GROSVENOR

Valuing Nature

Grosvenor Property UK's Biodiversity Strategy

Foreword

Biodiversity is an essential element of functional, healthy and happy places.

As humans, our intrinsic link with the living world is at risk of breaking as urbanisation has decimated species and habitat numbers.

But we can re-establish this link. Designed and managed well, urban areas can be surprisingly nature rich, and many recent conservation success stories in the UK have been in and around our cities.

Reversing biodiversity loss also offers us more than simply the opportunity to restore natural habitats. Beyond the direct benefits, integrated strategies can aid urban climate resilience and help regulate heat island effect, abate storm water impacts and improve well-being.

Our biodiversity strategy enhances our longstanding support for biodiverse communities through the evidence-based creation, and high-quality management, of a wide range of habitat types, providing food and shelter for priority species identified in locally targeted biodiversity strategies.

This will include living roofs, wildflower rich grassland and wildlife friendly herbaceous and shrub planting, as well as providing and improving wildlife corridors between existing green assets.

Any interventions will be considerate of the changing climate and the ways in which improved, and more numerous, habitats can deliver multiple benefits for nature, people and places simultaneously.

For new developments, the same principles apply, with our priority being to integrate biodiversity from the outset, rather than seeing it as an optional extra considered at the tail end of the design process.

Our commitment to achieving a significant biodiversity net gain in the places we make and manage is part of our goal to lead multi-faceted climate action in our industry and to have a measurable and positive impact on people's lives. We will apply our strategy across our UK property activities, including Mayfair, Belgravia, Liverpool ONE, Strategic Land sites and our regional office portfolio, and will report annually on our progress and learnings.

Tor Burrows

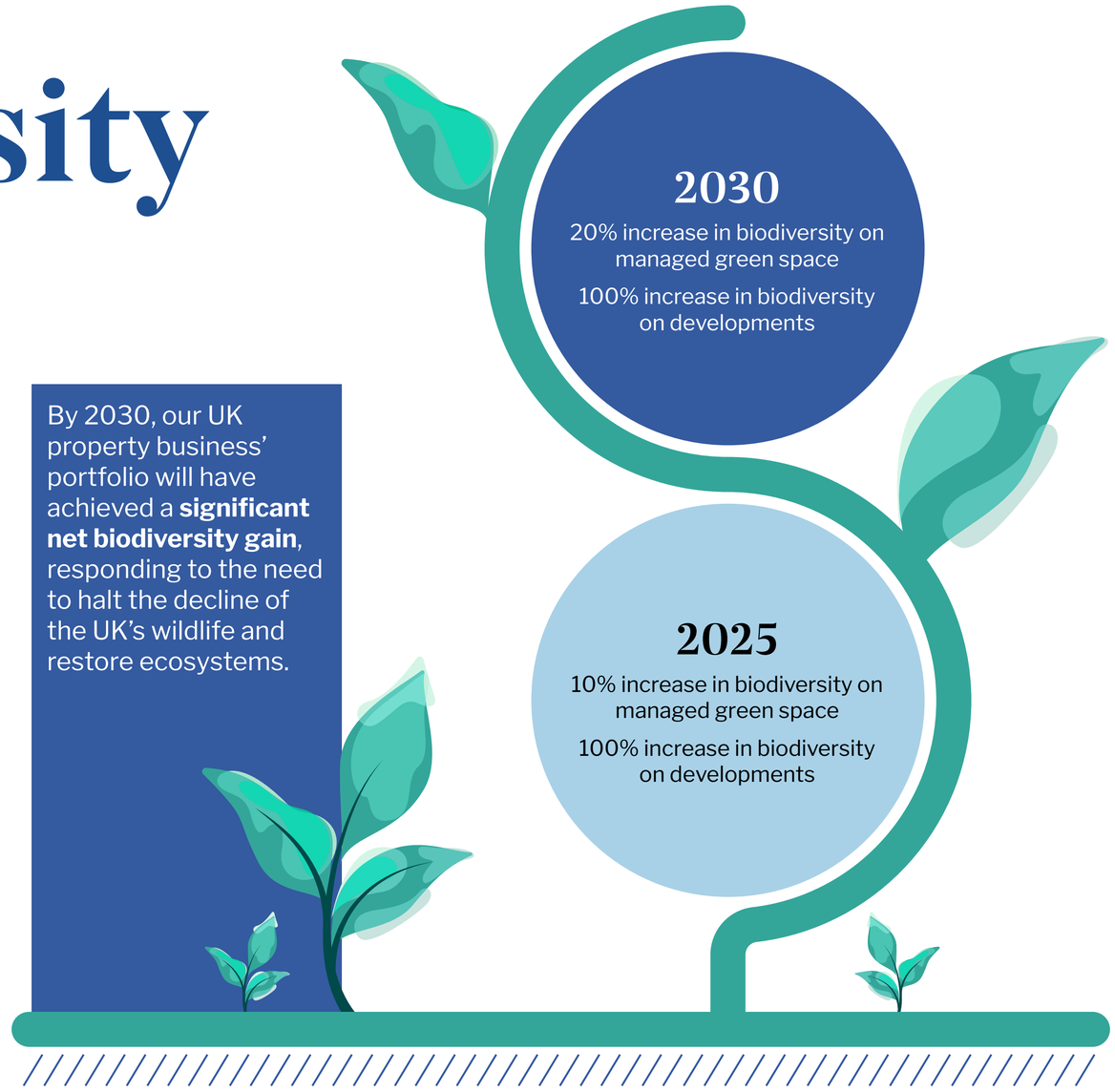
Executive Director, Sustainability & Innovation

Our Biodiversity Goals

In 2019, we committed to Valuing Nature as one of our four green goals. This set out our ambition to create significant biodiversity net gain across new developments and within the management of our existing assets.

Following a 2021 baselining exercise where we assessed all our existing green assets for biodiversity value using DEFRA's Biodiversity Metric 3.0, we have specified targets in the development and management of our portfolio to enhance biodiversity.

Each business area now has specific targets and a roadmap to deliver against the overall goal.



Biodiversity Net Gain

Definition:

Biodiversity net gain is a relatively new concept which is becoming more mainstream within the property and construction sectors. It requires that new development delivers a measurable gain in biodiversity. We have valued biodiversity in our places using DEFRA's Biodiversity Metric 3.0, the most widely accepted industry standard tool.

This tool values biodiversity on the basis of the form and condition of habitats present at a site. It is then possible to calculate and optimise the predicted value of a post-development site based on proposed landscape plans, which enables us to comply with and exceed The National Planning Policy Framework requirements and many Regional/ Local Plans (including the London Plan, 2021). Guidance on the Defra metric *can be found here*.

We recognise that there are constraints in the application of the metric and have structured our framework to include an aspect of qualitative judgement alongside the score, whether this is related to connectivity of green assets or supporting notable or protected species.

Our biodiversity strategy is based on four principles...

1

Exceeding best practice

Biodiversity net gains which exceed minimum best practice levels will be delivered through habitat enhancement, asset management interventions and a refreshed process for designing developments.

Gains will represent an increase in the quantity and quality of biodiverse habitats which benefit priority faunal species.

2

Functional ecosystems

We will respond to the climate emergency by creating multifunctional green assets and infrastructure, capable of delivering environmental co-benefits such as mitigating flood risk and reducing urban heat island effect.

3

Reconnection with nature

Our investments also aim to strengthen people's affinity with nature and provide wellbeing co-benefits.

Engagement and learning opportunities will be identified, and new development will integrate nature within the built form and bring wildlife into the community.

4

Maximising return on investment

To deliver the greatest impact across each principle, all investment decisions will be well-informed through an evidence based approach.

Grosvenor Square

Case study

Creating more biodiverse urban green spaces

We're transforming London's second largest garden square into an extraordinary urban garden with ground-breaking environmental credentials.

Through designs informed by a multi-year consultation, we will create new habitats and maximise this historic green space's contribution to the local environment and people's well-being.

Driven by extensive new landscaping, trees and planting, we are targeting a Biodiversity Net Gain of 15.5%, which is a significant uplift for an area that is already green.

Increased biodiversity

A third of the garden will be covered in habitat rich planting, with five times the number of plant species and 26 more trees of varying species.

Water features

Introducing a wetland, water channel and waterfall canopies will support wildlife and enable rainwater to be re-used in the square.

Education building

This new addition will facilitate school and community learning about the environment.

Our 2021 Baseline

A 2021 study has informed our approach and identified priority actions for maximising both gains and co-benefits. It will form our basis for annual reports on progress.

Independent experts analysed existing green assets in our portfolio, followed by ground truthing surveys to appraise extent, form and condition. This then allowed us to calculate the baseline ecological value of the different sites using DEFRA's Biodiversity Metric 3.0 methodology, following best practice guidance from DEFRA, and joint guidance from CIEEM, IEMA and CIRIA.

The charts on the following pages show the distribution of biodiversity throughout our portfolio and by green infrastructure typology. A total portfolio wide unit value of 79.15 was calculated.

Our majority of unit value is delivered throughout the Mayfair and Belgravia portfolios, largely through the contribution of trees in parks and gardens.

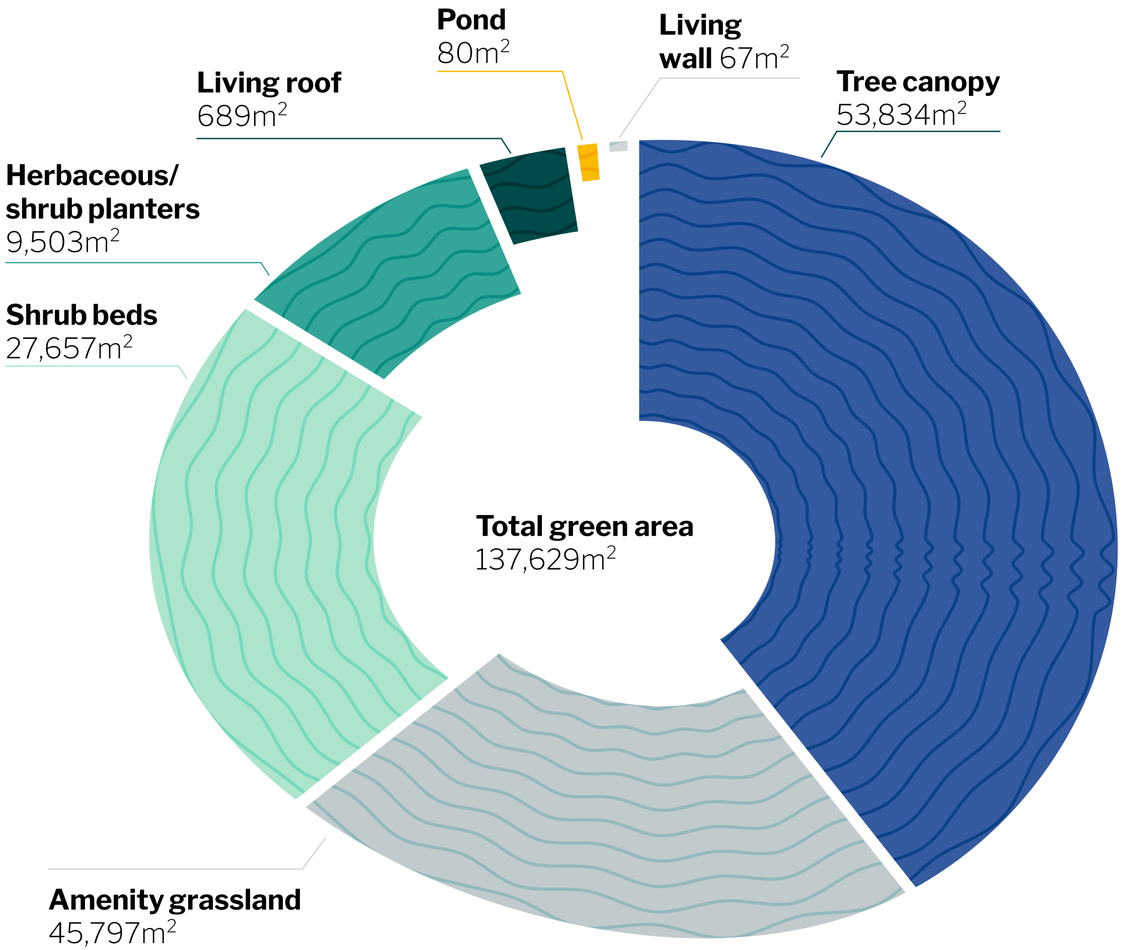
Trees across all assets accordingly contributed the most towards the baseline unit value. Modified grassland, shrub/herbaceous beds (a habitat typology used to capture the woodland understorey type ecotone found amongst the London squares and parks) respectively were the next highest contributing habitat typologies. All other green infrastructure features contributed <1% of total value.

Aquatic habitats were significantly under-represented, alongside built-form green infrastructure features such as living roofs.

Habitat variability was limited with similar and common urban habitat typologies present across Mayfair and Belgravia.

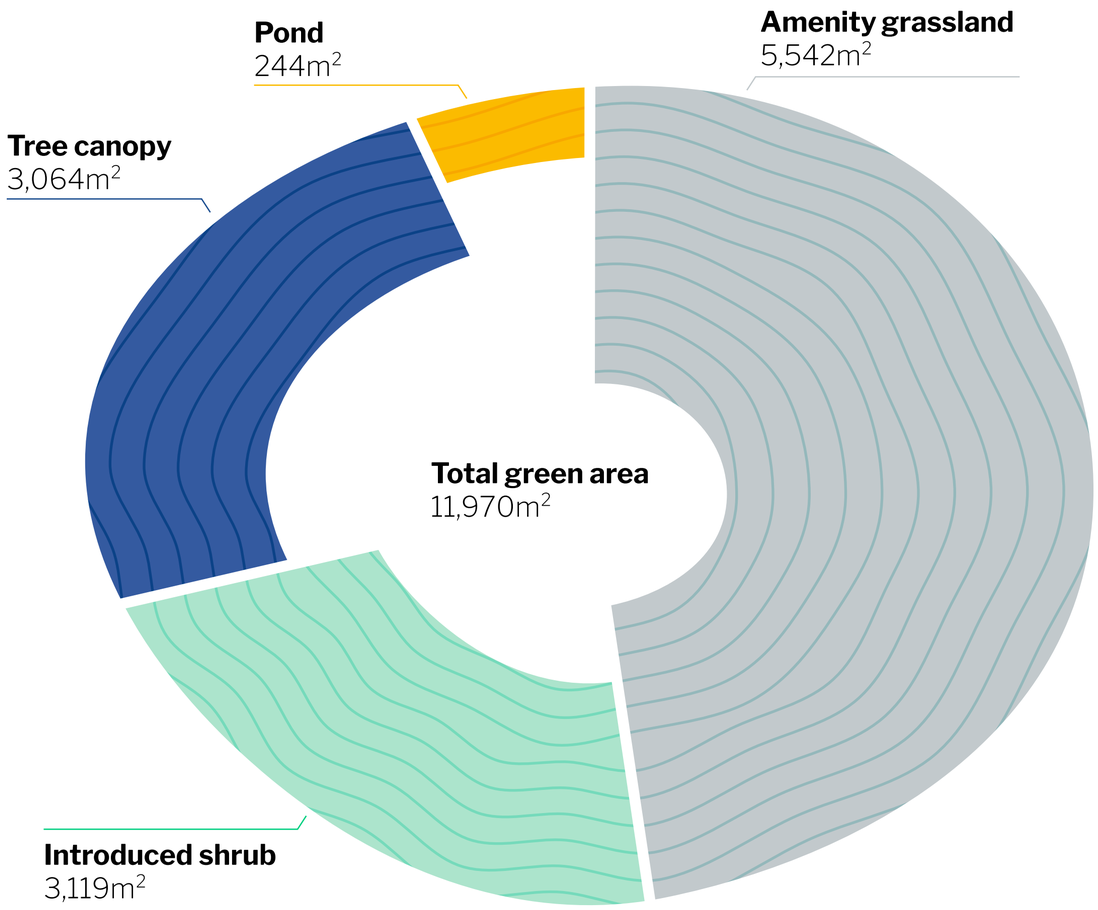
Mayfair & Belgravia

Habitat Typology by Area (m^2)



Liverpool ONE

Habitat Typology by Area (m^2)



Proportionate split in biodiversity unit contribution between business areas - 2021

Liverpool ONE
6%

Mayfair
16%

Belgravia
78%

Proportionate split in biodiversity unit contribution between habitat typologies (across all assets) - 2021

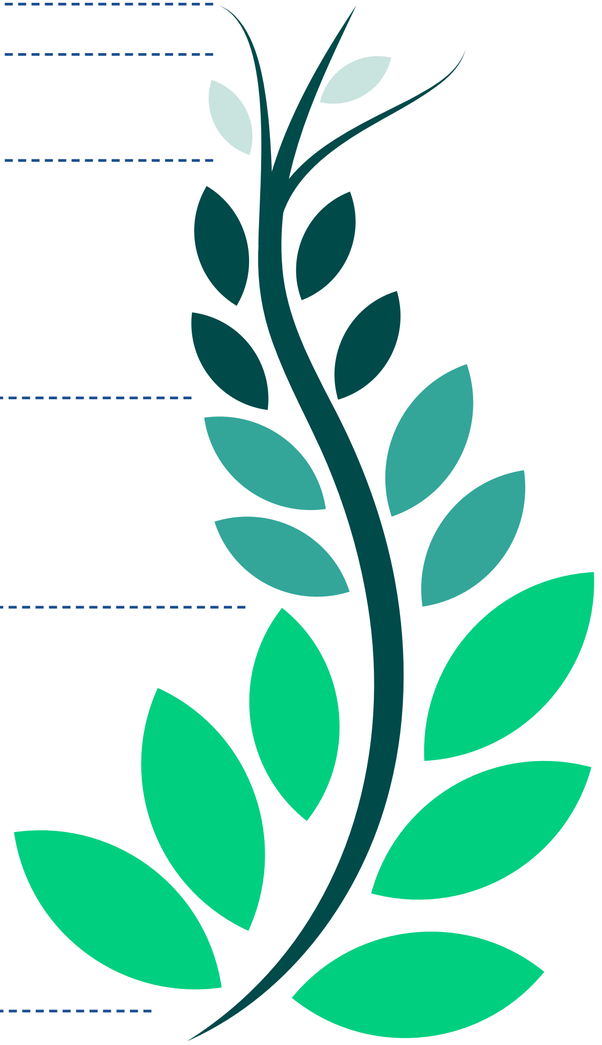
Other

Containers
4%

Grassland
13%

Shrub/herbaceous beds
17%

Trees
66%



Holbein Gardens

Case study

Enhancing biodiversity in office development

From day one, reducing emissions and maximising biodiversity were key success factors for our first net zero carbon office development near Sloane Square in London.

At each stage of design, we considered how to create an exemplary modern workspace by repurposing a 1980s building surrounded by hardscaping in a dense urban setting.

Biodiversity, wellbeing and local air quality will be significantly enhanced through extensive exterior landscaping and greening of over 11% of the building's internal area.

Outdoor terraces and ground floor landscaping with herbaceous planting, grasses, shrubs and small trees will also drive a 200% Biodiversity Net Gain.

Strategy Overview

Our approach to enhancing biodiversity will deliver uplift through two main opportunities - improving the management of our existing biodiverse assets, and adding to these assets through new development and investment.

The London estate and Liverpool ONE represent our opportunity for biodiversity uplift through existing asset management. Through a review of existing green infrastructure, we have set realistic but challenging targets of 20% and 35% biodiversity net gain respectively.

For new developments and investments

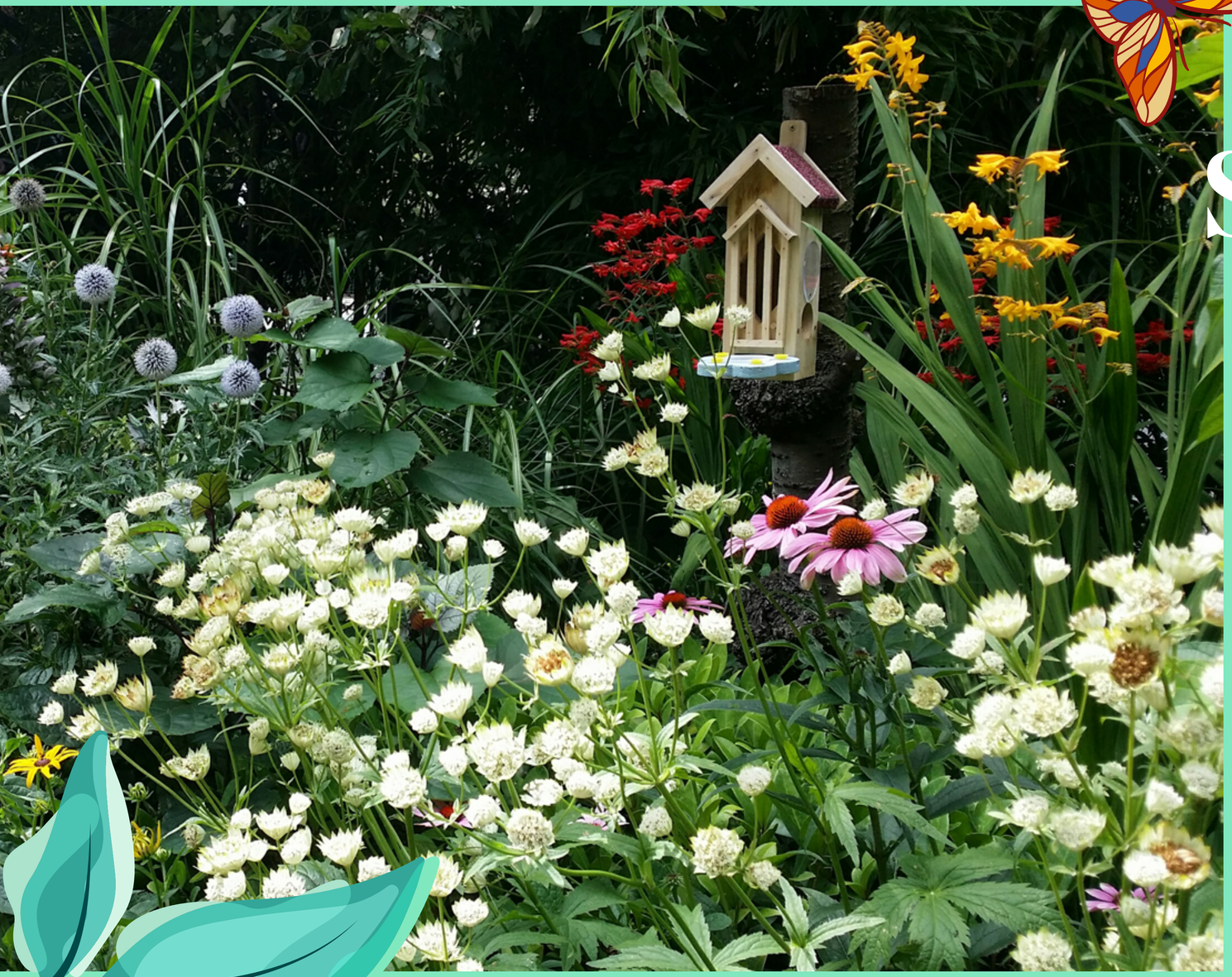
- In urban areas, we will target significant biodiversity net gains in the developments of existing properties of 75% - 100%, moving to a 100% target gain by 2025
- Our Strategic Land business will target biodiversity net gains of 12 – 15%, stretching existing best practice planning requirements, moving to a 15% target by 2030
- New office and residential investments will be assessed on a case by case basis, with bespoke targets and action plans created

Business area		Uplift achieved through...	2030 Net Gain Target
London	Operations	Existing Asset Management	20%
	Locations		
	Mayfair / Belgravia development	Development	75-100%
UK Regions	Liverpool ONE	Existing Asset Management	35%
	Strategic Land	Development	12-15%
	Office/Residential	Development	Bespoke

Biodiversity Buffet

The Biodiversity Buffet is our guide for green assets and infrastructure, which can be used to identify and implement interventions for both new developments and existing assets.

Click here to read in full.



Belgrave Square Garden

Case study

Transforming the management of urban green spaces

Changing how we manage this urban garden in London's Belgravia will create a biodiversity uplift in an already green space.

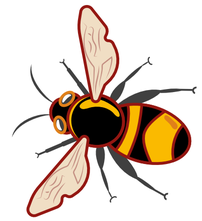
Grassland diversity will be improved by introducing wildflower species and seeds and young plants to create of a large species-rich lawn. As part of our trial, this area will be maintained to support biodiversity and allow wildflower seeds to set.

Shrub and herbaceous planting will be diversified with new pollinator friendly species and habitat structures including dead wood piles, bug hotels, log and pebble hibernaculum for insects, frogs, toads and reptiles.

These actions will help improve climate change resilience and bring benefits to the community through a well-functioning and increasingly connected network of local green infrastructure.

Since 2021, the square has also been home to the Belgravia Forest School. Built and managed by Grosvenor, local pupils and community groups benefit from a new outdoor classroom providing an opportunity for outdoor learning.

Within our existing assets in Mayfair, Belgravia and Liverpool ONE, we will:



Enhance shrub and herbaceous beds through the creation of additional planting structures (e.g. removal of dense, non flowering shrubs) and habitat structures (e.g. deadwood habitat) and the introduction of native/ pollinator friendly species

Improve amenity grassland areas through changes to management regimes and the addition of more pollinator friendly species

Explore opportunities for additional large street trees

Identify opportunities and deliver rain gardens to existing hardstanding areas

Identify opportunities for, and deliver new, intensive and extensive biodiverse living roofs

Improve the condition of existing green roofs

For developments and investments, the same principles will apply within the bespoke context of the physical asset.

Trumpington Meadows Cambridgeshire

Case study

New communities that create space for people and nature

Trumpington Meadows shows the benefit of integrated thinking between local government and developers: well-planned development with high levels of natural green space and thriving habitats.

As master developer and co-landowner, Grosvenor led the transformation of an agricultural research centre into a 1,200-home community with 80% of the site dedicated to a 148-acre riverside country park and nature reserve.

By designing the scheme for nature as much as for people we delivered a 46% Biodiversity Net Gain and created new publicly accessible green space.

Under the management of the Wildlife Trust, habitats in the nature reserve have thrived and are home to a wide range of flora and fauna, European otters, Small Blue (the UK's smallest butterfly) and skylarks, one of the country's most endangered farmland bird species.

GROSVENOR

Discover more at Grosvenor.com/EnvironmentalLeadership