

People Planet Purpose

2020-2030:
A DECADE OF ACTION

2024
UPDATE

 **VolkerWessels UK**

Our framework for a sustainable business



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INTRODUCTION

The construction industry holds a privileged position in society. Contributing significantly to the national economy, we have the ability to instigate change on a level that can have real impact. At VolkerWessels UK, it remains our ambition to deliver projects that demonstrate design, construction and engineering excellence. These projects enhance the way we live, through innovative engineering solutions across the civil engineering and construction sectors including rail, highways, airports, defence, marine, energy, water, and environmental infrastructure, but only if delivered sustainably, responsibly and with a desire to unlock the long-term social value embedded within these projects.

The last 20 years have seen the business requirements and understanding of Sustainability grow beyond recognition. Carbon reduction, energy management, enhancing social value and inclusion are now primary concerns in our business and in the eyes of our stakeholders.

Since its original publication in 2020, People-Planet-Purpose has become more established around our business, and we have achieved some notable successes across each of the pillars. This was recognised at the 2023 Planet Mark Awards where we were awarded the prestigious 'Best Company' accolade for outstanding results and 'impressive clear articulation' of the positive impacts of People-Planet-Purpose in all aspects of the 'Measure, Engage, Communicate' process.

Our ESG Leadership Group, chaired by our Corporate Responsibility Director and attended by our Managing Directors, Group Procurement Director, heads of sustainability and I, to provide a dedicated platform to formally discuss the strategy and its implementation to ensure we further challenge our approach. Our review in 2024 resulted in the addition of a few new metrics but overall we are happy that our approach is still reflective of our ambitions. This document provides a look back at our performance since 2020 and an update on our key activities during 2023.

We will continue to remain bold and resolute in our commitment to respect the environments in which we work, alongside the desire to grow economically and to leave a legacy we are proud of.

Richard Offord
CEO - VolkerWessels UK



VISION / 2020-2030

IS OUR 'DECADE OF ACTION'

VolkerWessels UK's vision is to be the construction contractor of choice by exceeding our stakeholders' expectations, being sustainable, innovative and future-oriented. It is our desire to grow responsibly, with respect for communities and the natural environment, and to leave a legacy we are proud of.

We will use 2020-2030 as our 'decade of action' to take bold action to achieve this vision, aligning our approach internally to our organisational values and existing strategies, and externally to our client expectations, as well as to international, national and industry best practice, including to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's).

We will continue to respect our workforce as the foundation of our business by making safety and wellbeing a priority, forging relationships with likeminded clients and supply chain partners, actively seeking to unlock our collective ambition to deliver long-term social value and support our workforce and supply chain in delivering VolkerWessels UK's sustainability ambitions.



THE PILLARS OF OUR RESPONSIBLE AND SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS



These pillars will act as our guidepost to ensure we make corporate decisions informed by our inherent culture to do business in the right way, as well as recognising that social and environmental risks have interdependencies that touch every part of our business and our supply chain.

Each one of our pillars has three themes and is supported either by a working group or function within the business that aims to challenge current thinking, set ambitious targets, develop best practice, share learning and provide a support network to enable the business to grow collaboratively and innovatively.

PEOPLE

Putting people at the heart of our approach

Empowering our workforce to be the drivers of sustainable and responsible change will be key to the delivery of our strategy; they are the foundation of our business so their safety and wellbeing will remain our priority, as will our desire to ensure our workplace is an inclusive and inspiring place to be.

PLANET

Protecting and enhancing the natural environment

Each of our projects is unique and, as such, the environmental risks and opportunities that they present to us are unique. Our ability to address these professionally and creatively, with a focus on net-positive solutions, will ensure we act responsibly and pro-actively.

PURPOSE

Being a trusted, forward thinking and respected business of choice by delivering long-term social value

Making responsible and forward-thinking choices about the way our projects are executed, and how they will deliver social value, will support our overall vision to be the contractor of choice and encourage us to be a good neighbour in the communities in which we work.

EMBEDDING OUR APPROACH

This strategy sets the strategic direction for VolkerWessels UK and is fully endorsed by our Board. To fully embed the People-Planet-Purpose pillars of this strategy into our operations, and make sustainability inherent to the way we do business, it has three things at its core.

The first is the belief that being a responsible, sustainable business must be delivered with **substance and integrity**, the second is that it must be delivered with **people at its heart**, and finally it needs to **connect seamlessly** with every part of our business.

It sets a structure that enables us to talk consistently to our stakeholders and, importantly, offers flexibility to our Business Units and projects to direct focus to those areas of greatest value to their stakeholders. This approach engenders trust, respecting that embedding sustainability must be an agile and empowering process at the same time as providing standardisation, transparency and a collective ambition.

To support our ambitions, we will partner with external providers who will ensure our approaches are robust and ambitious.

Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) provide a blueprint for the transition needed to a healthier planet and a more just and fairer world - for present and future generations. The 17 Global Goals have been adopted by world leaders and aim to create a better world by 2030, catalyse global action to end poverty, fight inequality and stop climate change. We align our strategy to these goals.



MEASURES



Measuring and sharing the progress we are making supports our desire to be transparent and build a culture where sustainability is inherent to our business model.

We have set measurable and meaningful targets to monitor progress and challenge ourselves towards stretched, exciting and ongoing progression, alongside highlighting the need for more qualitative sharing of best practice.

Quantitative Measures

Primary measures have been established and are reviewed on an annual basis. Targets have been set for the year ahead as well as for 2025 and 2030. These will either be a quantitative target or a 'measure only' target, where we want to measure year on year improvement only. Where new metrics are added, we will seek to include available data for previous years wherever possible. These metrics help us to direct resources to specific areas of focus, and to track implementation across the business.

To quantify the added value to society and the natural environment, we have adopted a range of metrics from the Impact Evaluation Standard, which are recorded in the Thrive platform, to present a defensible and transparent way of reporting tangible social value. Each metric carries a financial proxy value representing the benefit to the individual and to society.

Qualitative Indicators

We recognise that all indicators of success can't be quantified. Qualitative narrative, such as case studies and best practice add greater depth and richness than numbers alone can provide. This supports our desire to build a culture around sustainability and endorses the spirit of our ambition to contribute positively to society and leave a legacy we are proud of.



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IMPACT EVALUATION STANDARD

SAFETY AND WELLBEING

The provision of a safe working environment which prevents incidents or injury to our workforce and anyone else affected by our work.

A workforce that maintains good mental and physical wellbeing, free from ill-health.



Principal measures	2020 Target	2020 Actual	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Target	2025 Target	2030 Target
Accident Frequency Rate (AFR)	0	0.10	0.07	0.09	0.07	0	0	0
Accident Incident Rate (AIR)	0	247	179	235	171	0	0	0
Lost Time Frequency Rate (LTFR)	New metric in 2024	0.20	0.17	0.17	0.17	Measure only	Measure only	Measure only
All Reported Injuries (ARI)	New metric in 2024	1.22	0.94	0.96	0.90	Measure only	Measure only	Measure only
Incident Frequency Rate (IFR)	New metric in 2024	1.12	0.87	0.87	0.83	Measure only	Measure only	Measure only
Percentage of Mental Health Champions across the business	5%	4%	4%	5%	4%	5%	6%	7.5%

Qualitative Indicators of Success

Improving safety metrics are a result of an improving safety culture. Whilst overall culture is challenging to measure, we will continue to prioritise this through our behavioural campaigns, sharing lessons learnt and promoting initiatives to improve processes and safety controls. A broader range of metrics will continue to be captured which will be used to support our growth in this area.

The VolkerWessels UK Occupational Health team assesses the impact of work on health and conversely that everyone is fit for work.

We not only consider the physical impacts but the mental impacts too as these can also affect and an individual's ability to work. The Occupational Health team is there every step of the way from the beginning of employment.

Helping our workforce maintain a healthy work life balance will remain a priority, as will our commitment to supporting a number of national and industry specific pledges and maintaining our accreditation to SEQOHS for our Occupational Health service.

OUR PROGRESS IN 2023

Safety and wellbeing are key to maintaining an effective working environment and a healthy workforce. We continue to strive to prevent work-related injuries and ill-health amongst anyone working on our behalf.

We recognise that an individual's sense of wellbeing is inherently linked to a safe workplace where opinions are valued, and participation is encouraged. Training and development of our employees enables us to ensure that they understand their responsibilities, and how individual contribution to our safety culture delivers regular improvement in our standards. As our business develops its services, including in more complex aspects of construction, we must ensure that our workforce is fully engaged with the correct skills, knowledge, experience, and behaviours.

In 2023 our All-Reported Injury Rate (ARI) dropped to its lowest recorded level of 0.90, down from 0.96 in 2022. This was achieved due to drops in both our Accident Frequency Rate (AFR) and Minor Injury Frequency Rate (IFR). The 2023 AFR was 0.07, down from 0.09 in 2022, and our IFR was 0.83, down from 0.87 in 2022, demonstrating our commitment to preventing work-related injuries.

We developed the training for our mental health champions, in partnership with our provider Ripple & Co, to include more detailed sections on suicide awareness and conversation skills. It is important that we enhance the skills of our mental health champions, so that they are suitably armed with the best techniques to assess and interpret a situation, in order to successfully signpost individuals to the right form of support. Feedback has been hugely positive from participants on both the refresher course and those starting out on the new champion course.



Health awareness is key

We continued our occupational health awareness campaigns with a mixture of textual information and participation sessions from external speakers. It is important that these campaigns continue to focus on key health issues, with the correct balance of how health affects work and how work affects health. In 2023 campaigns included diet and nutrition, mental health, autism, cancer, heart health and sleep.



FAIRNESS, INCLUSION AND RESPECT

We will ensure that VolkerWessels UK is thoroughly inclusive of people from all lifestyles and is enriched by a diversity of perspectives, cultures and backgrounds, characterised by fairness and equality of opportunity.



Principal measures	2020 Target	2020 Actual	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Target	2025 Target	2030 Target
Percentage of FIR Champions across the business	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3.5%	4%	5%
Percentage of current employees who have received FIR training since 2020	New metric in 2023	20%	44%	53%	55%	75%	85%	100%
Percentage of employees who agree that the company values the diversity of its employees, and that they are treated fairly and with respect	New metric in 2023	-	84%	87%	84%	85%	90%	95%

Qualitative Indicators of Success

Many of the benefits associated with FIR initiatives take time to embed and be realised in a business. Statistics will demonstrate movement, but it will be the results of our employee survey and the general 'feeling' around our offices and sites that will help us understand how a diverse workforce is affecting our culture.

Communication remains key, so we will continue to review how the FIR message reaches our teams across a broad range of initiatives as well as adopting inclusive policies and best practice models.

Storytelling and case studies will be pivotal in sharing the message and promoting success. We will also be reviewing the training available to our employees to ensure it is specific to their role and responsibilities.

Everyone has a role to play to ensure we remain united in creating an inclusive environment. Our refreshed Fairness, Inclusion and Respect strategy sets out our plans to deliver activities relating to eight FIR focus groups, which will help us achieve our strategic vision of creating a truly inclusive working environment where everyone feels valued, appreciated, and at ease to be their authentic selves.

OUR PROGRESS IN 2023

It remains our resolute aim that VolkerWessels UK is a welcoming place of work, where everyone feels included, valued and free to be their authentic selves.

During the year we rebranded from Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) to Fairness, Inclusion and Respect (FIR) to better reflect industry terminology, and launched our RESPECT programme. At the very heart of the RESPECT programme is a simple message - to respect our colleagues, even if they are different to you. It is about treating everyone in a way that they, and you, would like to be treated. The launch included a programme about Banter, raising awareness of both the positive and negative aspects and the impacts it can have.

To support the RESPECT programme, we launched a FIR learning portal for employees to access information and resources around a wide range of FIR topics. This supported our ongoing commitment to ensure that all new employees receive FIR training, delivering sessions to over 400 people in 2023, as well as ensuring that existing employees have access to company-wide awareness campaigns which included neurodiversity and Pride and National Inclusion Week.

To ensure we take informed, positive action to improve the diversity of our workforce, we created a FIR PowerBI dashboard which enables us to anonymously assess the protected characteristics of our employees. One such area that our data showed that taking positive action would be beneficial was the attraction and retention of female talent.



To support this, during 2023 we commenced a successful trial of the EMPOWER career development programme specifically for women, launched a female mentoring programme in VolkerFitzpatrick, enhanced our maternity, adoption and paternity policies, and continued to use gender decoding technology in our job adverts to remove unintentional bias in the language used. These ideas were generated by our Women in Construction working group.

Our FIR Champions continue to engage fully to raise awareness and provide a safe network of likeminded individuals. The FIR Champions delivered countless events on our sites and offices, facilitated three Network Groups - LGBT+, menopause and the newly launched Parents and Carers group - and hosted monthly calls to share important messages and information. We also increased the number of FIR Champions around the business from 102 in 2022 to 126 in 2023.

Celebrating FIR success

In 2023, we are proud to have climbed ten places in the 2023 National Centre for Diversity Top 100 Most Inclusive Workplaces Index, from 15th place in 2022, to 5th. We were also awarded Engineering Company of the Year.

The National Centre for Diversity's

No. **5**

2023 Most Inclusive UK Employers

**ENGINEERING
COMPANY
OF THE YEAR**

The National Centre for Diversity's
2023 Most Inclusive UK Employers

We are also pleased to share that we successfully re-accredited to the National Centre for Diversity 'Investors in Diversity' award. The accreditation included a series of 1-2-1 interviews, a focus group interview and a supporting evidence submission consisting of over 160 posters, blogs, social media posts relating directly to FIR as well as evidence that FIR is embedded into training, awards, management /board meetings, development opportunities and surveys.

EMPOWERING SUSTAINABLE LEADERS

Our workforce will be supported in their ambitions to enhance their own skills, knowledge and experience in order to embrace and instigate sustainable and responsible change and inspire others to follow.



Principal measures	2020 Target	2020 Actual	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Target	2025 Target	2030 Target
Percentage of current employees who have received sustainability training since 2020	15%	3%	12%	15%	18%	45%	50%	100%
Percentage of employees in 'high influencing roles' attending function specific sustainability related training	New metric in 2023	-	-	-	25%	30%	75%	90%

Qualitative Indicators of Success

Empowerment is not solely a result of classroom courses, but also our ability to find alternative ways to address development and helping employees to feel confident in making the right decisions and bring others along on the journey. Approaches will need to be varied; the right solution for the business area and individual.

OUR PROGRESS IN 2023

Providing our employees with access to a wide range of sustainability related learning resources is key to ensuring our workforce is empowered to support the delivery of our People-Planet-Purpose framework. This includes general awareness as well as specific, targeted training on topics such as low carbon materials, sustainable procurement and working with wildlife.

We continue to host monthly 'Sustainability Share' sessions to provide sustainability updates and examples of best practice. These sessions are open to the entire workforce and we invite external speakers to talk around specialist subjects. These sessions were attended by 600 people throughout the year and, during 2023, topics delivered included presentations from key charity partners, roundtables with our senior leaders, updates from our social value teams and carbon reduction awareness. Learning, updates and general guidance is available via our internal Sustainability Hub.

We amended our principle sustainability training measure in 2023 to provide a more robust way of demonstrating the ways we provide training, education and learning opportunities to all employees, with a particular focus on those employees in high influencing roles. Work commenced during the year to build a sustainability training programme and we look forward to rolling this out in 2024.



VolkerHighways deliver IEMA 'Leading with Sustainability'

On behalf of VolkerHighways, the Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) facilitated the delivery of four 'Leading with Sustainability' training sessions which were attended by 50 of our senior leadership team including Operations Directors and Managers, Contracts Managers and Project Managers. The half day course is designed to challenge business leaders to formulate a strategic understanding of the risks and opportunities presented by an ever-changing environment, whilst reiterating the importance of understanding personal obligations to ensure the business remains compliant and forward thinking.



Supply Chain Sustainability School

Our ongoing partner status with the Supply Chain Sustainability School ensures access to over 3,500 sustainability related learning materials, and 120+ e-learning modules remain free for our supply chain. Selected e-learning modules, which align with People-Planet-Purpose, are also available for our employees to access via iLearn, our internal learning management system.

Internally, this partnership has enabled over 300 of our employees to access sustainability training, e-learning and dedicated specialist support. Externally, over 1000 individuals in our supply chain were able to attend sustainability workshops and over 4000 e-learning resources were accessed.



CLIMATE, ENERGY AND EMISSIONS

Translating and taking positive action to reduce or, wherever possible, eliminate our adverse impacts on climate change.



Principal measures	2020 Target	2020 Actual	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Target	2025 Target	2030 Target
Percentage reduction in absolute Scope 1 and 2 emissions, and those Scope 3 emissions under our direct control on a rolling baseline year	-5%	-10%	+4%	-14%	+11%	-6.5%	Reduction in line with 2050 Net Zero target	
£m turnover	n/a	1,081	1,152	1,348	1,432	n/a	n/a	n/a
Percentage of total company car fleet that is electric or hybrid	Measure only	6%	50%	67%	84%	Measure only	Measure only	Measure only
Percentage of new company car orders that are electric or hybrid	Measure only	68%	82%	93%	90%	Measure only	Measure only	Measure only
Percentage of energy from renewable sources	40%	67%	68%	67%	83%	85%	95%	100%

Qualitative Indicators of Success

Our Carbon Reduction Strategy commits us to using good quality data as the cornerstone of our approach, alongside developing emission specific reduction plans, collaboration and training and education for our workforce to ensure we meet our ambitions targets.

Read our carbon reduction strategy [here](#).

OUR PROGRESS IN 2023

The effects of climate change remain ever present, with temperature extremes, flooding, droughts and wildfires a reality for populations across every part of the globe. We continue to be resolute in our desire to reduce our carbon impact in line with the science to limit warming to 1.5 degrees. To facilitate this, we have placed focus on four drivers of change - having robust data to facilitate informed decision making, continuing to develop targeted reduction plans specific to our emission sources, raising awareness across all levels of our business through training and education, and working collaboratively with our value chain.

As we head into 2024, we will finalise our validation with the Science Based Targets Initiative 'Business Ambition to 1.5°C', confirming that we have committed to setting a science-based target that is in line with a 1.5°C future, and we will commence implementing the requirements of PAS 2080 across our business.

We continue to have our carbon footprint externally certified by Planet Mark, in line with ISO 14064:1, with the certification of our 2023 footprint marking the thirteenth year of this relationship. Whilst our footprint increased by 11% from 2022, we continue to make strides to make changes to our business processes to avoid, switch and improve our approach to carbon reduction.

Fuel continues to represent a notable proportion of our carbon footprint. To support our efforts in reducing fuel used in company cars, our alternative fuel vehicle statistics continue to improve; at the end of 2023 an impressive 84% of our company car fleet and 90% of new vehicle orders were either electric or hybrid. The move to electrify our commercial fleet is growing at a steady rate, with 4% of our fleet now fully electric.

Operationally, our projects challenge material and site set up choices to reduce emissions. This includes the use of warm asphalt, low carbon concrete, hybrid plant and equipment, and energy efficient welfare units.



Increasing RAP content in wearing course

To support West Berkshire's goal of becoming carbon neutral zero by 2030, VolkerHighways collaborated with FM Conway to resurface part of the A4 from Hungerford to Newbury using a 20% RAP wearing course. This initiative yielded several benefits, including an 8-12% reduction in the need for new high-quality aggregate, reuse of known quality stone in the wearing course, and fewer vehicle movements. Additionally, the use of brighter road studs enhanced driver safety, and the reduced scheme duration minimised disruption to road users and provided extra health and safety benefits.



Hybrid generator trials

To support National Highways' goal of Net Zero plant and cabins by 2030, VolkerLaser and Sunbelt trailed the Trime Solar Hybrid Diesel Generator. This generator, a potential replacement for 20-40 KVA diesel generators on sites, was tested for powering security cabins, lighting, and cameras. The trial demonstrated several benefits, including a more compact design compared to other solar units, reduced emissions and noise, lower fuel usage, and



the inclusion of telemetry and a screen. Trials of this nature are essential to achieving zero emission sites.

RESPONSIBLE MANAGEMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Environmental risks and opportunities will be managed professionally, responsibly and innovatively.



Principal measures	2020 Target	2020 Actual	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Target	2025 Target	2030 Target
Number of projects implementing verified biodiversity enhancements	New metric in 2024	-	-	-	-	Measure only	Measure only	Measure only
Hours spent supporting community initiatives that enhance the natural environment	Data collection only	-	1510	750	681	900	1000	1500

Qualitative Indicators of Success

We will continue to collectively share ways to achieve net positive benefits to the natural environment.

Implicit within this theme is our ongoing commitment to reduce other environmental impacts such as nuisance and pollution. This will be managed through the Aspects and Impacts assessments of our activities.



OUR PROGRESS IN 2023

Our ongoing certification to ISO 14001 demonstrates our proactive approach to environmental protection through our processes, procedures and objectives. Our Sustainability teams continue to work closely with our pre-construction and operational teams so that interventions are made early to maximise the opportunity for improvement.

During 2023, we placed greater focus on biodiversity enhancement by formalising our partnership with GreenTheUK. The term biodiversity is used to describe the variety of all life on earth and how their delicate balance is essential for survival. When everything works together, they provide humans with everything necessary for survival including fresh water, food and medicines, and limiting rising temperatures. However, when this delicate ecological balance is disturbed, the impacts can be devastating.

GreenTheUK work with charity partners to give businesses access to biodiversity projects across the country including tree planting, wildflower restoration, kelp restoration and oyster restoration, as well as tree, wildflower and vegetable planting in schools.

Our VolkerStevin and Boskalis Westminster (VSBW) joint venture, delivering the Southsea Coastal Scheme, partnered with GreenTheUK to sponsor the Solent Seascape Project, whose aim is to restore and reconnect habitats across the Solent Strait – a diverse estuarine system between the Isle of Wight and mainland England. The project was to deploy native oysters to a newly created habitat, and Emma Ward, Head of Sustainability and Inclusion, and Sophie Carter, Customer Experience Coordinator, were two of 126 community volunteers who took part in oyster biosecurity event at the University of Portsmouth ahead of releasing the latest batch of oysters to the River Hamble oyster reef development.

VolkerHighways' BaNES contract with Bath & North East Somerset Council focuses on sustainable highway maintenance and construction. The project earned a Green Apple Environment Award for its environmental efforts, including the installation of 132 solar PV panels, 6 batteries, 6 EV charging points, adopting a thermal road repairs method, and setting up various bird and bat boxes around the depot.



Protecting biodiversity

As part of VolkerStevin's project with the Environment Agency to raise and strengthen the existing 6.5km embankment between Scots Float and Rye Harbour on the eastern banks of the River Rother, a huge array of environmental risks were identified that required careful management.

A consultant ecologist was employed to ensure the protection of a variety of animals such as the controlled capture and relocation of 21 great crested newts, 687 smooth newts, 472 slow worms, 221 common lizards and 15 grass snakes. There was also over 5km of newt and reptile fencing erected to provide a barrier to control the movement of reptiles away from the works area.



Habitat restoration

VolkerRail's Hope Valley Railway Upgrade, enhancing the Manchester to Sheffield line to enable passenger trains to overtake slower freight trains, incorporates a habitat restoration scheme under its Landscape and Ecology Management Plan to mitigate habitat loss from construction. The initiative has successfully planted 11,600 native scrubs, 169 trees, and 120 meters of hedgerow both onsite and on adjacent third-party land.

CIRCULAR ECONOMY

A fully embedded approach to a circular economy which aims to design for sustainability, minimises waste and make the most of resources.



Principal measures	2020 Target	2020 Actual	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Target	2025 Target	2030 Target
% reduction in tonnes of waste generated per £100,000 turnover against 2019 baseline	-5%	-38%	-2%	-26%	-44%	-45%	-50%	-60%
% of waste diverted from landfill through reuse, recovery and recycling initiatives to achieve our ultimate aim of consistently operating zero waste construction sites	94%	95%	97%	95%	98%	97%	98%	100%

Qualitative Indicators of Success

The transition from ‘waste and materials management’ to a circular economy is one that will require education and training to support a new suite of metrics. We will seek engagement from our supply chain and Clients to support our ambitions in this space.

Materials management will remain at the heart of our approach in order instil best practice both internally as well as through our supply chain.

OUR PROGRESS IN 2023

It continues to be our aim to reduce the total quantity of waste generated by our operations, with the ultimate ambition to operate zero waste construction sites. This actively promotes the waste hierarchy by focusing on eliminating waste through great design and excellent on-site practices before choosing reuse and recycling options in favour of disposal.

Whilst year on year, the types of work we undertake changes which can impact on waste control options, in 2023 we achieved a 44% reduction in the amount of waste generated per £100,000 of turnover against our 2019 baseline, and diverted 98% of waste from landfill.



Combining sustainable alternatives with traditional construction methods

At VolkerFitzpatrick Apex site in Camden, we combined sustainable alternatives with traditional construction methods by using bricks made from excavated clay from the site to construct the basement perimeter walls.

Working with client, Reef, and architect, Bennetts Associates, the clay subsoil from site was sent to brickmakers HG Matthews, who combined it with sand and straw to create unfired bricks known as earth blocks. The earth blocks, which are tested to British standards, regulations and strengths, were sent back to site to create the perimeter walls in the basement of the new buildings.

The Apex is the first building of its scale to make use of site subsoil as a construction material, and the aim is to set a pioneering precedent on using earth blocks for the construction industry. In total almost 14,000 earth blocks were laid, covering over 90m³.

Unlike standard blockwork, which has limited recycling potential, earth blocks can be broken down and reused, or returned to nature at the end of their lifespan. As such, the earth block can store the building resource within the walls of the development throughout the lifetime of the building. This natural material also brings climatic benefits to buildings – it regulates indoor temperature and humidity levels and purifies the air by trapping airborne pollutants.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYABILITY

Raising awareness of the opportunities that exist within the construction industry and ultimately promote VolkerWessels UK as the employer of choice.



Principal measures	2020 Target	2020 Actual	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Target	2025 Target	2030 Target
Number of days provision of work experience placements	425	454	1429	1754	2261	2300	2500	3000
Percentage of people in 'Earn and Learn' employment in line with our commitments to the 5% Club <i>(includes apprentices, sponsored students and employees supported in further education or on formal graduate training programmes)</i>	5%	7%	8%	10%	12%	5%	5%	5%
Hours spent undertaking school and further education visits	Data collection only	438	784	1738	2738	2750	3000	3500
Number of people hours of mock interviews, CV writing, careers advice delivered <i>(calculated by multiplying the number of volunteers by the number of beneficiaries in line with IES methodology)</i>	New metric in 2023	160	967	207	1545	1500	1600	2000

Qualitative Indicators of Success

The business benefits of a robust schools engagement strategy may not be realised for many years to come, but it is our role now to ignite an interest in VolkerWessels UK and the employment opportunities that exist to help support other attract policies and contribute to the well documented skills shortage.

The way each part of the business interprets our Schools and Further Education Strategy will reflect their own needs and support specific industry needs. There will also be overlap here with our volunteering commitments.

There will be a focus on the completion of apprenticeships across the range of focus areas e.g. reskill, upskill, school leavers, retirement programmes and people who return to work.

Our 5% commitment for 'Earn and Learn' employees is in line with the national 5% Club campaign and includes apprenticeships at all levels, formalised graduate training programmes and sponsored students.

OUR PROGRESS IN 2023

We continued to implement our education engagement strategy, with the aim to 'raise aspirations and broaden horizons' for young people, and we found great fulfilment in participating in a variety of events with schools, colleges, and institutions of further education during 2023.

We launched the Thrive Education Engagement portal in 2021 and since then we have received over 325 applications for support, with almost 81% relating to requests for work experience and 13% relating to career opportunities. We have been able to offer 2,260 days of work experience in 2023, an increase of 29% since 2022.

We currently have 444 people in 'earn and learn' roles across our business, compared to 380 in 2022, representing 12% of our total workforce which far out achieves our commitment to the 5% Club. This is made up of 266 apprentices, 39 supported in further education, 34 sponsored students and 105 on formal graduate training programmes.

Jayne Youell, Apprenticeship Lead for VolkerWessels UK, reflects on the growth of our apprenticeship programme in recent years: "We've seen our apprenticeship numbers increase by almost 100% in the last 5 years which is reflective of the benefit individuals on these kinds of structured programmes bring to our business. It's often a surprise to colleagues how many apprentices we have in the business - not only are we bringing in new talent but also developing our existing staff.

We offer a range of Level 2-7 apprenticeships, across 57 different areas - from accountancy, civil engineering, chartered surveyor, project manager, management, rail engineering, HR, data and risk management to train driver, highways maintenance, business admin, PR, sustainability, and lots more in between, the options are endless and suit all the job families within the business. We have established support programmes in place, committed to ensure our apprentices have the best experience and achieve great results."



VolkerRail Education Ambassadors programme

VolkerRail initiated a forward-thinking Education Ambassadors Programme which began in January 2023. This innovative programme successfully enlisted the support and commitment of 33 of its employees, all of whom have volunteered to participate in various education engagement activities.

This includes attending careers fairs, championing work experience, providing curriculum support, delivering STEM activities and conducting mock interviews. Ambassadors follow a code of conduct, attend quarterly update meetings and have an active Teams channel for collaboration and sharing best practice.

Notably, these ambassadors represent a broad spectrum of employees, including different ages, genders, levels of seniority, and functional areas within the company.



CHARITY, VOLUNTEERING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Establishing meaningful relationships with charitable bodies and local communities which provide mutually beneficial opportunities.



Principal measures	2020 Target	2020 Actual	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Target	2025 Target	2030 Target
Number of hours spent on non-education related volunteering in the local community	Data collection only	4699	2273	4585	4275	4200	4300	4500
Percentage of employees engaged in volunteering activities	New metric in 2023	-	4%	6%	6%	7%	10%	15%
Number of organisations supported by our volunteers	New metric in 2024	-	-	-	77	Measure only	Measure only	Measure only
£ ('000) donated to charitable and community initiatives	New metric in 2024	116	168	143	210	Measure only	Measure only	Measure only

Qualitative Indicators of Success

We will continue to report on the financial contribution made to our chosen charities and will work closely with them to get to heart of their approach, and how our support will add value to the charity. Case studies and storytelling are imperative to help engage hearts and minds.

The launch of our structured approach to volunteering has enabled employees to build on existing relationships, as well as exploring opportunities with our designated corporate charities and school links. Every employee is entitled to one days leave per year to undertake volunteering activities.

OUR PROGRESS IN 2023

Since the introduction of the Thrive social value platform in January 2021, there has been a 350% increase in the number of projects recording activities that generate social value. This growth has allowed us to recognise the excellent efforts of our teams and gauge the beneficial effects we're achieving in communities via the Impact Evaluation Standard.

In 2023, the total social value generated was £650m, with £65m generated from activities that exclude metrics associated with spend. This is an important distinction as whilst spend, particularly in areas local to our projects, is an important indicator of an embedded approach to sustainability, it can mask the smaller, yet arguably more impactful elements of social value, such as work with charities and schools.

Throughout 2023, our projects and sites have embraced our ambition to more build meaningful partnerships with charities and communities. We offered 144 volunteering opportunities via our Volunteering Portal, through which 267 employees undertook volunteering activities equating to 2,723 hours of valuable support to 77 charities and community organisations.

We continue to provide well needed financial support to our charity and community partners. Through our close call programme, we raised a total of £40,873, 50% of which was donated to our corporate charity, Save the Children, and the other 50% divided between our business unit partners of choice which included CRASH, St Richards Hospice and Raise your Hands.



Examples of the volunteering work we were involved with:

The VolkerFitzpatrick team, as part of the Heathrow 7 Runway Rehabilitation project, visited Hedgewood School, a special education institution tailored specifically for children diagnosed with Autism who are facing various learning challenges. The activities included the planting of sensory flowers, which are known to stimulate the senses and support sensory integration and the replenishment of the school's planters with rich compost soil to ensure healthy plant growth.



VolkerLaser joined 'The Great British Beach Clean' which is a week-long event where hundreds of beach cleans take place up and down the UK. Representatives from our Eastcliff Viaduct project joined colleagues from our Medway bridge site to undertake a litter picking along the shoreline of Whitstable beach.

At Christmas VolkerStevin supported the charity 'Love, Amelia', by getting involved in the 'Giving tree' campaign. The charity provided gift tags providing details of the presents that some children from disadvantaged families would like to receive for Christmas.

PROCURING WITH PURPOSE

We want to ensure all types of businesses have a fair opportunity to work with us, so we have an approach to procurement with sustainability embedded into it. This includes working with SME's, Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises (VCSE'S) and organisations with diverse leadership teams. We also recognise and understand the importance of procuring locally and the benefits this brings to communities and families.

Principal measures	2020 Target	2020 Actual	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Target	2025 Target	2030 Target
Percentage of total procurement spend with SME's	60%	59%	50%	57%	50%	55%	60%	65%



Qualitative Indicators of Success

The overall aim of this metric is to raise awareness of the benefits that sound sustainability practices can bring throughout our supply chain, and we understand that this will be best achieved by seeking two-way engagement. Whilst we will capture the formal interactions we have with our supply chain in our metrics, this will only be possible by our own internal culture reflecting the desire to share this message.

In addition to the use of SME's across the business, we will also continue to broaden our supply chain to include Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises (VCSE's) as well as local suppliers and contractors.

OUR PROGRESS IN 2023

Our procurement teams continued to maintain strong relationships with our supply chain partners in 2023. During the year, 50% of our total supplier spend and 64% of the number of businesses we transacted with, were SME's. We always apply a balanced scorecard to the way we procure to ensure the solution chosen is best for the business, but these consistently high numbers demonstrate that having a strong mix of organisations who are SME's is great for our business, and for the communities in which they are based. Through our social value objectives, we also prioritise the use of organisations that are local to our projects capitalising on the benefits spending locally bring to communities and to support the growth of organisations.

The procurement team are also central to bringing sustainable innovation into our business. During the year, this has included energy monitoring solutions for our site welfare units and cabins, battery storage units, the trialling of plant and equipment with lower environmental impacts and working closely with our materials suppliers to ensure we are at the forefront of trials and new products with lower embodied carbon. This information was pivotal to the implementation of site set up guidance for our projects with sustainability very much at its heart. We have also worked with our PPE supplier, Lee Brothers, to remove plastic from their deliveries.

During 2023 we worked hard to collate more detailed carbon emission data from our material suppliers. Our Carbon Reduction Strategy commits us to placing focus on those materials with the greatest impact to our carbon footprint - concrete, aggregate, asphalt, steel and timber - and we're pleased to report that good progress has been made with key suppliers. Access to product specific emission factors, alongside great relationships with our supply chain, is critical to us being able to specify and source low carbon alternatives.



WORKING GROUP CREATES SITE SET UP GUIDANCE

A cross function and business unit working group, supported by our procurement team, worked together to produce a specification for minimum standards for site set up and temporary accommodation on our construction projects with emphasis on reducing the energy consumption of the site operations and lowering the carbon impact in line with achieving Net Zero. The specification provides a hierarchical approach that identifies mandatory, recommended and 'for consideration' interventions on areas such as lighting, welfare units, utilities, heating and cooling solutions, and water. The procurement team engaged our supplies in the development of the standard to ensure our recommendations could be bought to life on all our projects.



MEASURES OVERVIEW AND PROGRESS TO DATE

Pillar	Theme	Principal measures	2020 Target	2020 Actual	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Target	2025 Target	2030 Target
People	Safety and Wellbeing	Accident Frequency Rate (AFR)	0	0.10	0.07	0.09	0.07	0	0	0
People	Safety and Wellbeing	Accident Incident Rate (AIR)	0	247	179	235	171	0	0	0
People	Safety and Wellbeing	Lost Time Frequency Rate (LTFR)	New metric in 2024	0.20	0.17	0.17	0.17	Measure only	Measure only	Measure only
People	Safety and Wellbeing	All Reported Injuries (ARI)	New metric in 2024	1.22	0.94	0.96	0.90	Measure only	Measure only	Measure only
People	Safety and Wellbeing	Incident Frequency Rate (IFR)	New metric in 2024	1.12	0.87	0.87	0.83	Measure only	Measure only	Measure only
People	Safety and Wellbeing	Percentage of Mental Health Champions across the business	5%	4%	4%	5%	4%	5%	6%	7.5%
People	FIR	Percentage of FIR Champions across the business	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3.5%	4%	5%
People	FIR	Percentage of current employees who have received FIR training since 2020	New metric in 2023	20%	44%	53%	55%	75%	85%	100%
People	FIR	Percentage of employees who agree that the company values the diversity of its employees, and that they are treated fairly and with respect	New metric in 2023	-	84%	87%	84%	85%	90%	95%
People	Empowering Sustainable Leaders	Percentage of current employees who have received sustainability training since 2020	15%	3%	12%	15%	18%	45%	50%	100%
People	Empowering Sustainable Leaders	Percentage of employees in 'high influencing roles' attending function specific sustainability related training	New metric in 2023	-	-	-	25%	30%	75%	90%
Planet	Climate, Energy and Emissions	Percentage reduction in absolute Scope 1 and 2 emissions, and those Scope 3 emissions under our direct control on a rolling baseline year	-5%	-10%	+4%	-14%	+11%	-6.5%	Reduction in line with 2050 Net Zero target	
Planet	Climate, Energy and Emissions	Percentage of total company car fleet that is electric or hybrid	Measure only	6%	50%	67%	84%	Measure only	Measure only	Measure only
Planet	Climate, Energy and Emissions	Percentage of new company car orders that are electric or hybrid	Measure only	68%	82%	93%	90%	Measure only	Measure only	Measure only
Planet	Climate, Energy and Emissions	Percentage of energy from renewable sources	40%	67%	68%	67%	83%	85%	90%	100%
Planet	Responsible Management of the Environment	Number of projects implementing verified biodiversity enhancements	New metric in 2024	-	-	-	-	Measure only	Measure only	Measure only
Planet	Responsible Management of the Environment	Hours spent supporting community initiatives that enhance the natural environment	Data collection only	-	1510	750	681	900	1000	1500
Planet	Circular Economy	Percentage reduction in tonnes of waste generated per £100,000 turnover against 2019 baseline	-5%	-38%	-2%	-26%	-44%	-45%	-50%	-60%
Planet	Circular Economy	Percentage of waste diverted from landfill through reuse, recovery and recycling initiatives to achieve our ultimate aim of consistently operating zero waste construction sites	94%	95%	97%	95%	98%	97%	98%	100%

MEASURES OVERVIEW AND PROGRESS TO DATE

Pillar	Theme	Principal measures	2020 Target	2020 Actual	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Target	2025 Target	2030 Target
Purpose	Education and Employability	Number of days provision of work experience placements	425	454	1429	1754	2261	2300	3000	3500
Purpose	Education and Employability	Percentage of people in 'Earn and Learn' employment in line with our commitments to the 5% Club (<i>includes apprentices, sponsored students and employees supported in further education or on formal graduate training programmes</i>)	5%	7%	8%	10%	12%	5%	5%	5%
Purpose	Education and Employability	Hours spent undertaking school and further education visits	Data collection only	438	784	1738	2738	2750	3000	3500
Purpose	Education and Employability	Number of people hours of mock interviews, CV writing, careers advice delivered (<i>calculated by multiplying the number of volunteers by the number of beneficiaries in line with IES methodology</i>)	New metric in 2023	160	967	207	1545	1500	1600	2000
Purpose	Charity, Volunteering and Community Engagement	Number of hours spent on non-education related volunteering in the local community	Data collection only	4699	2273	4585	4275	4200	4300	4500
Purpose	Charity, Volunteering and Community Engagement	Percentage of employees engaged in volunteering activities	New metric in 2023	-	4%	6%	6%	7%	10%	15%
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Purpose	Charity, Volunteering and Community Engagement	£ ('000) donated to charitable and community initiatives	New metric in 2024	116	168	143	210	Measure only	Measure only	Measure only
Purpose	Procuring with Purpose	Percentage of total procurement spend with SME's	60%	59%	50%	57%	50%	55%	60%	65%

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information about our People-Planet-Purpose sustainability framework, please contact sustainability@volkerwessels.co.uk or visit our website volkerwessels.co.uk



