Green Spaces Toolkit for the housing sector. This will pull together in one place all of the best practice drawn together through collaboration with hundreds of practitioners over the past two years. In this way, we hope to contribute towards a positive legacy for nature and residents not only within Orbit but across the UK.

Continuing our energy advisory service

Following the success of our energy advice service with National Energy Action we will be continuing this project for a second year. Fuel poverty and the cost-of-living crisis is still an ongoing issue for our customers, our recent 2500 days report highlights our customers needs. Through continuing this project, we hope to reach and support more of our customers who face dire situations of 'heat or eat' on a daily basis.

Waste

Our new waste commitments will help us to transition to a circular economy where resources are sourced, produced, used, and disposed of sustainably. Our approach will vary according to where waste originates across our organisation, focussing on construction and maintenance, our offices, grounds maintenance and our supply chain. Adopting a life cycle approach where efficiency is optimised, and waste avoided will unlock value for Orbit and our customers whilst reducing our exposure to future resource insecurity.

Sustainable supply chain

Our supply chain partners underpin everything we want to achieve within our Sustainability Strategy. Our relationships with suppliers are based on fairness, transparency, and integrity and we are committed to conducting our business in a way that treats people fairly and creates thriving communities. It is our ambition to be part of a supply chain that is built on these values, and we encourage our suppliers to echo this responsible and sustainable approach within their own supply chains. To encourage this, we have developed a sustainable supplier charter, which is focused on: Business Conduct, Social Value, Diversity, Inclusion & Human Rights and Environmental Sustainability. Over the next year we will be working with our suppliers to integrate this further into our supply chain and will also publish a toolkit of resources to support suppliers take climate action.

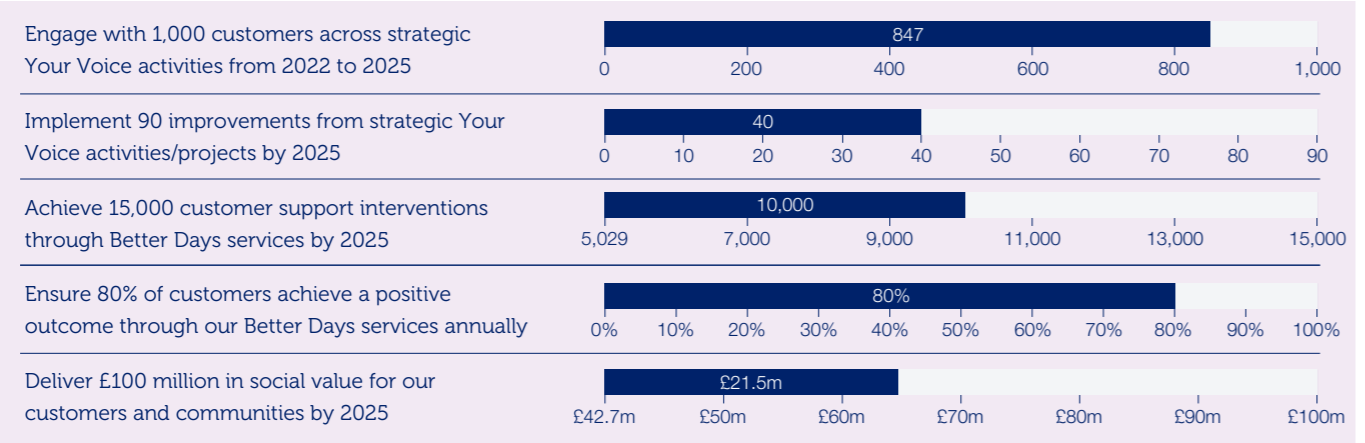


Performance forecast

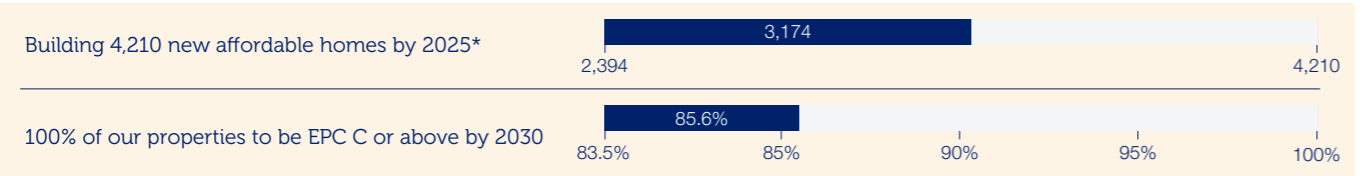
2023/24 forecast



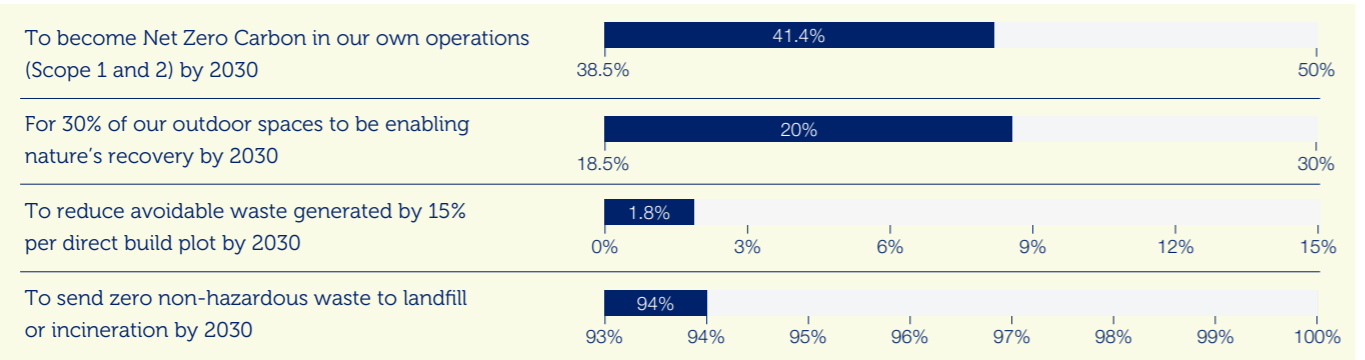
Our Customers



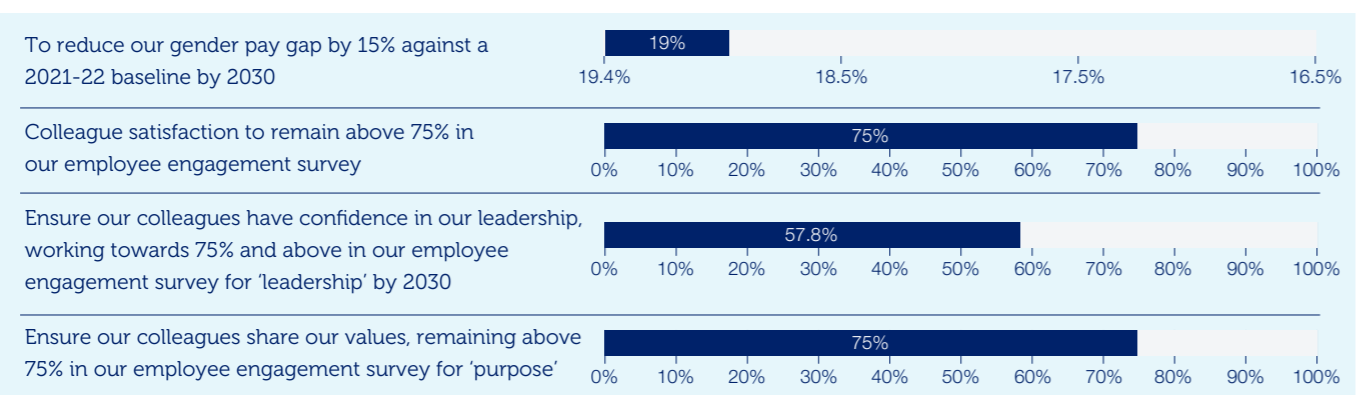
Quality Homes and Places



Our Planet



Our People



*Reduced from an initial target of 4,429 in response to market changes and economic climate



Orbit colleagues on a volunteering day at our Shipston-on-Stour development, helping to enhance green spaces



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