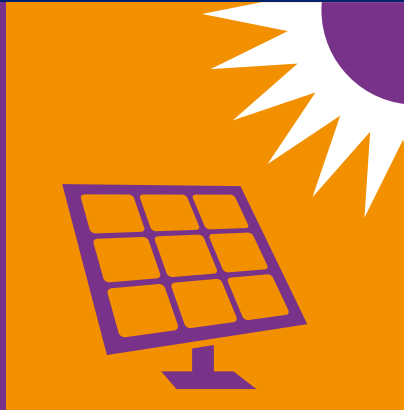




Orbit Group Sustainability Strategy

Ensuring we meet the needs of our customers now, and in the future



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Introduction

Orbit is focused on delivering good quality homes that people can afford, in a place that they are proud to live. Our Sustainability Strategy aligns with our vision and corporate strategy to lead in building thriving communities and has four themes: Our Customers, Quality Homes and Places, Our Planet and Our People. 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 the publishing of our Sustainability Strategy in 2021, much has changed. On a global level, events such as the UN Climate Change Conference COP26 (Conference of the Parties) and the UN Convention on Biological Diversity COP15 have increased focus on the issues of climate change and the challenge to keep limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees within reach.

The war in Ukraine and the after-effects of the pandemic and Brexit continue to impact the economy, supply chains and labour resources, and on a daily basis we are seeing the negative effect of the cost-of-living crisis on our customers who are often struggling with even the most basic of needs. Legislation continues to evolve and, quite rightly, we are seeing a heightened focus on the quality of the homes that the sector provides and our customers should expect.

Against this backdrop we felt it was appropriate to revisit our Sustainability Strategy. The Sustainability Strategy outlined here is therefore an updated version to help us deliver what we want to achieve socially for our customers, communities, colleagues, and environmentally for our planet. Moving forward we anticipate keeping this document live so we are able to respond to changing societal and environmental needs, whilst ensuring it remains true to our core vision of building thriving communities.

In its development we have worked with stakeholders to understand our current environmental and social impact. We have explored the issues that matter to our customers and colleagues, our material impact against those issues, and our ability to affect change. This is the resulting strategy, and their collaboration has been fundamental in shaping the long-term targets that we have committed to achieve.

We believe that by considering sustainability within our day-to-day decision making at every level, and by working in partnership with our customers, colleagues and partners, we can deliver long-lasting positive change on the material issues that affect all of us, and this is what we are setting out to achieve.

We will measure a whole range of outcomes to understand the performance of our Sustainability Strategy. As a holistic measure we will record the impact of this strategy using social value, a recognised metric attributing a financial value to the positive impact a business or organisation has on the economy, communities, and society. It measures both financial and non-financial impact and considers the wellbeing of individuals and communities, social capital created and the environment; for example, the value we experience from professional development, or from living next to green space.

Our strong governance approach will ensure compliance and risk is considered at every stage, we remain on target to deliver our commitments and we are open and transparent in reporting the impact we have in our annual Sustainability Report.



“ Sustainability is integral to our core vision. It is vital that we operate in a socially responsible and environmentally sustainable way and do all we can to help support our customers and create a better society.

Orbit's Sustainability Strategy is embedded within our overarching corporate strategy, and it will be central to achieving our vision: to lead in building thriving communities. But it is essential that we continue to adapt and shape our approach to maximise the positive impact we make as an organisation and to meet the changing challenges our customers and communities face. ”

David Weaver, Chair of Orbit Group



“ My position as Chair of the Sustainability Steering Group and Corporate Services Executive Director puts me in a prime position to have overview and responsibility of how we embed sustainability and continue to make change within this organisation.

I am very proud of the sustainability journey that we have been on, and the achievements made so far. The publishing of our Orbit to Zero net zero carbon roadmap, reducing the carbon footprint of our operations by 33%, and the approval of our new Thriving Communities Strategy, all indicate our intentions to make positive change.

This strategy outlines our plans and commitments for the future to ensure we maintain this momentum, as well as ensuring that sustainability remains integrated within our governance, performance, and risk management frameworks.

With the early adoption of the Sustainability Reporting Standard (SRS) for social housing we have now had the opportunity to learn and reflect on our approach. This has enabled us to strengthen our Sustainability Strategy and commitments to reflect the breadth of work we are already delivering as part of our overall business strategy.

However, there is more that we can do, and we will continue to work with our key stakeholders and like-minded organisations to drive positive environmental and social impact. ”

Afzal Ismail, Chair of Orbit Sustainability Steering Group and Corporate Services Executive Director



Our Sustainability Strategy

Orbit's Sustainability Strategy has been developed to ensure that everything we do at Orbit maximises our positive social and environmental impacts. It is an enabler of wider corporate strategy and aims to provide a holistic view of our sustainability approach across the business. It is organised into the four themes: Our Customers, Quality Homes and Places, Our Planet and Our People.

Each theme sets out our key objectives, which are explained in more detail throughout this strategy. Our supply chain underpins everything we do and so is inextricably linked with the delivery of all of these objectives.



Our Customers

- 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



Quality Homes and Places

- Provide high quality, affordable homes
- Invest in the decarbonisation of our homes
- Provide safe, healthy places to live
- Create sustainable living environments



Our Planet

- 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



Our People

- Create inspiring leaders and maximise our colleagues' career satisfaction
- Provide high quality, safe working environments
- Create a diverse and inclusive workplace

Developing Our Strategy

Orbit last completed a materiality assessment in 2020. At that time, we identified energy and climate change, future homes, diversity and inclusion and social value as our most material issues. To refine our strategy, we have produced a new materiality assessment through a series of workshops with colleagues and customers.

We then cross referenced these with external sources such as the Sustainability Reporting Standard (SRS) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG's), to create a comprehensive list of material issues that were relevant to Orbit. These were then mapped based on financial and regulatory considerations, the importance to our stakeholders and our ability to drive change.

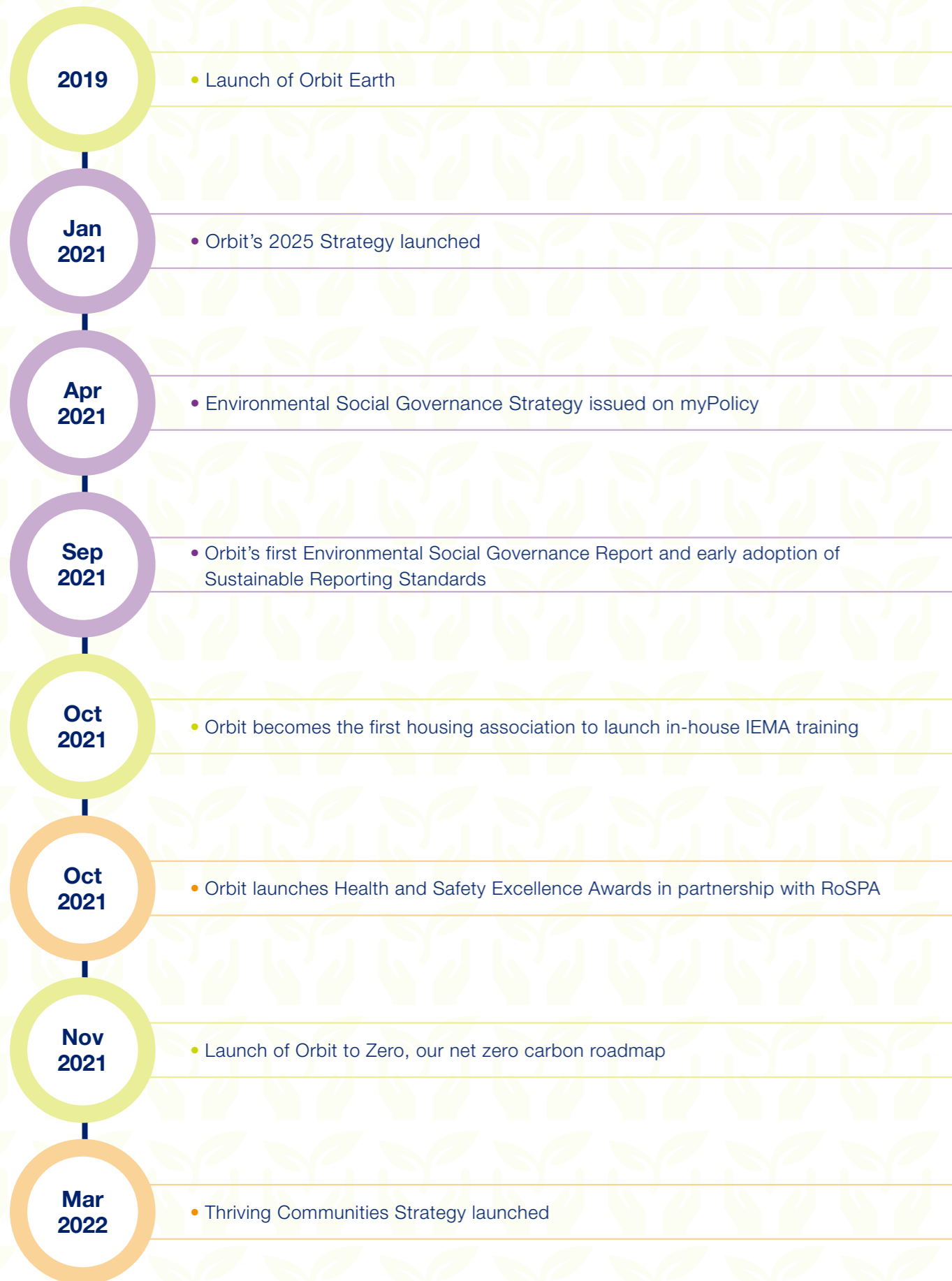
Those issues in the top right of the chart below are the most material issues for Orbit and will be prioritised accordingly. However, all issues are important and will still be reflected in our strategy.

This exercise will be repeated every three years, or when a significant change within Orbit or the external environment triggers an earlier review, to ensure we are acknowledging the changes in the external environment and the importance of the issues to our stakeholders.

Click on the below circles to navigate to the relevant page within the strategy



Our sustainability story so far





Our Customers

Our customers are at the heart of everything we do. It's for them that we build and maintain high quality homes, build thriving communities, and work to improve the quality of the environment for current and future generations.

Our Sustainability Strategy has three customer-focused objectives:



Customer engagement

- Working with our customers to shape our services



Customer support

- Supporting our customers to maintain their tenancy and fulfil their potential



Customer impact

- Delivering social value to our customers and communities

Our Targets:

- 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 by 2025 through our Better Days services
- 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

Customer 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, it is based on three core programmes:

Individual Engagement

Providing individual feedback on the services customers receive

- Real time feedback
- Complaints
- Perception-based research
- Research and insight projects
- Social media

Local Engagement

Providing opportunities for customers to influence their neighbourhoods, schemes, and communities

- Estate inspections
- Independent scheme meetings
- Residents' associations
- Better Days events

Strategic Engagement

Helping to co-create our plans and strategic priorities

- Scrutiny exercises
- Focus groups
- Surveys, polls and discussion forums
- Conferences and events



Our targets are to engage with 1,000 customers across strategic 'Your Voice' activities by 2025, ensuring we implement 90 improvements from their suggestions.

To ensure our Engaged Customer Group represents all members of our customer community, we are piloting new approaches to attract and retain those who are currently underrepresented, and have launched our 'Principles for Engagement', which clearly outlines what customers can expect by taking part. Our four Principles for Engagement are:



Creating safe and inclusive spaces



Being transparent, open, and honest



Making engagement easy



Empowering our people



In 2021, Orbit won the Outstanding Tenant Engagement Award, awarded by Tpas, England's leading tenant engagement experts.



[Click here for more information](#)

Customer Support



We aim to support our customers to maintain their tenancies and fulfil their potential by helping to remove barriers that might be created by worklessness, debt, poor mental health, or other social and economic issues.

Delivered through our Better Days programme, our customer support interventions include universal services, which are available to every customer and designed to support financial inclusion, mental wellbeing, employment and skills, and digital support. They also include targeted local activity in defined placemaking areas to improve the social, environmental, and economic prospects of these communities. We intend to support 15,000 customers by 2025 ensuring a minimum of 80% of them achieve a positive outcome annually. A positive outcome is one where the customer is happy, as indicated through feedback forms.

Supporting Financial Resilience

To help our customers with the current cost-of-living crisis and future financial pressures, we deliver a number of programmes dedicated to improving financial health:

Welfare Benefit Service

This service provides customers with coaching on becoming more financially resilient, as well as support around income maximisation with welfare benefits advice, form filling support and appeals support, and providing a dedicated telephone support service for our customers.

Just About Managing (JAM)

Delivered in collaboration with Money Advice Plus and Penderel's Trust, this programme is designed to provide the skills to become financially resilient and improve financial capability. It teaches customers how to make informed decisions around their finances and how certain behaviour changes can improve their financial circumstances.

Debt Advice Service

Delivered in partnership with PayPlan, which is accredited and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority, the service explains the options available to customers, including debt re-payment, Debt Relief Orders, Individual Voluntary Arrangements and, if the customer wishes, will also manage debt on their behalf.

National Energy Action

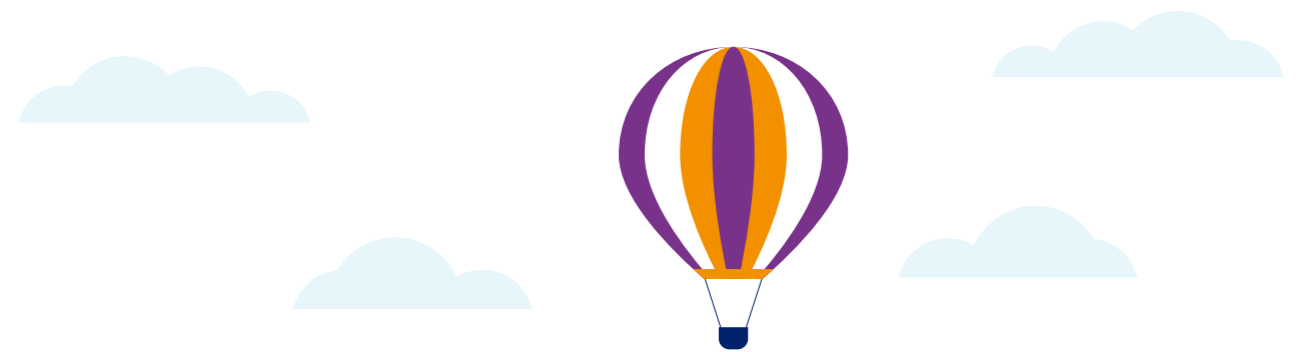
To support customers struggling with cost-of-living pressures, we have partnered with National Energy Action (NEA) to provide a telephone advice service offering support with energy costs. Support ranges from grants and fuel debt support, to energy efficiency advice and signposting to support offered by other agencies.

Supporting Employment and Training

Our Tenancy Sustainment team works with customers who are looking to return to employment or find better employment. Support ranges from online advice and guidance to more bespoke coaching.

Coaching is tailored to the customer and, once they gain employment, is provided for a further six months to support employment sustainment.

Customers may also be eligible for financial support to fund accredited qualifications or support travel and clothing costs whilst they await their first salary. Our customer grants provision is delivered in partnership with Heart of England Charitable Fund to help our customers overcome challenges including hardship, employability, wellbeing, and digital accessibility.



Supporting Digital Ability

Digital skills are an important aspect of life today and often an essential skill for paying bills or accessing support. We have partnered with a digital skills provider to support our customers to be digitally able:

Barclays digital wings



This online programme covers topics such as how to stay safe online, use social media and use digital skills for work.

Data Privacy and Security

Keeping our customers' data protected and secure is an integral part of our business, therefore we have introduced several measures:

- A one-stop-shop for colleagues to go to for advice and guidance on Data Protection
- Multi-Factor Authentication to enhance our IT security protecting against phishing and hacking
- An email protection system Egress, to reduce email breaches
- Implementing an Information Governance framework across the business
- An information Asset Register to comply with UK GDPR.
- Compliance with the Payment Card Industry (PCI) Data Security Standard
- Implementing the upcoming Access to Information Scheme (part of the Social Housing White Paper) to ensure we can manage data requests appropriately.

Supporting Wellbeing

Wellbeing inequalities have a significant impact on our customers and the communities in which they live. The mental and physical health of our customers is often linked with wider cultural and societal systems of disadvantage, such as financial, employment, physical health, environment and housing security, as well as stigma and discrimination. At Orbit we have several programmes that support the diverse range of our customers' needs:

Breathing Space

Breathing Space supports customers to help them manage their mental wellbeing. The service is delivered by mental health charity, MIND, and supports customers with a range of accessible services to meet individual requirements, including offering support, either on a one-to-one basis or in groups, digitally and by phone.



In our Independent Living schemes, which offer retirement and supported housing, we commission projects to bring multiple generations together to improve sharing, learning, and understanding, and provide dementia support and services to reduce social isolation. We also offer in-scheme activities to reduce social isolation, ranging from coffee mornings and befriending services to arts and crafts, bingo, and 'knit and natter'.



In 2020, Orbit conducted research into the impact of its debt support services. This research estimated that if Orbit were to successfully refer 75% of its most indebted customers, then the expected arrears debt repayment would be over £714,000.

Click here for more information 

Customer Impact

Delivering Social Value

Social value enables us to measure the financial value for each improvement we make for a customer or for communities. We calculate this value for all our services using industry recognised social value tools such as 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 will also monitor the Social Return on Investment (social value divided by investment) of our services to ensure they continue to provide value for money.

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 supported into training. This generated a total of £2.5 million in social value for our customers over the 12 month period.



Quality Homes and Places

As a housing provider, we believe everyone is entitled to a good quality home that they can afford, in a place where they are proud to live, and we aim to ensure the homes we provide and the places we create are high quality, safe and sustainable. Focusing on these key objectives will support our vision of building thriving communities for our customers.

Our Objectives:



Provide high quality, affordable homes



Invest in the decarbonisation of our homes



Provide safe, healthy places to live



Create sustainable living environments

Our Targets:

- 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

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



Net Zero Carbon in our homes before 2050

We continue to invest in the energy efficiency of our homes.

We have committed that 100% of our existing homes will be EPC band C or higher by 2030 and are well on our way to achieving this with 83.54% of our homes already at this level.

In partnership with Stratford-on-Avon District Council, we were awarded funding from the Government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Demonstrator project, which was designed to help the sector learn lessons about high complexity, retrofit of energy performance improvements.

We've subsequently been awarded SHDF Wave 1 and Wave 2.1 funding to upgrade 348 properties in the Midlands. This project will generate further insight into the practical challenges of achieving net zero carbon emissions across our properties.

Supporting this, through our Carbon Forum, we continue to explore new technologies to incorporate into future retrofit programmes including insulation and low and zero carbon heating, and are installing smart thermostats in retrofitted homes to gain better quality data on fuel poverty.

Providing high quality, safe and sustainable homes

As a housing provider we are responsible for a portfolio of over 46,500 homes; how we manage and maintain these homes is key to providing high quality, safe and sustainable homes. We do this through our Asset Management Strategy and Building Health and Safety Strategy.

Asset Management

The strategic asset management plan consists of four steps to be delivered by 2030:

Consolidation

We will continue to implement our densification strategy, which has been underway since 2019. This will see us target 98% of our stock in no more than 50 key local authorities with 650 units or more by 2030. Our 2030 growth areas will be increased through development, acquisition and bilateral asset swaps with other housing providers. Our exit areas will facilitate asset swaps and ultimately be sold. The denser portfolio will allow us to provide a more efficient and sustainable service, and develop stronger partnerships with local authorities and communities in these areas.

Simplification and Enabling Technology

We currently have significant capital tied into shared ownership at the present time. The social value for these investments was generated at the point of initial sale to customers and now achieves limited additional value and therefore we will keep this under regular review. We will also increase the installation of smart sensor technologies and the digitalisation of property data to better inform decision-making and customer support services.

Standardisation

By 2030, more of our portfolio should be providing customers the opportunity to age in place and to live in a home and community safely, independently and comfortably regardless of age, income or ability level. We will have developed property passports that support the journey to net zero carbon and achieving EPC C in all our homes. We will have developed our understanding of how individual properties can be adapted to provide high quality, accessible and affordable homes and have a recognisable standard look and feel.

Shape and Grow

We will leverage our increased focus on specific local authority areas to further build partnerships and seek acquisition opportunities. Where potential properties are at less than EPC band C, Orbit will seek to discount according to the projected cost of decarbonisation works to reach a minimum of C. Work will continue on the existing portfolio to decarbonise and support energy affordability for our residents. The portfolio will also be assessed for climate resiliency, and plans developed to mitigate risks of climate change posed to our properties.

Building Safety

British and ISO (International Organisation for Standardisation) standards have been used to create our unique standards-based Building Safety Strategy for in-scope buildings.

We are currently working to:

- British Standard BS9997 Fire Risk Management Systems (FRMS), which is the UK's current best practice for fire risk management, and we remain the only national housing association to have achieved this accreditation

We are currently working towards (by 2025):

- Business Resilience Management System ISO 22301, which looks at events that are likely to disrupt a business and seeks to minimise the risk of it occurring, whilst also preparing the business for a swift reaction if the worst does happen
- Data Management and BIM (Building Information Modelling) ISO 19650 and BS 8644, which helps us to create and maintain a robust golden thread of information required to implement the safety changes in the Building Safety Act and ensure our homes are safe for our customers

Common to all standards is the Plan, Do, Check, Act model (PDCA), which will be at the heart of the new Building Safety Regulator's regime.



Building new affordable homes

We want to create new homes that customers truly want to live in, that can adapt as lifestyles and situations change, and which offer our customers the assurance that safety and the environment have been considered throughout.

Our New Build Residential Policy and Design Standards go far beyond the Decent Homes Standards and are our commitments for the creation of new Orbit homes and communities. Designed with customers, colleagues, and specialists, they aim to ensure our new build homes meet customer needs today and for the future, and focus on five key elements:

Accessibility:

Homes are designed to be accessible to the widest possible range of people and allow for future adaptability wherever possible.

Space fit for purpose:

Orbit Homes house types meet the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS) as a minimum and are designed to Royal Society of the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) Safer by Design Gold Standard, ensuring they are amongst the safest new build homes on the market.

Our new house type range focuses on maximising the light and space to improve the enjoyment and wellbeing of our customers.

Design:

We offer parity of specification across all tenures where possible to achieve high quality, tenure blind developments. Orbit Homes house types include more room for desks and workspaces throughout, alongside modern USB sockets, data points and fibre optic connectivity, where available.

Future proofing:

Within all of our developments we consider the use of modern methods of construction (MMC) and, through our design, we aim to allow for the installation of foreseeable technologies. This includes electric vehicle charging as standard.

Environment and sustainability:

We aim to minimise the environmental impact of the homes we build, and the construction process undertaken. Homes go beyond Building Regulation minimums and use fabric-first, solar orientation, and ventilation techniques to achieve high thermal performance, improved comfort, and affordability.

We are increasingly installing waste water heat recovery (WWHR) and solar photovoltaic systems to further help homeowners and tenants with rising energy bills. As the ban on natural gas boilers in 2025 approaches, we are developing our new home designs that make use of technologies such as air source heat pump and underfloor heating to maximise energy efficiency.

Material specification is considered in sustainability terms, including responsible sourcing, circular economy, material reuse and embodied carbon, and we consider the life-time costs of materials, with high-quality, long-lasting materials favoured to ensure quality and longevity. Our specification aims to reduce water usage such as the introduction of flow restrictors and water butts.

The outdoor spaces of our new build developments will deliver biodiversity net gain of 10% or greater moving forward and will align with our innovative 30by30 commitment formed in partnership with the Wildlife Trusts. This means that 30% of our outdoor green spaces will be managed in a way that supports nature's recovery. This is part of a global movement to protect our wildlife for the enjoyment of current and future generations.

Sustainable communities and placemaking

Our Urban Design and Placemaking approach ensures a consistent standard and product for our customers, whilst delivering value for money.

Architecture and urban character play key roles in placemaking; we aim to deliver locally distinctive places which reflect an area's heritage, landscape, and identity. We aim for a healthy distribution of tenure on our developments, subject to planning policy, with schemes designed so that site layouts result in high quality living spaces alongside safe and comfortable streets and spaces, where ecology and biodiversity are successfully integrated.

Connection to the wider community is a key consideration in site selection, ensuring access to public transport, shops and services, health and education and centres of employment.

Community Hubs

In areas where we have a high density of housing stock, we build partnerships with community organisations to support the creation of inclusive, healthy and sustainable communities where people are proud to live.

As part of this, we run a number of community hubs to provide services for our customers and the wider community structured around our Better Days programme, as well as providing spaces for the local delivery of services by statutory organisations and voluntary community sector (VCS) partners.

We currently operate community hubs in Newmarket, Stratford-upon-Avon and Gorleston, with a further hub under construction as part of the Orbit Homes Micklewell Park development.



Our Planet



Orbit is fully conscious of the environmental challenges facing our world today. Climate change, biodiversity loss and resource security pose immediate and future risks to our customers and operations. There are also significant opportunities to improve efficiencies, reduce costs and improve the wellbeing of our customers by creating greener, more sustainable communities.

We are committed to doing our part to unlock these opportunities, whilst providing affordable, quality homes and thriving communities for our customers. To help us achieve this, we have established our environmental sustainability programme, Orbit Earth. This sets out our approach across three objectives:



Climate action to become net zero carbon



Enhancement of outdoor spaces to improve the quality of natural resources including biodiversity, land, water and air



Sustainable consumption to manage resources, materials and products responsibly

Our Targets:

- 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



Orbit operates an environmental management system that has been certified to ISO14001: 2015 by the British Standards Institute. This demonstrates our commitment to managing our environmental responsibilities and provides assurance that our approach is robust and effective.

Environmental Stewardship

It is essential that we manage our day-to-day operations to promote positive environmental impacts and manage any compliance obligations. We have followed best practice in developing an environmental management system that identifies the key issues we must manage to remain a compliant and sustainable organisation.

Our environmental management system is certified to ISO14001: 2015 by the British Standards Institute and demonstrates our commitment to managing our environmental responsibilities and provides assurance that our approach is robust and effective. This is overseen by a dedicated environmental sustainability team that works to continually improve our approach and to embed our processes across the organisation.

Supporting Sustainability - Environmental Sustainability Skills for Managers

Our environmental sustainability qualification for our colleagues is the first in-house training of its kind in the social housing sector. The course, Environmental Sustainability Skills for Managers, provides learners with 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.

Delivered in-house by our environmental sustainability team, this internationally recognised qualification developed by the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA), has been tailored for Orbit and the social housing sector to provide learners with a working knowledge of our environmental management system.



Climate Action

We are committed to following a science-based approach to reduce our direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions in accordance with the 2015 Paris Agreement.

Orbit published its detailed Orbit to Zero roadmap in November 2021, during COP26 in Glasgow. It sets out actions already taken and future commitments across four different elements: our customers, our homes, our operations, and our supply chain partners.

Net Zero Carbon in our Own Operations by 2030

Orbit will reduce its direct emissions by 50% by 2030 (against a 2018-19 baseline) and offset the remainder in order to become Net Zero Carbon. As of March 2022, Orbit had already reduced emissions by 33%.

Further actions that will be taken to achieve this include:

- The transition from fossil fuels to hydrotreated vegetable oils (HVO) in our construction operations
- Continuing to operate an agile working model that reduces travel and office space
- Transitioning our grounds maintenance fleet to electric vehicles
- Implementing energy efficiency improvements in our offices and customer communal spaces
- Providing energy awareness and other training opportunities to staff and customers

In 2021, Orbit conducted ground-breaking research into the perceptions of approximately 900 customers regarding the environment and climate change. This, and subsequent research and customer engagement, has informed our Orbit to Zero roadmap and wider Orbit Earth programme.



[Click here for more information](#)



Net Zero Carbon in our supply chain before 2050

Two thirds of Orbit's 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. In this way, we are able to align with the science-based targets methodology.

Climate Adaptation

Even if global temperatures are kept to no more than 1.5°C of warming, climate change will continue to take place for many decades into the future. Initial work carried out by Orbit has identified local flooding, overheating and drought as being the most material local risks presented by climate change. There is also the potential for significant supply chain disruption in the future, which may require changes to the design of new build homes and retrofit programmes, and careful assessment of supply chain risks. We will continue to work internally on our climate adaptation plans and aim to set out an approach by 2025. This will embed adaptation into retrofit and new build design and be rolled out from that point onwards.



In our new build properties, we currently build our homes to EPC band B or higher and have begun to transition away from natural gas boilers in advance of the 2025 deadline set by government. We continue to increase our use of modern methods of construction (MMC) to deliver energy efficient, warm homes.

Enhancement of Outdoor Spaces

Globally, we are living in a biodiversity crisis, with humans the main driver behind a significant reduction in the number of species alive on the planet today. The UK has lost half of its wildlife since 1970 and one in ten species are currently threatened with extinction. At the same time, our customers have made it clear that they want easy access to greenspaces and 'wildlife outside their window'.



Biodiversity – the variety of life in a given area, whether that be an individual estate or the entire planet.

Orbit is a founding member of the **Green Spaces Advisory Board** which was formed in 2021 with the purpose to unlock the potential of green spaces through actions, thought leadership, and enabling conversations that create collaboration.

In response, Orbit partnered with the Wildlife Trusts between 2020 and 2022 to create an approach that is both scientific and practical in its delivery.

A pilot project saw us undertake detailed habitat surveys of four estates that are representative of our wider portfolio. These were then used to develop biodiversity improvement plans for those communities, which were designed to contribute towards the global 30 by 30 target and implemented in collaboration with our customers.

Following the success of the pilot project we were able to develop our approach, which allows anyone with minimal training to assess our estates and determine their current performance against the criteria developed with the Wildlife Trusts, and to commit that 30% of our outdoor spaces will be enabling nature's recovery by 2030. This aligns with the goal of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity and the Wildlife Trusts' 30 by 30 campaign.

Our full approach can be accessed via our website.

Our Orbit Earth programme is also focused on broader natural resources, including water conservation and air quality. We are focused on expanding our efforts in these areas for future versions of this strategy. Over the coming years, Orbit will work with its peers to develop a Green Space Model, biodiversity metric and certification programme, and resources for the wider sector to utilise.



Zero Waste

We aim to:

- Transition to a *circular economy* where resources are sourced, produced, used, and disposed of sustainably
- Adopt a life cycle approach where efficiency is optimised, and waste avoided

This will unlock value for Orbit and our customers whilst reducing our exposure to future resource insecurity.



Circular economy – an economy that reduces material use, redesigns materials to be less resource intensive and recaptures “waste” as a resource to manufacture new materials and products.

Our approach will vary according to where waste originates across our organisation. The baseline for all waste targets is 2022-23.

Construction and Maintenance

We have created a Zero Waste Group that has developed and begun implementation of a range of waste management initiative to support our reduction target of 15% per direct build plot by 2030. These include working with suppliers to reduce packaging, promotion of offcut storage areas, increased segregation and our work with partners such as Community Wood Recycling. The ongoing exploration of MMC products will further facilitate reductions of waste onsite as materials are used far more efficiently in factory settings than on a construction site. In our existing homes, we are continuously reviewing the products we use to extend lifespan and therefore, consequently reduce waste and disruption to our customers.

Offices

We are working with our Facilities Champions to implement a 5% reduction target. This is focused on raising colleague awareness of how to reduce waste, continuing to promote reduced printing and exploring options to donate electronic equipment to reduce environmental impact and unlock social value.

Grounds Maintenance

We are targeting a 30% reduction in our green waste generated by grounds maintenance. This will be driven by reductions in the requirement for regular grass cutting as we implement our 30by30 enhancement of outdoor spaces. We are also increasing local composting so that green waste can provide value to our customers and reduce costs at the same time.

Supply Chain

Whilst supply chain waste is outside the scope of our quantitative targets, we will work with our top suppliers to ensure that waste data is captured and targets set. Where changes in design and purchasing decisions can be made that will help deliver a circular economy, these will be discussed in contractor meetings and taken forward where possible.

Our People

Engaged colleagues are central to delivering the services and support our customers expect from us. We cannot deliver one without the other. They are our best asset, and we believe they should be able to maximise their potential, have the opportunity to make a difference, and to do so in a safe, supporting, and respectful environment.

Our Objectives:



Attract and retain the right talent to deliver excellent customer services



Unlock the potential in our colleagues and maximise their career satisfaction



Create a diverse and inclusive workplace



Provide a safe and secure working environment

Our Targets:

- 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 Five Quality Safety Audit by 2027

Attracting, retaining and unlocking potential

We will achieve this by building individual and team capability, inspiring leadership, sharing in our pride in purpose and ambition, and building a fit for future organisation.

On an annual basis we conduct an employee survey to understand our colleagues views. This is where our colleagues' targets are assessed, ensuring they share our vision and values, working to ensure our leadership is supporting our colleagues and the overall satisfaction of our colleagues is over 75%.

Our areas of focus and priority in our People Strategy are:

Enablement and Skills: ensuring colleagues have access to structured learning and the tools for their role; that capability frameworks are in place to identify and support routes to growth; and that Orbit is an organisation conducive of skill acquisition and transfer across teams and processes.

Leadership: enabling leaders to grow talent and help colleagues to succeed; acting as 'coach', supporting, encouraging, and leading performance; being visible and understanding the challenges colleagues face.

Teamwork: creating a culture where we trust each other and actively work together; encouraging cross functional working and growth; supporting best practice across teams.

Reward and Recognition: having a remuneration policy that encourages and incentivises doing the right thing for our customers; recruiting for passion and customer focus, and developing for capability; paying for skill acquisition.

Our success will be:

- Increased colleague engagement and retention
- Individual and enterprise capability enhancement
- Closing pay gaps



Looking after our colleagues' Health and Wellbeing

Our future plans for delivering a strong wellbeing proposition for colleagues are informed by our colleagues themselves. Each quarter through our engagement surveys we check in with colleagues and take proactive steps to enhance our wellbeing offer. Colleagues are telling us that looking after their wellbeing is not only about the benefits or support we offer, it's about the way their work is set-up, the systems and processes we have in place as well as the reality of their job day to day. In building our proposition we

Our focus for the next 24-36 months will be:

- **Creating a one stop shop for all wellbeing needs**
Creating a unified wellbeing proposition, part of the broader benefits offer that enhances colleagues connection with our offer and provides them with the necessary support for their individual circumstances.
- **Reviewing key partnerships** to ensure meaningful and relevant support as we deliver our employer promise through a robust EAP offer and a strong occupational health proposition
- **Creating or enhancing our policies and guidance** that support our wellbeing offer (such as relooking at our parental pay policies, enhancing flexibility of work and more).
- **Helping colleagues understand the values of the benefits** we offer at Orbit and encouraging long term planning and the importance of pensions, as well as helping colleagues stretch their income further through the financial support we offer.
- **Service with respect**
Creating a dedicated support offer for colleagues dealing with difficult work situations and interactions.
- **Leadership**
Supporting leaders to confidently have wellbeing conversations with their team members and help them on the journey to feeling that they can be their best at work.

therefore look holistically at what our colleagues are telling us, our absence rates, our leavers data, our engagement survey as well as the societal reality across our sector.

In 2023 we are launching our wellbeing strategy and are creating a unified wellbeing offer for colleagues, part of our benefits offer, to create a holistic colleague proposition.

What we strive for:

- To decrease our absence rates and reduce sickness absence due to mental health.
- Enabling our colleagues to manage their workloads without having to feel under pressure or having to work extended hours.
- Ensuring our colleagues are not leaving Orbit because of the impact their role is having on their own emotional and physical wellbeing.
- Increased engagement with Orbit's benefits proposition, especially increased colleague pension contributions that will help colleagues better plan for their future.



Creating a diverse and inclusive workplace

Committing to a sound Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) strategy is not only the right thing to do, but it also drives great business outcomes. A diverse and inclusive business means that we access the best skills and talent that enable us to deliver great outcomes for our customers. We want our people to have equitable chances to become their best selves, and we want to create a great place to work where we attract and retain great and diverse talent and our customers are delighted to do business with us.

Our long-term People Strategy has as an ultimate aim of closing all pay gaps. Our median gender pay gap commitment will reduce the gap from 19.4% to 16.5% over the period to 2030. This is the start of a systematic approach to reducing our gender pay gap over the long-term.

Our EDI Mission Statement:

- Our vision is to build thriving communities. For us to thrive, we need people from all walks of life. We value and celebrate differences, asking only that our people are driven, innovative, responsible, and invested in our success
- Our authentic approach to equity, diversity and inclusion means that we encourage our people, partners and customers to share their voice, helping us shape our decisions and services, so that we are a great inclusive place to work and a leading housing provider
- No one should live in fear of discrimination, victimisation, harassment or prejudice. We talk openly, supporting and celebrating each other, so that we belong, grow and thrive together.

Our EDI framework focuses on five key areas:

Creating safe spaces and a sense of inclusion and belonging: Our colleagues feel safe and able to share their experiences to build a better place to work and for our customers to do business with.

Inclusive Leadership: Our leaders create the conditions for excellence through role modelling inclusive behaviours and creating a nurturing and collaborative environment for colleagues to perform to their best.

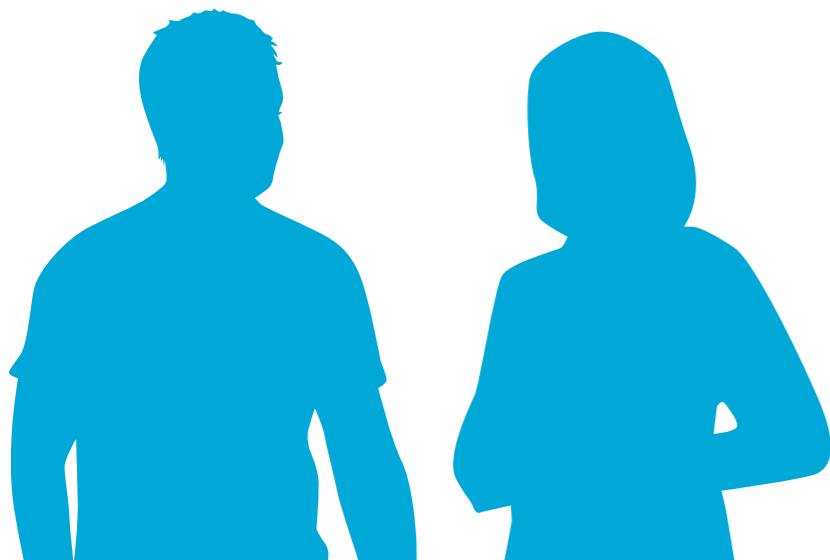
Learner Mindset: We learn from each other; we are brave, accepting when things don't go well and learning from them; we strive to raise the bar of our performance and the service we give to our customers.

Opportunities to grow no matter your background: We want to attract and retain the very best people, no matter their background, and celebrate and embrace our differences.

We are here for our customers: Everything we do has our customers' interests at heart.

We are proud to support a number of like-minded organisations and commitments which are all focused on ensuring an equal and fair world for all.

- The HouseProud Pledge
- Business in the Community - Race at Work Charter
- Disability Confident Committed status
- Armed Forces Covenant
- Stonewall No Bystanders



ROSPA



All our colleagues play a key role in our strong health and safety culture and, in recognition of this, we have hosted annual Orbit Health and Safety Excellence Awards for the last two years.

Held in partnership with RoSPA, these awards celebrated our contributions to health and safety and acknowledge our people and partners who have shown an outstanding commitment to keeping our customer and workplaces safe.

Providing a safe and secure working environment

Our Health and Safety Strategy, single integrated Health and Safety Management System and risk register covers our approach to the health, safety and welfare of our colleagues. It follows a Plan, Do, Check and Act methodology and we work closely with the Royal Society of the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) to ensure our systems and processes remain best practice.

- **Plan** - Health and Safety guidance and governance
- **Do** - Information, instruction, training and supervision and skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours
- **Check** - Audit and review
- **Act** - Assurance and reporting

In September 2022, RoSPA was commissioned by Orbit to carry out a Quality Safety Audit (QSA) of the Health and Safety Management System applied across the Group.

In the resulting QSA we achieved an overall Health and Safety Performance Rating (HSPPR) of 82.2% and a Level Four award based upon the lowest score of the 11 sub-sections of the QSA. Level Five is the highest QSA score achievable. Our objective is to continue to work with colleagues across Orbit to achieve Level Five by 2027.

Building health and safety awareness

Our 'Work Safe, Live Safe' campaign aims to increase health, safety and welfare awareness and understanding, and develop skills across our workplaces through targeted training, workshops and promotional content.

Equally, we aim to share safety knowledge with our customers using a range of mediums to help them and their loved ones stay safe in their homes. This includes partnering and supporting the Royal Society of the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) on several of their safety campaigns, including RoSPA's Safer Stairs, Fall Fighters and Safer by Design.

Our Partners

Effective partnerships are key to Orbit delivering its goals and commitments, from working with partners who are experts in their field to deliver our Better Days services, to working with environmentalists to shape our Orbit Earth programme. Partnerships ensure we can have the greatest impact by utilising the skills and knowledge of those that deliver best practice.

Orbit's biggest partners are our supply chain and for us it's important we are working in partnership, not just to deliver a great service for our customers, but also expand upon the delivery of this strategy through them to ensure we can deliver wider impact. For this reason we have developed the Sustainable Supplier Charter.

Our Sustainable Supplier Charter sets out what our suppliers can expect from us and what we expect from them in return.

Orbit's relationships with its suppliers are based on fairness, transparency, and integrity: **We will conduct 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 engage with their suppliers on the same basis. We also expect all our suppliers to manage their own suppliers in a responsible and sustainable manner.

Sustainable Supplier Charter

Our charter is focused on the following key themes:

Business Conduct

Ensuring fairness and transparency by working in line with procurement and contracting regulations. Compliance with our legal and regulatory obligations in relation to money laundering, data privacy, fraud, bribery and corruption. Ensuring the economic sustainability of our suppliers by prompt payment in line with our 30-day payment code.

Diversity, Inclusion and Human Rights

Treating our suppliers with respect and integrity, promoting equity, inclusion and diversity. Meeting the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 (MSA), including an annual update and publication of our own Modern Slavery and Trafficking statement. Making sure that we never use child labour, forced labour or unacceptable working hours or conditions.

Environmental Sustainability

Encouraging our suppliers to reduce their environmental impact by reducing their carbon footprint, promoting biodiversity, and reducing waste.

Social Value

Working in partnership with our suppliers to deliver social and environmental projects as part of their social value to further improve employment opportunities for our customers and help build thriving communities.



Governance

Strong governance supports our sustainability aims

Orbit's goal to lead in building thriving communities is linked to a commitment to ensuring the health of the business, including all those involved in our work or living or working in our properties or communities. Our strong corporate governance structure, underpinned by clear measures and reporting, includes:

- Robust corporate structure supported by specialised committees
- Experienced management team and boards
- Risk management deeply engrained into Orbit's culture
- Highest governance rating – G1 by the Regulator of Social Housing
- Ensuring compliance with all regulatory requirements and obligations

Risk management

Our approach to risk management encompasses all areas of our business, including sustainability, and is underpinned by six key elements:

- Clear understanding of our risk environment, incorporating internal and external factors
- Robust approach to identifying and monitoring key risks
- Putting in place early warning measures and risk triggers so that we can act before a risk materialises
- Close monitoring of our Strategy Business Critical Risks
- Regular stress testing of our Financial Plan in line with risk appetite set by the Orbit Group Board
- Clearly defined appetite for risk approved by the Orbit Group Board

Any sustainability related risks are embedded into the corporate risk management process at an operational risk management level through Senior Management Team risk registers process and, at a strategic level, through reporting to Orbit Group Board. Underpinning this is an ongoing review of the internal and external environment and the extent to which that impacts on all risks. Given the rate of environment and social change, this ongoing risk analysis is an important element of our Sustainability Strategy.

The Orbit Group Board maintains overall responsibility for strategic risk management and our internal controls environment is continually reviewed and monitored by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee on behalf of the Board. All subsidiaries are required to implement our risk management framework and provide reports to their respective boards.

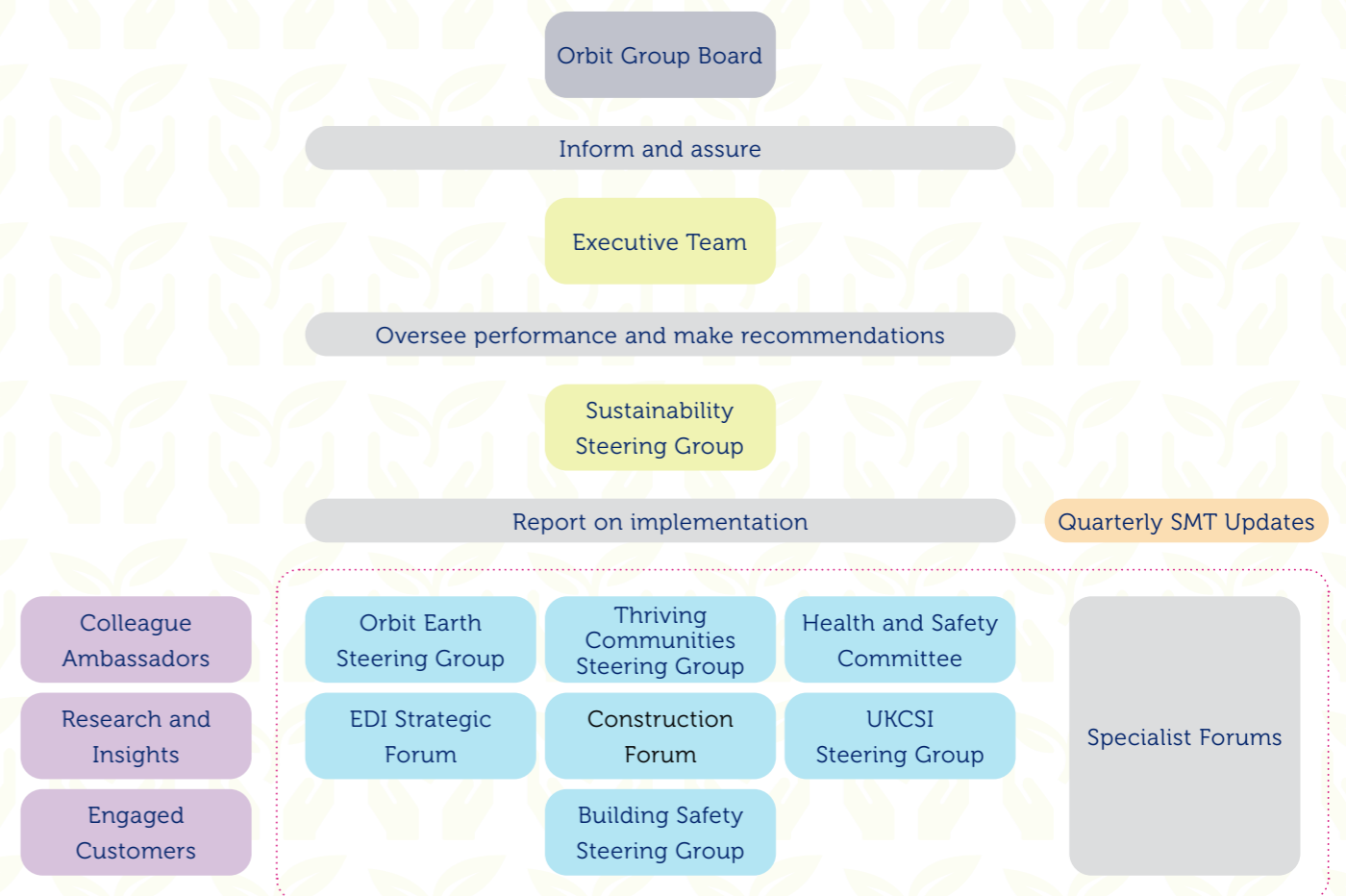


Governing our sustainability commitments

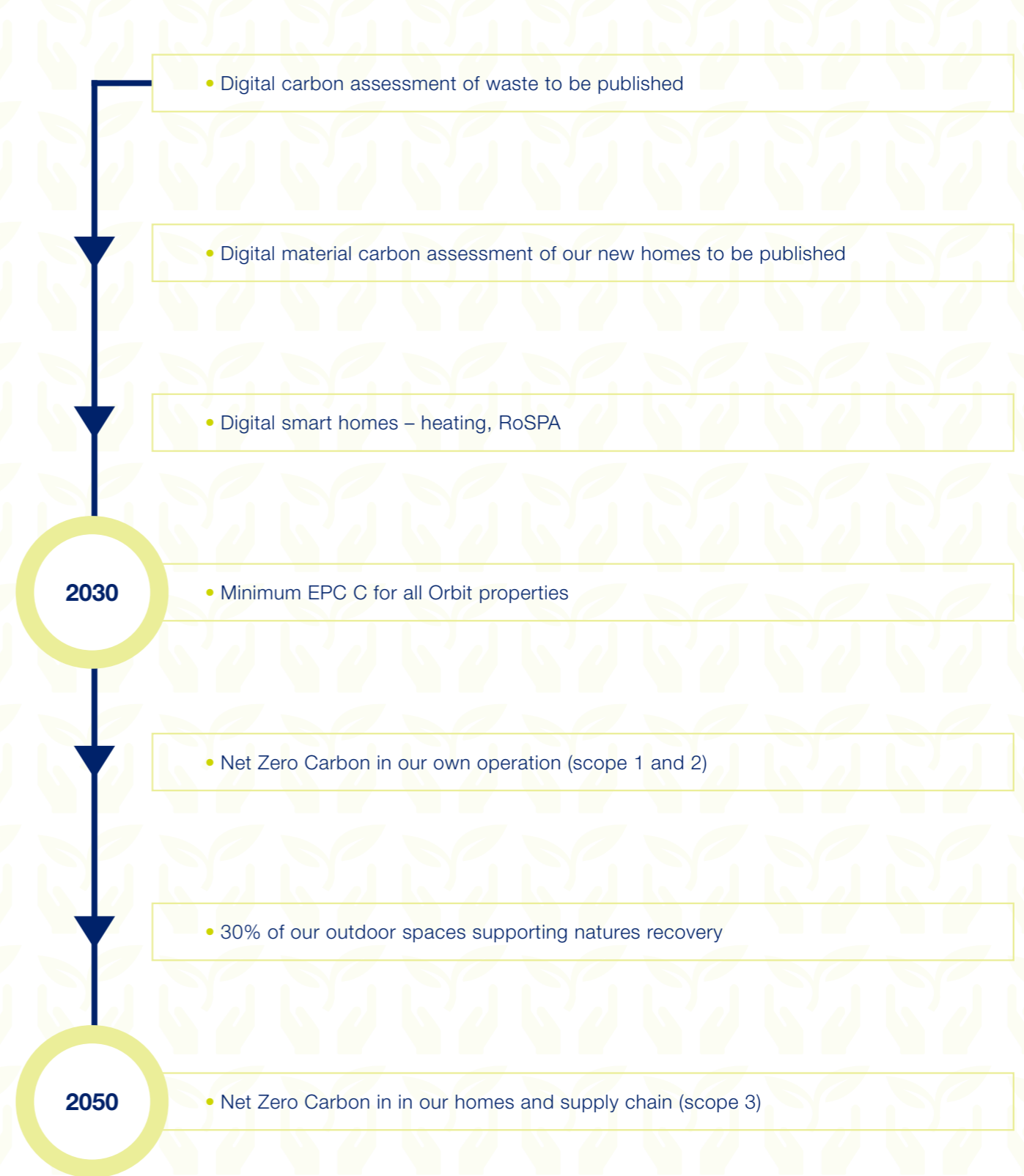
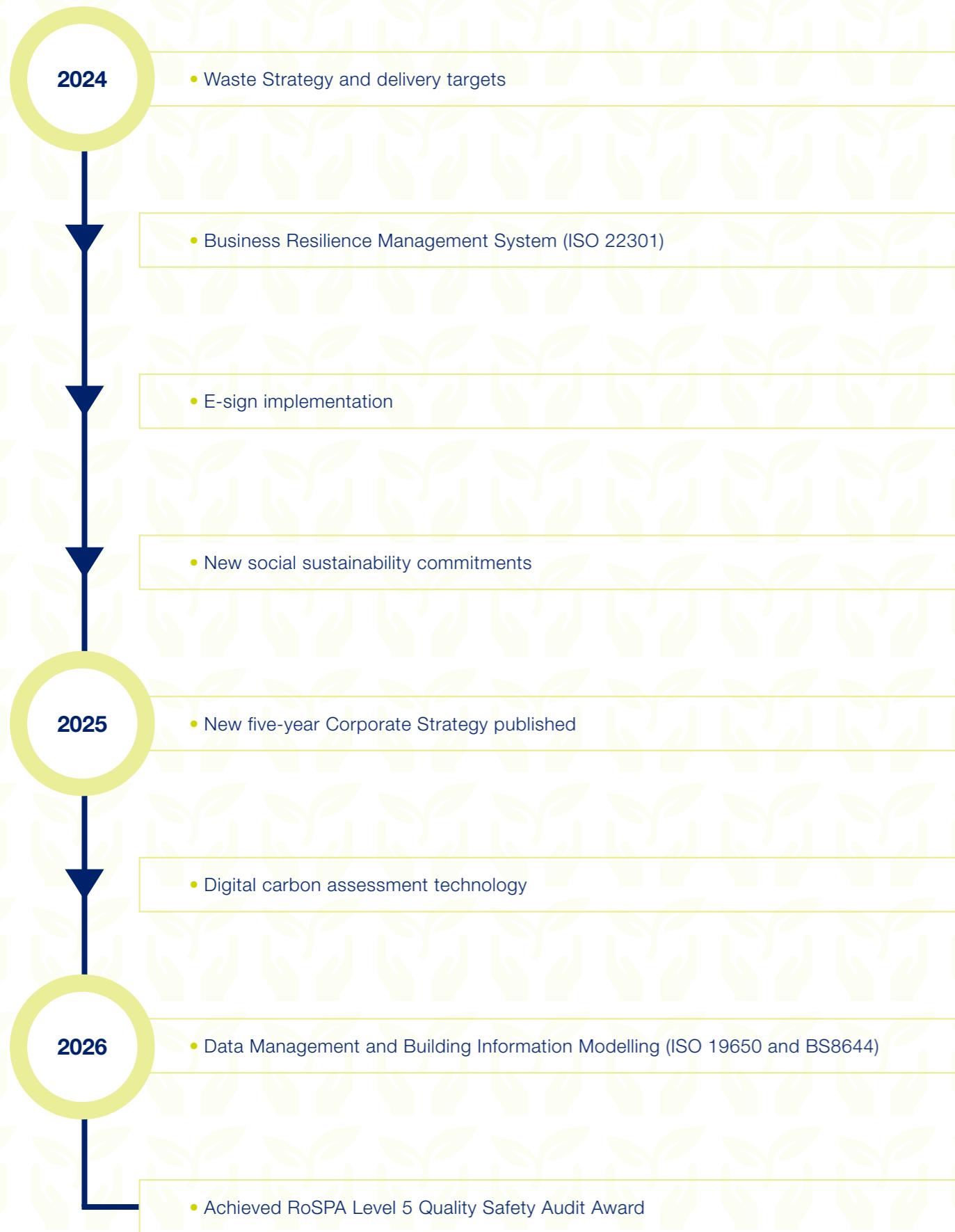
Our sustainability commitments are reported to and overseen by our Executive team and Orbit Group Board through our robust performance management framework. This reinforces our strategic commitment to sustainability.

This is supplemented by a Sustainability Steering Group that meets to ensure the Sustainability Strategy remains relevant and appropriate to Orbit's vision and values, our stakeholder expectations, and the external environment.

Engagement activity and specialist forums, such as our EDI Strategic Forum, Carbon Forum, Health and 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.



Our Future





Frameworks

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals UNSDGs

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals are a call for action by all countries to promote prosperity whilst protecting the planet. They recognise that ending poverty must go together with strategies that build economic growth and address a range of social needs including education, health, social protection, and job opportunities, whilst tackling climate change and environmental protection. Orbit maps its sustainability commitments to ensure we are supporting global change against these targets.



The Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing (SRS)

This is a voluntary disclosure framework for housing providers to report on their sustainability performance in a transparent, consistent and comparable way. It was developed with the housing sector and lenders and investors to make it easier for them to assess the performance of housing providers, identify risks and pursue opportunities to create positive social and environmental outcomes. Orbit was one of the early adopters, signing up to this standard in 2020.



Business in the Community, Business Tracker

Business in the Community (BITC) Business Tracker is the tool we use to benchmark our performance beyond our sector. We use this to ensure we are progressing in our journey and help us to drive change to ensure we are a more sustainable business.

Their map guides us on a journey of continuous improvement, working across the whole agenda.

The Business Tracker is broken down into three sections:

- Healthy Business which looks at our vision and values, governance and transparency, stakeholder engagement and community collaboration, value chain and digital transformation
- Healthy Communities which looks at the health and wellbeing, employment and skills, and diversity and inclusion of our colleagues as well as the work we do in communities
- Healthy Environment looks at our progress on climate action, circular economy and nature stewardship

Sustainable Finance Framework

As a registered provider of affordable housing, Orbit is committed to its social purpose, and provides housing for target populations underserved by the UK commercial housing market as designated by the UK Regulator of Social Housing (RSH). All its investments and expenditures are dedicated towards this purpose. In alignment with this Sustainability Strategy, Orbit has elected to create a **Sustainable Finance Framework** (the "Framework"), under which it can undertake sustainable financing transactions (public bonds, debt Private Placements, term loans and revolving credit facilities), funding green, social or a combination of expenditures (respectively green, social or sustainability instruments; together "Sustainable Finance Instruments"). The strategy seeks to deliver improved performance for Orbit's customers, colleagues, and suppliers, with specific programmes and objectives for each of these stakeholders.

Reporting on our sustainability

Sustainability Reporting Standards

The Sustainability Reporting Standards (SRS) has been 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 are made up of core and enhanced metrics for those housing associations who want to report in more detail.

Orbit is one of 37 housing associations which signed up to be an early adopter of the SRS and report on the enhanced metrics. In doing so, we have had the opportunity to learn and reflect on our approach. This has enabled us to strengthen our strategy and our commitments to reflect the breadth of work we are already delivering as part of our overall business strategy.

We will report on our SRS results on an annual basis. To ensure transparency within this report we highlight our previous year's results to indicate where we have made improvements and where we have not.

Business in the Community

On an annual basis Orbit completes Business in the Community Responsible Business Tracker. The tracker benchmarks us against other sectors and helps us to identify how we can improve and what we are improving on. We report our outcomes on an annual basis and showcase some of the developments we have made over the year.

Sustainability Report

Orbit's annual Sustainability Report reports on progression against our sustainability targets over a retrospective 12 month period and in relation to our material issues, and drills down to the impact we have made to our customers. Our Sustainability Report will be published at the same time as the Orbit Group Annual Report and Accounts.





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