

# Advancing Ambition, Accelerating Action

Strategic Plan 2022-2025

MAY 2022



## Time to go further, faster

2021 was a critical year for the climate and ecological agendas and although progress was made at both domestic and international levels, the need for increased ambition and the translation of commitments into tangible and measurable action has never been greater. Delivery – at pace and at scale – is key.

The climate emergency remains the most pressing issue facing the built environment. It is directly responsible for 25% of total UK emissions, and as evidenced by UKGBC's Net Zero Whole Life Carbon Roadmap, continuing a 'business-as-usual' approach will simply not deliver net zero by 2050. Instead, the current pace of climate action will only deliver a 60% reduction in carbon dioxide levels compared with 1990 emissions levels; leading to catastrophic and irreversible impacts, adversely affecting lives, livelihoods, and the planet.

Business-as-usual will also threaten the very fabric of our built assets. Climate extremes have intensified in recent years, posing physical risks to both tangible assets and business supply chains, threatening their financial viability. In fact, by 2050, UK modelling predicts that over 500,000 residential and commercial properties will be at high physical risk from extreme weather conditions.

At the same time, the science is clear. We must halve emissions by 2030 if we're to stand a chance of maintaining a 1.5°C temperature increase, so it's the near-term targets and actions that matter the most. The scale of the challenge cannot be underestimated and urgently requires a transformational shift in the way we design, construct, operate and deconstruct buildings. Quite simply, we need to go further, faster now.

This is why UKGBC has set out a 2025 Strategy – halfway through this crucial decade we must be well on our way to undergoing a transformational shift in the way we design, construct, operate and reuse built assets. This begins with science-based evidence of what the industry needs to achieve by 2025 – some of which has not even been modelled yet. And from this, through careful consideration of the market drivers, and in consultation with members, we have identified seven distinct goals that UKGBC is able to achieve. Each of these will then inform and cascade into the key areas of work we'll take forward in the three years ahead.

UKGBC is passionately dedicated to supporting the built environment sector to deliver impactful, measurable, and transformative change. We are committed to convening the different parties required to remove obstacles, craft solutions and drive innovation. We will continue to provide the leadership, guidance, training and development necessary to enable the industry to deliver against key milestones on the pathway to net zero, and to transform our buildings, towns, cities and infrastructure so that they are climate resilient and increase environmental net gain.

**Only together will we go further, faster towards a better built environment.**



**Julie Hirigoyen**  
Chief Executive,  
UK Green Building Council



## UKGBC Theory of Change

Our Theory of Change visualises how UKGBC affects change on sustainability in the built environment.

At UKGBC, we collaborate to advocate, enable and inspire accelerated leadership and action, primarily by business and government, on climate change, resource use, nature & biodiversity, health & wellbeing and socio-economic impact.

### WE COLLABORATE

by convening diverse built environment organisations to engage in a common purpose.

### WE ADVOCATE

by calling for ambitious commitments, stronger standards and progressive policy.

### WE ENABLE

by developing guidance, showcasing solutions and stimulating innovation.

### WE INSPIRE

by sharing knowledge and best practice, and encouraging transformational leadership.



# Core foundations of the 2025 Strategy

Our Strategy to 2025 is underpinned by five core foundations:

- 1**

**Climate mitigation and resilience as the core programmatic focus**

Given the gravity and urgency of both the climate and ecological emergencies, including their interconnectivity and fundamental importance to the very survival of mankind, UKGBC will double down on climate and nature related outcomes for all its programmatic work to 2025. We will of course continue to research, curate and disseminate content across all five impact areas, however, our ring-fenced funded programmes will be focused on Advancing Net Zero and Climate Resilience and Nature – while recognising that achieving such outcomes will require a continued focus on circularity, health and wellbeing, and wider socio-economic impacts.
- 2**

**The strengthening of national and regional impact**

Effectively extending our national and regional footprint to support our membership base and the industry across the whole of the UK is also central to significantly increasing action to 2025. The 2025 Strategy highlights how we intend to continue strengthening our place-based approach, providing localised policy leadership, place-based initiatives, and regional support to drive and scale localised impact while simultaneously playing into the Government's levelling up agenda.
- 3**

**Engaging new audiences**

Given the fragmentation of the UK's built environment sector, UKGBC is under no illusion that achieving the requisite targets will be challenging. That being said, it's also crystal clear that it's inherently possible if all relevant parties act fast and act now – in close collaboration. Therefore, a major focus of our 2025 Strategy is to reach new audiences by extending the depth (greater number of individuals within organisations) and breadth (greater number of organisations, particularly from underrepresented sub-sectors) of our engagement across industry and encouraging radical collaboration to advance our shared goals.
- 4**

**Increasing political ambition**

Political advocacy has always been a central lever to drive the systems change needed to fulfil UKGBC's charitable mission – namely to radically improve the sustainability of the built environment. To 2025 and beyond, we will amplify our efforts to advocate for more ambitious commitments, stronger standards and bolder policymaking, uniting our members and the industry via a single, progressive voice and bringing this to the forefront to accelerate key policy asks and campaigns.
- 5**

**Target setting, measurement, and reporting**

Fundamental to the 2025 Strategy is a better, shared understanding of what must be achieved by the industry and the key milestones that must be met on the pathway to net zero carbon, climate resilience and environmental net gain. Therefore, UKGBC will aim to convene consensus around a series of industry-wide 2025 targets for climate resilience and environmental net gain. The subsequent impact measurement and progress tracking against such industry-wide targets, including updates to the Net Zero Whole Life Carbon Roadmap, will form a critical component of our work through to 2025.

Just as important as measuring the impact of the sector against industry-wide targets, UKGBC will measure its own performance against each of the 2025 Strategic Goals. Throughout this document we have illustrated this with examples of the critical success metrics we will measure ourselves against – but these are far from comprehensive and more will be demonstrated in our annual Impact Reports.



## UKGBC's 2025 Strategy is shaped by the targets industry must achieve

Everything that UKGBC puts resources and effort into must be driven by the science, and by the targets that need to be met by the industry. In some cases, such as achieving net zero carbon, these targets have already been established. In other areas, such as climate resilience and environmental net gain, these targets have yet to be defined. In the case of the latter, we will endeavour to develop them through collaborative research and wide stakeholder engagement.

### UKGBC 2025 Strategy

#### Industry ambition

By 2025, the UK built environment industry is undergoing a transformative shift that is enabling a just transition towards built assets that are net zero carbon, climate-resilient, and maximise environmental net gain.

#### Industry targets

Achievement of this ambition will be evidenced by the industry meeting the following targets:

#### Net Zero Carbon

**50%**

Reduction in operational carbon from new and existing domestic buildings.

**75%**

Reduction in operational carbon from new and existing infrastructure assets.

**30%**

Reduction in embodied carbon from new homes.

**20%**

Reduction in embodied carbon of new infrastructure assets.

**70%**

Reduction in operational carbon from new and existing non-domestic buildings.

#### Climate Resilience

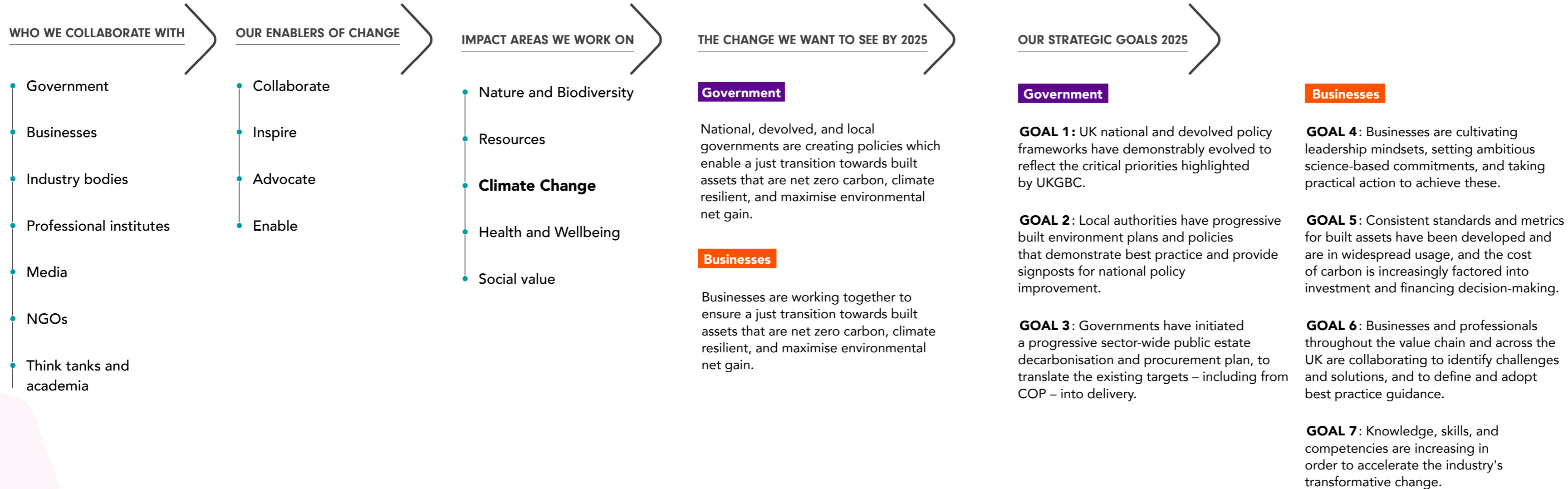
Identifying sector wide targets for climate resilience is a key activity of the 2025 Strategy.

#### Environmental Net Gain

Identifying sector wide targets for environmental net gain is a key activity of the 2025 Strategy.

*These targets arise from the scientific modelling and projections underpinning UKGBC's Net Zero Whole Life Carbon Roadmap published in 2021.*

## 2025 Strategy overview



## Government: Goal 1

UK national and devolved policy frameworks have demonstrably evolved to reflect the critical priorities highlighted by UKGBC.

To achieve the UK's Net Zero commitments, the built environment must radically and quickly decarbonise, becoming – in parallel – more resilient to weather extremes, and working to support and promote the protection and enhancement of the natural world.

Bold policy-making will be essential from national, devolved, and local governments to drive and incentivise this transformation. It will also be a crucial lever in the delivery of levelling up across the country, so – to 2025 and beyond – UKGBC will be at the forefront of political advocacy, urging governments to demonstrate both greater ambition and increased robustness in policymaking.

With a multitude of new bills and regulatory changes planned, there will be many opportunities to press for progress across UKGBC priority areas – from decarbonisation and circularity to resilience and adaptation, nature and biodiversity, just transition, and skills. In addition, the UK general election will shake the political kaleidoscope and provide opportunities to influence ambition in party manifestoes and the delivery of the ensuing government.

The clear trajectory of policy interventions set out in the Net Zero Whole Life Carbon Roadmap are core to our policy remit to 2025 and progress against these will be a key measure of success.

UKGBC will also continue to strengthen its place-centric approach. The opening of UKGBC Scotland in 2021 has enabled systematic engagement with Scottish Ministers and officials and Scotland-specific policy development. This success paves the way for equivalent launches across the other devolved nations before 2025. We will also expand our local presence across all English regions. Members are the power behind UKGBC's advocacy – in the next period more than ever, we will be uniting into a collective progressive voice around key policy asks and campaigns.

### Critical success measures:

Evidence of Westminster and devolved government policy changes against key recommendations included in UKGBC's Whole Life Carbon Roadmap (2021) – eg:

- National Retrofit Strategy for homes
- In-use energy performance measurement & disclosure (non-domestic)
- Existence of embodied carbon regulations
- Energy Use Intensity targets for new buildings
- Carbon accounting in planning frameworks

*"There are huge policy opportunities upcoming in the near term which are critical to achieve a net-zero and climate-resilient 2050. With impending regulation on the standards for new buildings, related to how we tackle the woeful inefficiencies of our existing building stock, and an overhaul of the way we plan our towns and cities, now is the time to drive the necessary political bravery to put things right; putting in place a coherent and joined-up policy landscape; which blends the required financial support systems with the much-needed regulatory bite. "*

**Simon McWhirter**  
Director of Communications, Policy & Places



## Government: Goal 2

Local authorities have progressive built environment plans and policies that demonstrate best practice and provide signposts for national policy improvement.

UKGBC believes that central government will not be able to 'solve' the key policy-led challenges facing the built environment sector through a fully top-down approach, particularly on complex issues such as home retrofit where local actors possess the on-the-ground knowledge and understanding necessary to craft suitable solutions for their area.

The complexity and technical nature of delivery, the need for a 'trusted' partner to give householders reassurance and the critical importance of high levels of coordination across multiple stakeholders mean that local/combined authority leadership will be essential to deliver tangible action.

UKGBC believes that local authorities can achieve more through collaboration and collective action but there is a gap to be filled. Therefore, a core area of work will be the establishment of a Local Authority Retrofit Forum where we will bring together local authorities at different stages of their retrofit journey, to learn from others and share their experience. This group will also form a 'sounding board' to steer our work on retrofit, and in time help identify other issues where bringing local authorities together would be beneficial, such as planning.

UKGBC will continue to focus on core activities that support local authorities advancing the housing retrofit agenda including the updating of playbooks and policy maps that offer up guidance and best practice case studies, and in the development of area-wide retrofit mobilisation plans, and the promotion of the Build Upon 2 Framework which enables local authorities to measure the impact of retrofit projects across a broad suite of indicators.

With our cohort of retrofit partners across the country, we will also seek to massively scale up the delivery of housing retrofit across all tenures, by building the capacity of local authorities to lead, facilitate and support projects.

We will expand our local presence across all English regions and devolved nations, driving more engagement with members, supporting the regional policymakers and businesses, and facilitating tighter collaboration while capitalising on locally distinct economic, social and environmental opportunities.

### Critical success measures:

- Number of local authorities that have built environment policies that go beyond national building regulations
- Number of places implementing Regional Retrofit Mobilisation Plans

*"To meet UK carbon targets we need to retrofit almost all of the UK's 29m homes by 2050 – that's nearly 2 homes every minute. Local authorities are uniquely placed to drive forward action at the scale required. The work of UKGBC and our partners to support authorities in mobilising mass retrofit is critical and will contribute towards breaking the current deadlock and driving the mass scale take-up of home."*

**Joanne Wheeler**  
Senior Manager, Local Policy & Retrofit





## Government: Goal 3

Governments have initiated a progressive sector-wide public estate decarbonisation and procurement plan, to translate the existing targets into delivery.

All decision-makers across the built environment – governments, businesses and civil society – must act together to drive towards a net zero future. That being said, the public sector has a particular responsibility to lead by example, delivering higher standards – thereby helping the wider industry to scale up.

UKGBC will create a public sector leadership campaign geared around direct carbon reduction in the existing estate and improved procurement processes for new and regeneration project delivery. Current government guidance and commitments need to be strengthened into clear, mandatory targets that are measurable, reportable, enforceable and funded.

Levering off our activity across Goals 1 (Progressive government policies) and 2 (Local authority leadership) we will push for the governmental adoption into regulation of higher performance standards, such as with the Net Zero Carbon Buildings Framework, and we'll advocate that they commit to introducing minimum energy performance standards for public sector buildings; doubling down on that commitment by only occupying net zero carbon buildings by 2030.

As we build through to 2025 it's key that we embed these changes at an infrastructure and delivery level. In alignment with Goal 1, Progressive government policies, we will utilise national and devolved planning reforms as a fulcrum for spatial development strategies to require and enforce net zero carbon development and facilitate the levelling up agenda across swathes of the country.

*"The public estate is the country's largest property portfolio. Decarbonising public buildings would save 2% of the UK's total emissions which is significant in its own right. But more important is the catalysing impact this will have on the whole building sector.*

*By moving further and faster, national, devolved and local governments can kick-start a scaling up of the green building industry. They can signal that skilling up will lead to long-term secure work in every part of the country and they can set the bar, through procurement, to make high environmental standards the new normal."*

**Louise Hutchins**  
Head of Policy and Public Affairs

### Critical success measures:

- Carbon footprint and climate resilience of public sector estate – as reported on in annual State of the Estate reports
- Evidence of environmental and social value underpinning the Levelling Up agenda



## Businesses: Goal 4

Businesses are cultivating leadership mindsets, setting ambitious science-based commitments, and taking practical action to achieve these.

UKGBC recognises that the transformation of the built environment isn't just dependent on systems or organisational-level change; critically our built environment professionals must have the progressive mindsets required to be leaders in their own right. Leading from the front, they need the courage, vision and purpose to do things differently and challenge the status quo.

UKGBC will continue to run a suite of high-impact transformational leadership programmes targeting different levels of experience, – including Recalibrate, Change Accelerator and Future Leaders. This will be complemented by regular events for C-suite Executives on our Leaders Network and convening opportunities to engage with individuals on a deeper more experiential level to activate their sense of personal responsibility.

Driving and facilitating change at every level is a core component of UKGBC's 2025 Strategy. In addition to the systems change achieved through Goal 1 (Progressive government policies) and Goal 5 (Embedding standards and metrics across industry), we will deliver programmes, activities, products and opportunities that support organisations to set ambitious corporate commitments including our critical role as a UNFCCC Race to Zero Accelerator organisation. We will also track and evaluate the sustainability commitments of our Gold Leaf Members through annual 360 reviews, with the ultimate aim of ratcheting up ambition and action across the network.

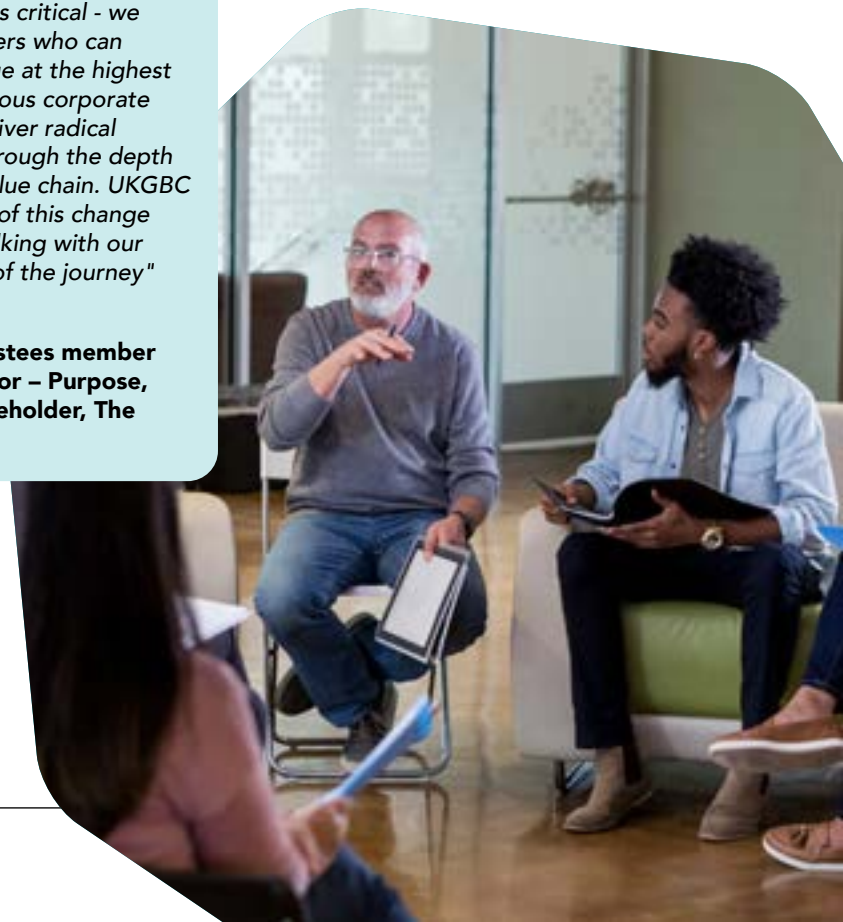
In all instances, success will be measured through tangible impact and change – with individuals taking bold action and organisations transforming from the inside out, significantly reducing emissions and increasing positive impact year-on-year.

### Critical success measures:

- % of delegates from UKGBC leadership programmes who have taken bolder action within their businesses or beyond
- % of business members signed up to UNFCCC Race to Zero campaign
- Evidence of reductions in the overall carbon footprint of UKGBC's Gold Leaf member community (like for like)

*"Transformation is people-led, and if we are to achieve the pace and scale of change required to deliver a net zero and climate resilient built environment then bold leadership is critical - we need thinkers and doers who can deliver systems change at the highest level, strive for ambitious corporate commitments and deliver radical operational reform through the depth and breadth of our value chain. UKGBC is a powerful catalyst of this change and committed to walking with our members every step of the journey"*

**Judith Everett**  
**UKGBC Board of Trustees member and Executive Director – Purpose, Sustainability & Stakeholder, The Crown Estate**



## Businesses: Goal 5

Consistent standards and metrics for built assets have been developed and are in widespread usage, and the cost of carbon is increasingly factored into investment and financing decision-making.

Defining the parameters and metrics of success, creating clarity, and effectively monitoring progress are key if the industry is to collectively realise our shared ambition of built assets that are net zero carbon, climate resilient, and maximise environmental net gain. Therefore, a core component of UKGBC's work through to 2025 will be the strengthening and delivery of existing targets, standards and metrics, and the origination of new versions where gaps exist.

*"The Net Zero Whole Life Carbon Roadmap was a critical juncture for the built environment in addressing exactly how and when our sector will cohesively reduce emissions to achieve our net zero 2050 target. The development of similar pathways for climate resilience and environmental net gain are now urgent priorities, as are the identification of corresponding metrics and standards at the asset level, in order to drive the sector forwards around a set of comprehensive industry targets and deliver tangible impact at critical key milestones."*

**Alastair Mant**  
Director of Business Transformation

Through continued collaboration, UKGBC will focus on the creation, dissemination, and institutionalisation of agreed industry-wide standards, metrics and guidance that will enable more robust and credible means of financing, verifying and reporting on new and existing buildings as net zero carbon. We will support the development of science-based, industry-wide net zero carbon buildings performance targets (in-use and embodied) to underpin the credibility of net zero carbon buildings claims. We will match this with a renewed focus on pricing the real cost of carbon into investment and financial decisions, to truly transform the market.

With regard to climate resilience, there is currently no single, recognised set of targets or pathway for building climate resilience and achieving environmental net gain for the built environment industry. Therefore, once again through wide collaboration, we plan to co-create these to provide the industry with a sectoral roadmap of key targets, milestones and recommendations in order to drive forwards the necessary government interventions, systems change, business transformation, innovation and financial flows required to achieve a resilient built environment that supports thriving natural capital.

### Critical success measures:

- Number of UK buildings verified to a Net Zero Carbon Buildings standard
- Evidence of buy in and adoption of both Whole Life Carbon Net Zero Roadmap and Resilience & Nature Roadmap (yet to be developed) for the UK built environment



## Businesses: Goal 6

Businesses and professionals throughout the value chain and across the UK are collaborating to identify challenges and solutions, and to define and adopt best practice guidance.

Advancing Net Zero will continue to be UKGBC's largest and now central programme as we maintain the momentum gained through the UK's hosting of COP26 in 2021. We will ensure that government, industry and members deliver on the commitments made, continually striving for more ambition and action through to 2025.

The programme, now managed through comprehensive 3-year cycles, will continue to promote the urgency and achievability of net zero carbon buildings and enable built assets to advance towards net zero by 2050

### Our approach:

- Defines ambitious and consistent commitments and standards.
- Identifies challenges, solutions and best practices.
- Increases knowledge and skills across the industry.

We will prioritise the promotion of circular practices to reduce the dependence of the sector on scarce natural materials, and to address the critical importance of whole life carbon reduction.

UKGBC will also continue to galvanise government and industry support around the equal imperatives of adaptation and biodiversity protection via the Climate Resilience and Nature programme. Also now managed as a cohesive 3-year programme, this has evolved to further support the identification and management of climate-related risks, promote resilience and the need to adapt to the impacts of climate change, as well as facilitate the development of a built environment that prioritises environmental net gain (through increasing the capacity of biodiversity and ecological and natural capital).

To support the sourcing, advancement and scaling of the innovations and solutions required to drive transformative change with the property and construction sector – and enhance collaboration between innovators and corporates, UKGBC will also continue to activate the network via innovation challenges and the Solutions Library.

### Critical success measures:

- Number & sub-sector representation of businesses taking part in UKGBC convened Task Groups, Forums, Innovation Challenges and Collaboration Labs
- Evidence of take up and adoption of solutions within UKGBC Solutions Library by businesses in and beyond the membership



*"Through radical collaboration, UKGBC is delivering a greater impact for the built environment. However, creating tangible impact doesn't happen overnight and frequently more time is needed to achieve the depth and reach we need. With a longer programme duration, we will now be working with our bold partners over a three-year timetable to meet our collective objectives. We are sharpening our focus to drive forward both the Advancing Net Zero and Climate Resilience and Nature programmes with valued partners who support our work."*

**Lorna Walker**  
UKGBC Board of Trustees member and  
Chief Operating Officer and Head of  
ESG at Modomo

## Businesses: Goal 7

Knowledge, skills, and competencies are increasing in order to accelerate the industry's transformative change.

To 2025 and beyond, UKGBC will reach and meaningfully engage with as many people as possible relevant to our mission; inspiring and supporting them to deliver a sustainable and net zero built environment.

We will continue to set the agenda for, and cater to, the specific development needs of our members and guest delegates – from introductory through to expert – and we will deliver our learning portfolio through a range of engaging, versatile and experiential formats. These formats will include bite-sized learning as well as video-on-demand and deep, immersive learning on live projects.

As our reach extends across the breadth and depth of the built environment value chain, UKGBC will expand our learning opportunities to meet the needs of new audiences – both in terms of content and format – and through partnering with global learning platforms, to reach completely new markets.

Across the learning portfolio, tangible outcomes in terms of acquired or improved knowledge, skills and competencies will be measured, monitored and reported on.

Additionally, to condition the ground for the skills required to deliver on the net zero future of the built environment, including the Net Zero Whole Life Carbon Roadmap, UKGBC will deliver collaborative research to map the regional skills, jobs and capabilities needed, identifying which existing jobs and skills will no longer be required and consider the economic and social benefits of upskilling the nation. These findings will then provide a core foundation for our levelling up advocacy towards the next general election.

### Critical success measure:

- Feedback obtained from individuals taking part in UKGBC convened learning opportunities that it has deepened their knowledge, skills or competencies

*"To support the transformation of the built environment, organisations need to rapidly build capability and employees must develop skills and competencies at a faster pace than ever. Sustainability and non-sustainability professionals and leaders, both need to upskill and drive process and behaviour change for sustainability to be embedded into the everyday decision-making business operations. UKGBC aims to support through its portfolio of learning and leadership offerings, at scale and with greater impact to meet member needs, as well as convening professionals and leaders to share knowledge in more effective ways."*

**Elfrida Hamilton-Russell**  
**Director of Leadership and**  
**Experiential Learning**



## About UKGBC

- UKGBC is the industry led membership network radically transforming the sustainability of the built environment.
  - We represent the unified and progressive voice of our industry's current and future leaders, working together to deliver a just transition in response to the climate and nature crises.
  - Powered by over 650 leading organisations, UKGBC is at the forefront of driving sustainable solutions to transform our buildings, towns, cities and infrastructure so that people and nature thrive.
- When you join UKGBC you are in good company; our membership is diverse, spanning the breadth of the value chain, but unreservedly committed to transforming our organisations, influencing change and advancing the industry so that together, we can go further, faster.
  - The challenges ahead are plenty, but with the support of UKGBC membership, every organisation has the opportunity to thrive.

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