MAKING SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION A REALITY

How Holcim is leading from the front to deliver UK construction's most important and ambitious challenge

www.holcim.co.uk

HOLCIM

Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Construction is a stimulator of economies. It creates the places we live, work and thrive. And it contributes to the development, strength and opportunities in communities across the country. Yet it's also an industry with a formidable challenge in front of it: the realisation of buildings and infrastructure that are truly sustainable – in every sense of the word.

We're not just talking about using fewer resources and less energy, as critical as they are to the process. We're also giving thought to the integration of nature and a consideration of the people who build and inhabit the places we create. It's only when these aspects are included that we begin to fully reckon with what is meant by the term 'sustainable construction'.

This is Holcim's renewed mission as a unified brand: making sustainable construction a reality. It's not merely an update on our existing sustainability strategy but rather a statement of intent. And this document has been written to articulate that process – where we are to date and what is expected to come.

The challenge is hugely complex, requiring our industry's brightest minds and most effective leaders to make it even remotely possible. It will disrupt the way we work and it will force us to make difficult decisions. But it's a change that's urgently needed, not just for the health of our environment but also the long-term success of our industry. Our climate is changing. We must respond in kind.

Holcim is firmly established within the industry's supply chain and, in many senses, the work begins with us. We provide the products that bring about new buildings and infrastructure, giving us an opportunity to lead from the front. If we can eliminate as much carbon from our products and services before they are used, we are already on the road to lasting change.

This is not to say we are starting from square one; the industry has made great strides in recent years, lowering emissions and eliminating waste. But as we approach critical deadlines, it's time to redouble these efforts. Yes, the challenge is formidable. But it's also within our reach, providing we have a clear way of explaining how we'll do it. This positioning statement begins that process.

Lee Sleight
CEO at Holcim UK

I.

WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION AND WHY IS IT NECESSARY?

Sustainability is the defining challenge for business in the 21st century.

Some may contest this position – especially in areas where economic growth is needed most – but the facts bear out within construction. By its nature, the sector is one of the largest consumers of natural resources and, therefore, among the heaviest emitters of carbon. According to a landmark 2023 report from the UN Environment Programme, buildings and construction account for 37% of global emissions – the highest of all sectors studied.[1]

Many will be familiar with figures like this and recognise the fundamental questions they pose. Drawing attention to the sector's impact may feel reductive when so much progress has already been made. It's true that construction continues to make great strides and is, in many respects, leading from the front when it comes to sustainability. However, it would be remiss to overlook where improvements are still needed and an explanation for how these will be made, not least because ambitious, cross-sector targets like net zero demand evidence to remain even remotely achievable.

This is the thinking behind Holcim's positioning statement – the document you are reading. It explains what we mean by 'sustainable construction' and articulates our long-term strategy using real projects and initiatives.

Here, we're talking less about the why and more about the how: how we're improving ways of working, how our products are evolving and, ultimately, how we're contributing towards a sector that is able to manage its impact more effectively.

For Holcim, sustainable construction is an iterative process. It's about building better with less each time and taking those learnings forward so that every project begins with a head start. Rather than simply setting targets and reverting to a familiar way of working, instead we're seeking continual improvements at every site to reach a point where less materials and energy are used each time new ground is broken.

1 https://www.unep.org/resources/report/building-materials-and-climate-constructing-new-future

This is not just an ambition but a necessity too. And it's critical the work begins with our industry because the built environment sets the stage for all other economic activity. Getting it right as buildings and infrastructure are created sets a precedent, marking out sustainability as a central feature of work and life. In other words, construction provides the first opportunity to do the right thing, laying the foundations for others to follow.

Holcim's positioning statement comes at a difficult time. Supply chains have been depleted, creating what some have described as a 'perfect storm' for construction across Europe.[2] This has arrived in a period of declining output in some regions as well as a shortage of skilled people.[3] For the latter, the figures are hardly trivial. In May 2024, the UK's Construction Industry Training Board reported that 250,000 extra workers would be needed by 2028 to meet demand.[4]

These headlines are sobering but they serve an important purpose, highlighting the multifaceted challenges faced by those delivering sustainable construction on the ground. It's not just about having the right product and processes, but also a workforce capable of implementing them successfully. As such, any thoughtful strategy must include people as part of its plans.

Holcim's mission is simple in terms but difficult in practice. And we recognise that this positioning statement only sets the course. Nevertheless, any mission needs clear objectives and a plan of action to stand a chance of lasting success. The hard yards are to come but this is where it all begins.

OUR MISSION

WHAT GUIDES US

- Making Sustainable Construction a Reality

OUR VALUES

WHAT UNDERPINS OUR WORK

- People
- Purpose
- Performance

OUR CULTURE

OUR BEHAVIOURS THAT DRIVE US

- Let's deliver together
- Let's do the right thing
- Let's make a difference

2 https://www.ft.com/content/296d84a2-b73a-4bd0-b65b-6ef9883e6afc

3 https://www.constructionnews.co.uk/government/falling-construction-output-contributes-to-shrinking-gdp-13-12-2024/

4 https://www.citb.co.uk/about-citb/news-events-and-blogs/over-250-000-extra-construction-workers-required-by-2028-to-meet-demand/

II.

THE MEGATRENDS SHAPING SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION AND HOW HOLCIM IS RESPONDING

Many of the challenges facing construction are not unique to the sector. That is the nature of so-called 'megatrends' – major patterns emerging at a macro level; the type that affect all businesses to some extent. Economic volatility, for instance, is considered a megatrend because it's generally accepted that markets are more unstable today than they have been in previous years.

These kinds of megatrends are not discussed in this section. There's already a raft of analysis that examines the impact of broad economic movements on the sector. And, while important, they are too far removed from the issue of sustainability to have a bearing on Holcim's positioning statement.

However, construction is host to its own set of megatrends, many of them having emerged in response to the need to build more sustainably. It's these trends that are examined throughout this section. Some have a reach that extends beyond the sector – i.e. decarbonisation – but all are relevant to Holcim's position, offering and approach.

You cannot hope to make a difference without an awareness of the arena you're operating in. This is why we've drafted a positioning statement.

It articulates our response to the issues that matter most to construction in the 21st century, putting us on a more proactive footing as our 2030 and 2050 deadlines approach.

! Note: for clarity, this section focuses on the areas and megatrends where Holcim has a definitive stake – i.e. those directly impacted on by building materials.

1. DECARBONISATION

REDOUBLING OUR COMMITMENT TO CLIMATE

Decarbonisation is a megatrend for almost every industry. But, as earlier sections of this positioning statement have shown, the challenge is most apparent within construction, which typically sits among a list of other 'hard-to-abate' industries such as aviation, shipping and chemicals.[6]

There's a huge amount of work to be done before construction can be considered legitimately net zero. And there's still a lot of research and development required before subsectors – such as cement production – have a viable route to a low- or even zero-carbon product. But that doesn't mean there aren't opportunities to make significant, intermediate gains along the way. This is where Holcim is making a difference.

These opportunities are becoming more important as today's projects seek to balance commerciality and compliance. In Europe, there is a raft of legislation that places much greater emphasis on transparency and accuracy, such as the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive, which compels companies to identify and address adverse environmental and social impact across entire value chains.[7]

Moving forward, this will be a major undertaking for the industry, making the availability of low-carbon products and solutions even more important, not least because the region already has mechanisms in place to incentivise them. The Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, for instance, is designed to reduce so-called 'carbon leakage' with the import of less-sustainable building materials from other parts of the world.[8]

Similarly, in the UK, more attention is now being paid to embodied carbon. While no formal legislation currently exists, future enforcement is likely given the country's legally binding net zero law – the first legislation of its kind to be signed anywhere in the world.[9] As a major constituent of the country's economy – and one of the heaviest emitters – construction will be obliged to respond as the government ramps up efforts to meet its 2050 deadline.

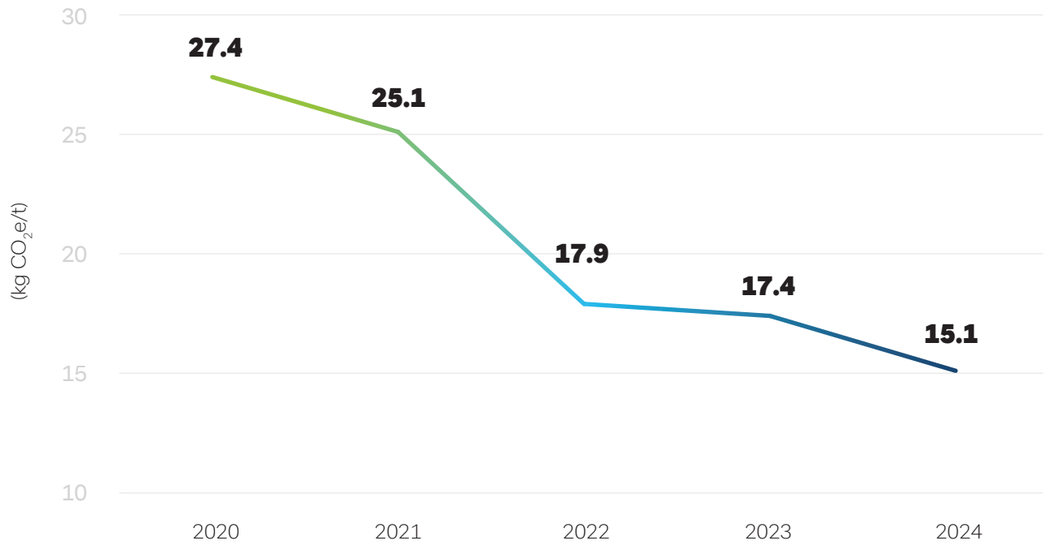
5 https://www.bbc.co.uk/future/article/20230203-why-the-world-feels-so-unstable-right-now

6 https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/sustainability/our-insights/sectors-are-unevenly-exposed-in-the-net-zero-transition
7 https://commission.europa.eu/business-economy-euro/doing-business-eu/sustainability-due-diligence-responsible-business/corporate-sustainability-due-diligence_en
8 https://taxation-customs.ec.europa.eu/carbon-border-adjustment-mechanism_en
9 https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-becomes-first-major-economy-to-pass-net-zero-emissions-law

How we're responding

ACCURATE REPORTING

In 2023, we launched our first net zero strategy, which covered all aspects of our operations with a set of measurable targets. We now have live reporting at each site and quarterly oversight meetings across all leadership teams to track progress. According to our latest figures from 2024, scope 1 and 2 emissions have fallen by 117,000 tonnes. This represents a 23% reduction in absolute emissions year-on-year and our lowest emissions per tonne of product at 15.1kg CO_2e. We are also seeking to reduce total emissions by 37% before the end of 2025, 68% by 2030 and ultimately reach net zero by 2050. Holcim was one of the first companies to have these targets validated by the Science Based Targets Initiative.[10]



10 https://www.holcim.com/sustainability/climate-action

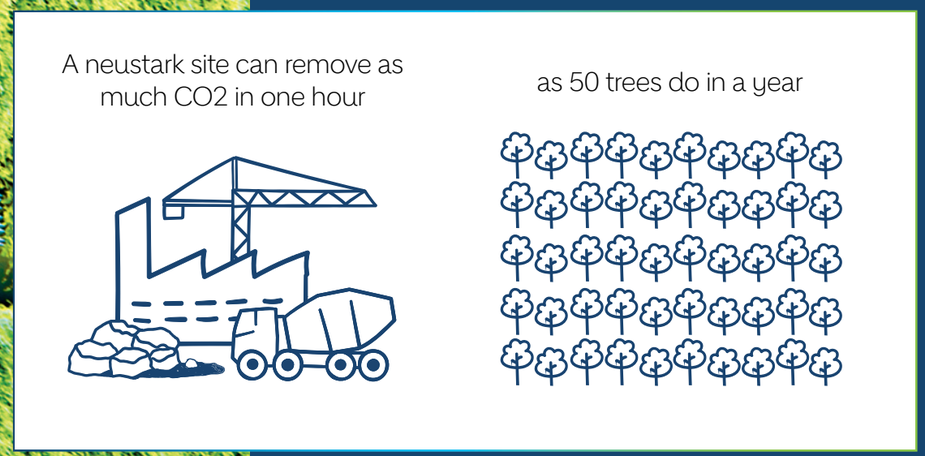
How we're responding

CARBON CAPTURE UTILISATION AND STORAGE

Swiss cleantech start-up neustark is helping us take a big step forward in our circular construction efforts with its cutting-edge carbon capture technology. By adopting this approach, we aim to double the volume of recycled materials we use from 1.5 million to 3 million tonnes by 2025.

neustark has developed a breakthrough process that speeds up the natural absorption of CO2 in concrete. This technology captures and stores biogenic CO2 in recycled concrete, preventing it from being released into the atmosphere and ensuring long-term storage, even if the material is reused.

The process involves collecting CO2 from biomass sites, liquefying it and injecting it into processed CDM for use in new concrete. On average, it stores 10kg of CO2 per tonne of demolished concrete.



How we're responding

ALTERNATIVE FUELS

We have been able to make significant carbon savings within cement, our highest-emitting area. By embracing alternative fuels and materials, such as HVO in vehicles, we have been able to reduce the volume of diesel we use.

At our Bardon Hill Quarry, for instance, we are replacing diesel with HVO on equipment such as generators, compressors and crushing and screening plant. All of our HVO is traceable to source under the International Sustainability & Carbon Certification Scheme, does not result in any deforestation and has saved more than 3,000 tonnes of CO2e.

We have also introduced solid-derived fuel to power the kiln through our Geocycle facility.

We've increased the biomass content of the fuels we use on site by nearly

60%

compared to 2020

How we're responding

RENEWABLE ENERGY

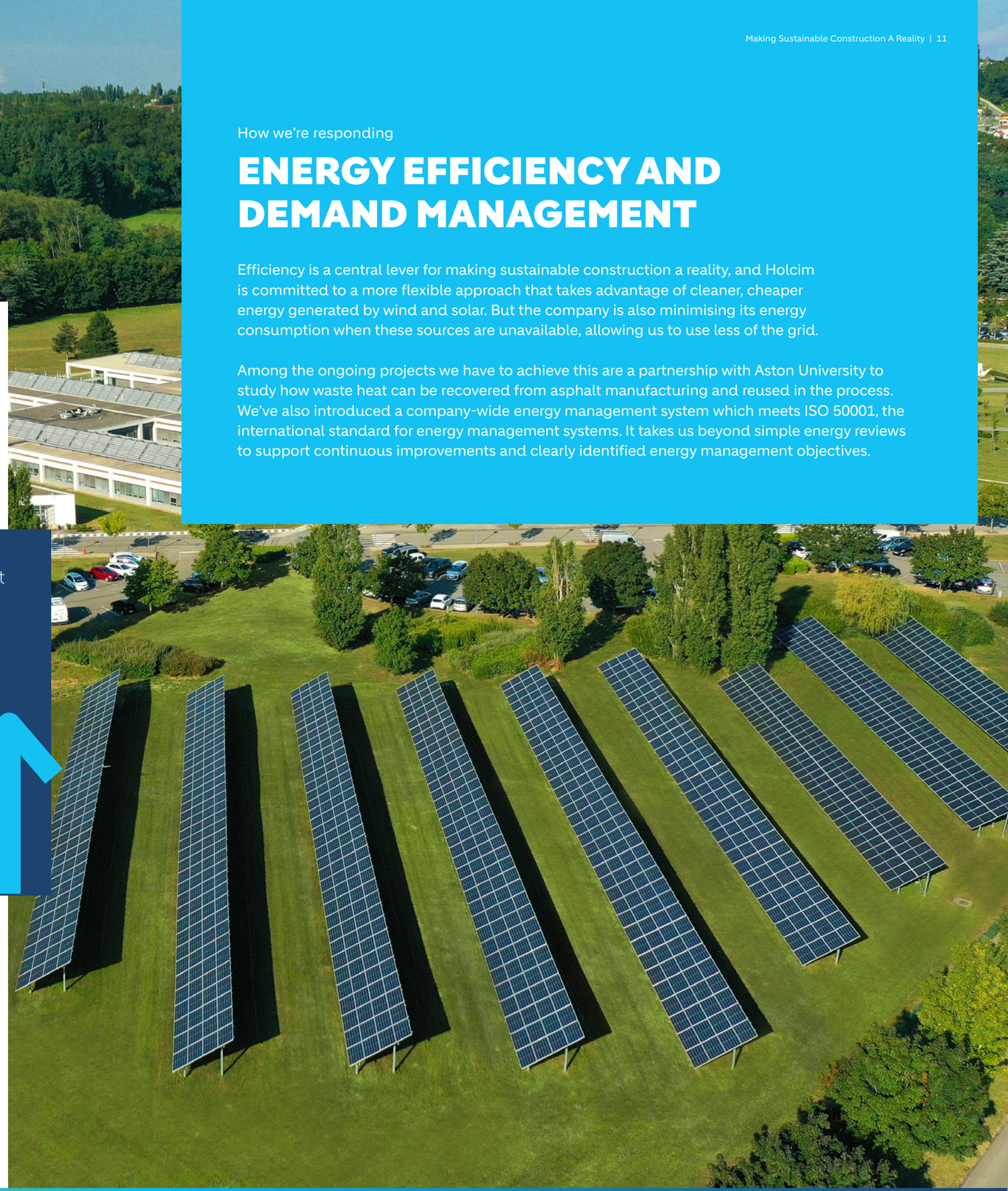
We are integrating more renewable energy generation across our UK sites, including major solar PV installations. Notable projects include Huland Ward and the company's Bardon offices, which produce 415,000kWh and 73,500kWh per annum respectively.

How we're responding

ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND DEMAND MANAGEMENT

Efficiency is a central lever for making sustainable construction a reality, and Holcim is committed to a more flexible approach that takes advantage of cleaner, cheaper energy generated by wind and solar. But the company is also minimising its energy consumption when these sources are unavailable, allowing us to use less of the grid.

Among the ongoing projects we have to achieve this are a partnership with Aston University to study how waste heat can be recovered from asphalt manufacturing and reused in the process. We've also introduced a company-wide energy management system which meets ISO 50001, the international standard for energy management systems. It takes us beyond simple energy reviews to support continuous improvements and clearly identified energy management objectives.

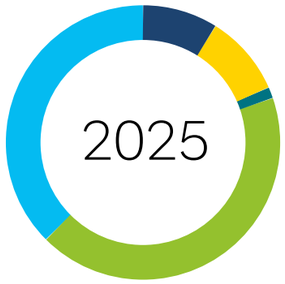


KEY GOALS

1

37%

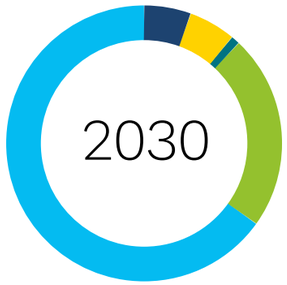
emissions reduction by



2

68%

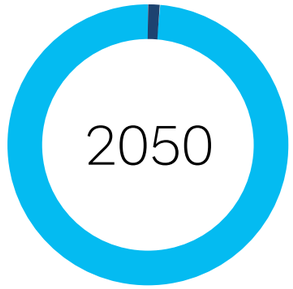
emissions reduction by



3

99%

emissions reduction by



Saving Aggs SSO CPR CEM

NOTEABLE PROJECTS

Harnessing Wind Power

We have installed two 500kW wind turbines at two operating sites to supply low-carbon electricity. This includes Back Lane Quarry, near Carnforth, which saves 700 tonnes of carbon emissions each year. Meanwhile the second site, at Melbur Blockworks in Cornwall, has allowed us to reduce our imported electricity consumption by 44%.

> Most builds require a complex network of suppliers, making decarbonisation a particularly formidable challenge for construction. It's not just the build process itself that needs consideration but also the production and transportation of materials necessary to bring buildings and infrastructure to life.
>
> This is why we're continually developing low-carbon solutions, as well as measuring and recording the impact of all our processes long before they reach a customer's site. It's our way of bringing this critical goal that bit closer.
>
> **Luke Olly**

2. CIRCULAR ECONOMY & WASTE REDUCTION

CLOSING THE LOOP

If decarbonisation is the first point in any realistic plan to make sustainable construction a reality, then circularity and waste reduction follows closely in second. Its influence on contemporary building practice is growing, with an emphasis on the continuous use and regeneration of materials. In turn, this work minimises the volume of waste sent to landfill while limiting the rate of extraction for finite resources.

It's well known that traditional construction methods are notoriously resource intensive. Most construction that takes place today is linear, in which raw materials are used to create products that are then discarded at end of life. Circular methods, on the other hand, see manufacturers design products that are intended to be reused at the end of a building's life.

The most complete expression of a circular economy within construction involves urban mining and widespread use of material passports. These passports – with an accurate log of all suitable materials – incentivise greater participation in building material recovery across a town or city, allowing companies to proactively minimise the impact of new developments. Working together, these two initiatives designate value in what is typically seen as disposable or useless, giving old buildings a vital role in the creation of new ones at the point in which they are deconstructed.

Circularity also offers a compelling argument for those looking to balance sustainability with the bottom line. The UK Green Building Council, for instance, has highlighted the reliable, low-risk cashflows created through circular economy initiatives, as well as their ability to de-risk major projects.[11]

Still, even with its profile on the rise, it would be a reach to suggest that construction boasts a mature circular economy. Material passports are still uncommon and many tenders do not define a minimum volume of recovered materials. This is not because the industry lacks enthusiasm; it's down to the concept still being relatively untested.

> As a unified global brand, Holcim intends to lead from the front on this issue, closing the loop on processes and promoting circularity at every stage of construction's life cycle.

11 https://ukgbc.org/resources/circular-economy-guidance-for-construction-clients-how-to-practically-apply-circular-economy-principles-at-the-project-brief-stage/

How we're responding

RECYCLING AND LANDFILL DIVERSION

With the support of our London CDM Recycling Hub, which handles and processes construction demolition materials, we've been able to recover more than 1.5 million tonnes of waste through a novel recycling and recovery process.

We have also seen further year-on-year improvements in our landfill diversion rate,

which currently stands at

93.7%

How we're responding

MATERIAL RECOVERY

We have increased the use of reclaimed asphalt pavement (RAP) in our operations, reducing the volume of virgin aggregate needed to manufacture new products. By working with our partners, we have been able to transport and process tens of thousands of tonnes of RAP since the initiative started in 2024.

How we're responding

WATER MANAGEMENT

Freshwater is a finite resource. We're seeking to reduce water intensity throughout our operations, implement freshwater replenishment programmes beyond our site boundaries and treat the water we use when it returns to nature.

KEY GOALS

1

Increase use of CDM to

3MILLION

tonnes per year

2

Reduce freshwater withdrawal intensity in the production of cement by

30%

and readymix concrete by

3.9% by **2026**

NOTEABLE PROJECTS

ECOCycle

Holcim's vision is to build new from the old, decoupling economic growth from resource consumption. Supporting the transition to a circular economy, ECOCycle is our proprietary endorsement which is at the forefront of driving change in the construction industry. This label identifies our products and solutions contain more than 10% CDM, without any compromise on performance.

"Through our nature and sustainability strategies we have a defined plan to significantly reduce the impact of our industry, long before the build process begins on site. This is our way of making the goal of sustainable construction more straightforward for our customers, providing solutions that simplify the challenge rather than adding to it. We will continue to incorporate CDM and closely monitor our water consumption, reaching a point where building materials no longer demand such a high percentage of raw resources. This is an exciting moment for construction – and we'll be leading the march."

Kaziwe Kaulule

3. SMARTER CONSTRUCTION

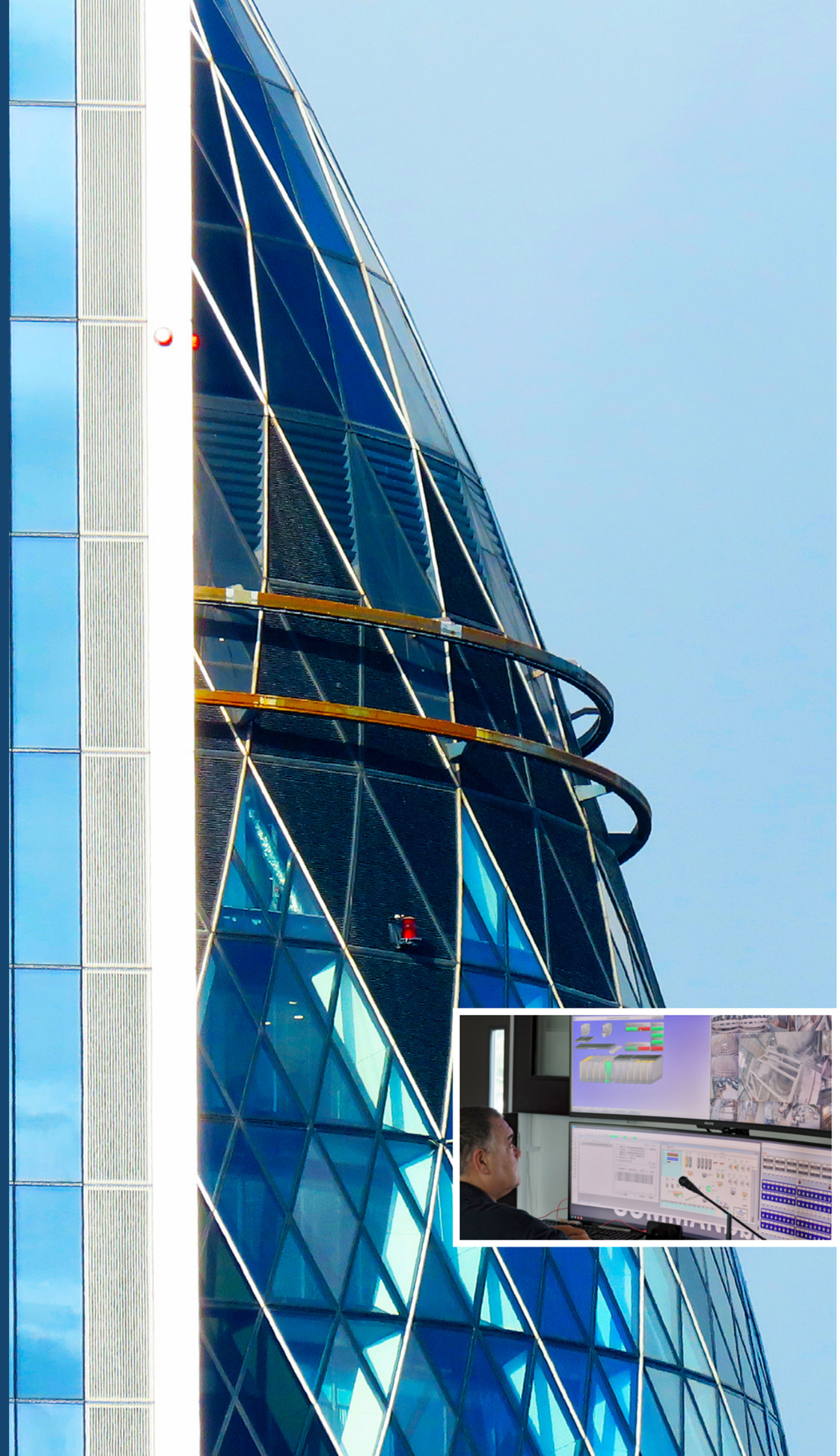
BRIDGING DATA, DESIGN AND FABRICATION

By using digital tools, building under controlled conditions and improving quality and process control, smarter construction can be thought of as a component within the circular economy, as it ultimately seeks to increase precision and reduce waste.

Arguably the most visible example of smarter construction can be seen with the use of prefabricated techniques. With the support of modelling software, off-site building approaches offer a number of key advantages, including lower carbon emissions, faster build times, cost savings and less disruption during development. And because the process is entirely planned, there are fewer delays or unforeseen supply challenges as parts are assembled on site. In other words, prefabricated builds are far more efficient when compared with more traditional ‘site-first’ approaches.

Much like other industries, construction is making greater use of data to improve the performance and safety of projects, including specific aspects of construction such as optimum curing techniques. This is an area to which Holcim has paid close attention in recent years, not just to maximise the strength and durability of a structure but also to ensure recoverability of materials.

While not necessarily ‘smart’ in the context of an increasingly digital industry, advanced building materials are nevertheless fundamental to the delivery of better buildings. Self-healing concrete, for instance, has remarkable potential to restore the integrity of failing structures and is an active area of research. However, it’s not just emerging products that offer routes forward for sustainable construction; many already exist, it’s just a matter of scaling them.



How we’re responding

INTEGRATING ADDITIVE MANUFACTURING

We have begun to integrate more additive manufacturing techniques across the business. Construction of a 3D-printed building produces up to 70% less CO2 emissions compared to a traditional building, and the computerised process also saves materials with its extreme precision.

How we’re responding

AI

Holcim is scaling up the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in manufacturing across more than 100 plants worldwide over the next four years, improving efficiency and reinforcing capacity for customers.

The control room project at our London Bow Plant marks a major step in digital transformation, replacing traditional on-site batching with a fully virtualised, remote-controlled facility. The system enables real-time management of production, safety, and material handling, optimising batching processes and ensuring full transparency on key mix properties such as slump, flow, and temperature.

Predictive maintenance and advanced analytics reduce downtime, while high-definition CCTV, automated number plate recognition and laser light walkway systems enhance safety and security. An optimised digital loading sequence streamlines fleet management, and energy-saving measures, including variable speed drives, support sustainability. This investment sets a new industry benchmark for efficiency, safety, and innovation in concrete production, with AI-driven materials management planned as the next phase of development.

KEY GOALS

1. Embed and expand the use of powerful technologies, such as AI and additive manufacturing, to increase precision and **REDUCE WASTE**

2. Develop and expand high-performance products, such as **DYNAMAX** and **ECOPLANET**

3. Ongoing development of our **CARBON REPORTING TOOLS** allowing customers to make more informed decisions about the products they use

NOTEABLE PROJECTS

Unlocking the Power of Additive Manufacturing

14Trees, a Holcim and CDC Group joint venture, is dedicated to accelerating sustainable and innovative construction solutions. By speeding up the commercialisation of new technologies, 14Trees has driven some of our most innovative building projects, such as the world's first 3D-printed school. At its core, 14Trees embodies Holcim's commitment to build more with less: less time, less cost and less environmental impact.

> Next-gen technologies will reshape the how, when and why of construction, unlocking new techniques and opportunities to deliver buildings and infrastructure. By minimising waste and increasing precision, they will also allow us to develop and create new solutions that are both low impact and low cost for our customers. Smarter, more sustainable construction begins with the materials we use – and we recognise the power that data can play in this process.
>
> **Ian Dean**

4. PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

BUILDING WITH A PURPOSE

Communities are integral to the idea of sustainable construction. Why? Because the built environment is the interface that allows people to live, work and play. Similarly, you cannot build a successful community without serviceable buildings and infrastructure. They feed into one another.

This dynamic has been referenced more frequently as the UK's population has grown, particularly in large towns and cities. At one time, construction projects prioritised commercial outcomes over anything else. Now, however, a shift in urban planning and development places people at the heart of decision making.[12]

Community involvement in construction promotes a sense of ownership and shared responsibility. When local people contribute to the planning and design process, they help create spaces that reflect their needs and cultural identity. This often leads to more resilient, long-lasting developments that encourage social interaction and environmental stewardship.

Today, communities play a larger role in shaping the built environment than ever before. Participatory urban design and social sustainability are key priorities, with both government and developers now regularly consulting communities to ensure projects provide social value, whether through affordable housing, public green spaces or better transport links.

Construction's role in this process is clear, from the base economic impact it provides through employment and regional growth to the realisation of buildings and infrastructure that contribute to society's greatest challenges.

12 https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/sustainable-buildings-focus-community-collaboration

How we're responding

MEASURING OUR ECONOMIC IMPACT AND SOCIAL VALUE

We have delivered over 3,200 volunteering hours in communities across the country, as well as donations to local causes. The total value of this work was £461,066 in 2024. By 2030, we aim to increase this social value figure to £1 million.

How we're responding

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We recognise that active community engagement is critical for managing our impact and regularly engage with resident groups to gauge their opinion.

We've hosted community engagement events across the country, including one at Waterhouses Primary School for residents near our Cauldon Cement Plant. The plant employs around 125 people and contributes £11 million to the local economy through salaries, business rates and local supplier partnerships.

However, we recognise the concerns raised by the Waterhouses and District Environmental Group, Parish Councils, and other local stakeholders regarding noise, dust, odours, and HGV movements. To foster open dialogue, we held an informal drop-in event where residents could meet our team, learn about the plant's operations and future plans, and share their perspectives.

This event provided a valuable opportunity to connect with the community, address key issues, and gather feedback – including suggestions for future community donations. The insights we gained will help shape future engagement efforts, ensuring we continue to listen, learn and properly support our neighbours.

How we're responding

APPRENTICESHIPS

Sustainable construction is only possible with a healthy pipeline of emerging talent that's fully plugged in to a company's mission.

Apprentices are a foundational aspect of this process. We currently have 89 apprentices working across the UK, from levels two to six.

KEY GOALS

1

Increased social value impact target of

£627,000

up from £413,283 in 2024. This includes volunteering hours, material donations and monetary donations.

2

Increased annual volunteering target of

3,534 HRS

up from 3,213 hours in 2024.

3

Increased material donations value of

£90,393

up from £50,723 in 2024.

4

By 2030

5%

of our workforce will be made up of early careers roles, which includes apprenticeships and graduate trainee schemes.

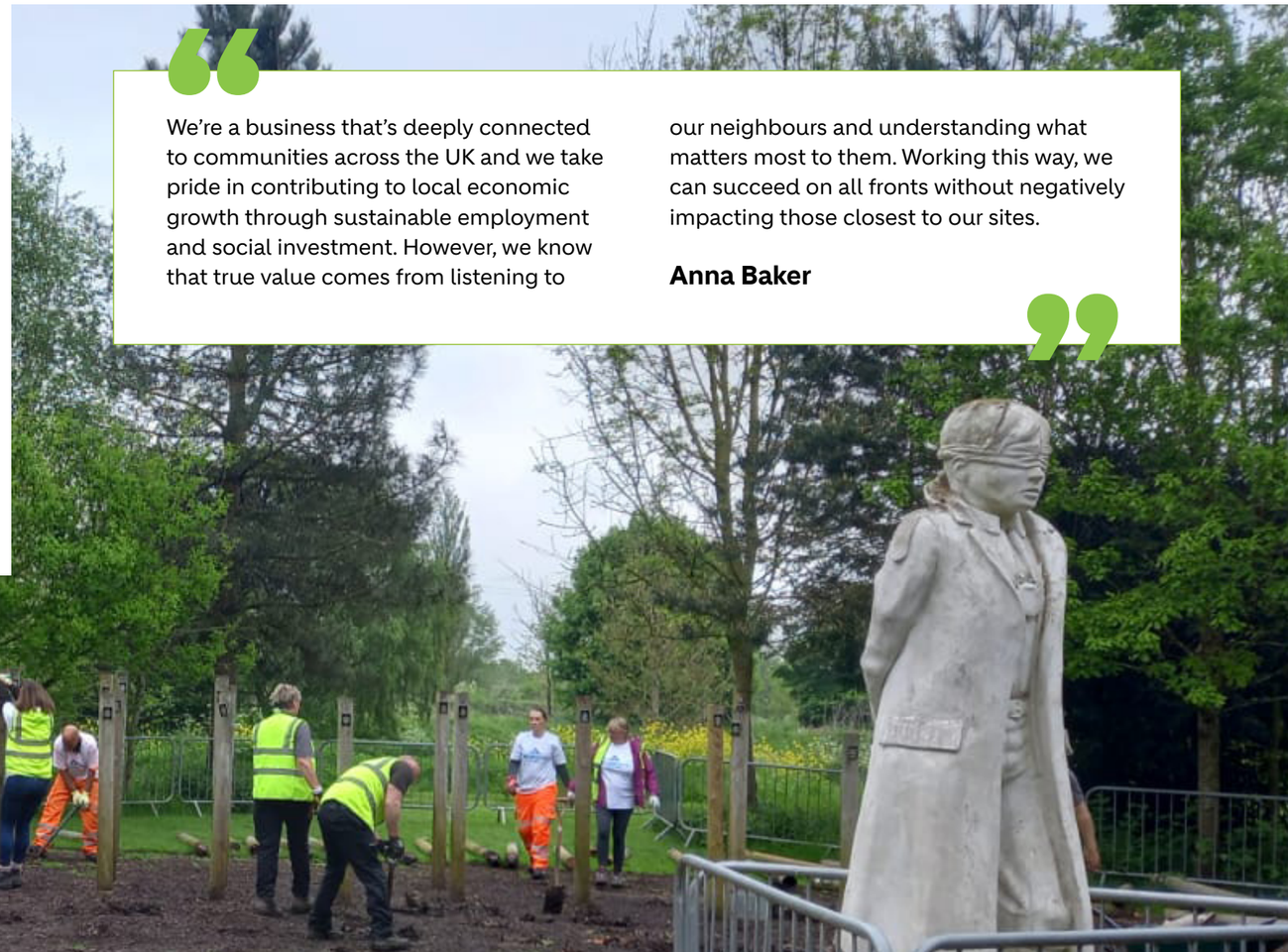
NOTEABLE PROJECTS

National Memorial Arboretum

A dedicated team from our Newbold and Bardon Hill quarries completed a major volunteer project at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire. In total, 23 volunteers dedicated 92 on-site hours at the Arboretum, in contribution to the renovation of the Shot at Dawn memorial – a poignant site that honours the 309 Commonwealth soldiers who were executed for alleged cowardice and desertion during World War 1.

The team undertook various tasks, including the removal of over 300 wooden posts, excavation of concrete and trench digging around the site, in preparation of fresh materials for groundworks. Additionally, volunteers cleaned dozens of memorial plaques that had been soiled by recent flooding.

The extensive work was supported by the generous donation of 80 tonnes of aggregate sourced from two Midlands-based quarries: granite from Bardon Hill in Leicestershire; and a decorative gravel from Woodhall Spa in Lincolnshire.



> We're a business that's deeply connected to communities across the UK and we take pride in contributing to local economic growth through sustainable employment and social investment. However, we know that true value comes from listening to our neighbours and understanding what matters most to them. Working this way, we can succeed on all fronts without negatively impacting those closest to our sites.
>
> **Anna Baker**

5. INTEGRATING NATURE

PLACES TO COEXIST

While often thought of as a relatively new debate, the integration of nature has always figured in conversations around planning and development. In some sense, the UK's green belt designation can be considered a forerunner, seeking to protect natural and undeveloped areas from uncontrolled urban spread. That was first proposed in 1935.[13]

However, urbanisation, a growing population and decades of missed new housing targets have shifted the dial. Now, it's generally acknowledged that far more homes and infrastructure are needed, which in some cases will require moving closer to – or building in – areas that have been left untouched.[14] This is an economic necessity but it's development that doesn't have to come at nature's expense.

Construction can appear a natural adversary to nature and wildlife – and many within the industry accept that its activities can have an adverse impact on the environment. This section of Holcim's positioning statement wouldn't exist otherwise. However, there is cause for optimism as the industry begins to reckon with the challenge of native landscaping, wildlife corridors and the design of buildings that can effectively coexist with their surroundings.

There are also legislative changes, such as biodiversity net gain (BNG). This was introduced in 2023 with the aim of leaving nature in a 'measurably better state than it was found' once development has finished.[15] While there have been some growing pains with BNG, its passing into law charts a direction for the industry over the coming years. Its effect can also be seen in other aspects of planning law, including calls for gardens and a minimum number of trees to be enshrined under new rules for housebuilders.[16]

However, the relationship between nature and construction doesn't end here – not least because we live in a changing climate that will pose increasingly difficult questions for delivering buildings and infrastructure. Resilient and adaptive design will be vitally important in this respect.

Put simply, the sooner we are able to integrate what needs to be built with what needs to be protected, the sooner construction will be able to realise a type of development that is legitimately sustainable. The course has been set; it's now up to us to deliver.

13 https://www.historytoday.com/green-belt
14 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/new-homes-fact-sheet-1-the-need-for-homes/fact-sheet-1-the-need-for-homes
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How we're responding

BIODIVERSITY BENCHMARKING

In 2024, we launched our Nature Strategy, which includes a benchmarking process to track and measure the biodiversity value of our quarry sites and associated landholdings. The biodiversity value of the land within scope will be measured through a two-step process:

1

Surveying the habitats and species present within the boundary of the landholding and the surrounding connected land

2

Assessing the biodiversity value of the landholding

We are working towards our nature targets through three key approaches:
Reducing future negative impacts on nature
Restoring, renewing, and enhancing nature
Advocating a 'Nature Positive' approach

How we're responding

GLENSANDA WOODLAND

We have planted a 64-hectare woodland at Glensanda Quarry, located on the north shore of Loch Linnhe. This plantation of 105,000 trees is situated in a remote and environmentally under-recorded part of Scotland. It also builds on a previous, much smaller 14-hectare scheme that we planted in 2014.

The planting was completed in May 2024 and consists of upland oak, upland birch, and wet woodland. As these trees mature, they will help to restore part of the temperate rainforest that once thrived in this region of Scotland. In doing so, they will also create priority woodland habitat for a wide variety of birds, mammals, and insects, including wood warblers, chequered skippers and otters.

We see this as just one example of the work we can do to restore habitats that have been in decline over recent decades. It also highlights the role that Holcim can play in broader landscape restoration projects.

KEY GOALS

1

To be 'Nature Positive' by

2030

as defined in our nature strategy

2

Replenishing freshwater in water-risk areas by 2030, with:

75%

of sites to be water-positive

100%

of sites to be equipped with water recycling systems

3

Lowering water intensity across business lines2 by 2030, with:

33%

reduction in Cement

20%

reduction in Aggregates

15%

reduction in Ready-Mix Concrete

NOTEABLE PROJECTS

Ripon City Quarry

Working in partnership with Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and the local community, we were awarded the Best Restoration Award at Ripon City Quarry. This involved the transformation of the former quarry into a nature reserve, providing a haven for wildlife. By adding to existing nature reserves along the River Ure corridor, Ripon City Quarry contributes to the development of the Wildlife Trusts' 'Living Landscape' scheme, which aims to create bigger, better managed and more joined up wildlife habitats.

> Successful construction does not need to come at the expense of nature. But to getting to this position requires a clearly defined plan. This is the thinking behind our nature strategy. It explains how we will halt and eventually reverse the impact of our operations, creating an environment where local habitats thrive even as we continue to grow.
>
> **Tom Redfern**

CONCLUSION

There are many steps needed to make sustainable construction a reality, and many will require the industry to fundamentally rethink established practices. The key is to start the transition well before critical deadlines arrive.

Our response to the megatrends outlined in this positioning statement is not a fixed blueprint. As new challenges, technologies, and priorities emerge, both Holcim and the wider industry will need to adapt.

However, this statement highlights the types of interventions necessary to embed sustainability into construction in the 21st century.

This is just the beginning — but we are ready to lead the way.

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