



NORTH WEST  
CONSTRUCTION HUB

# NWCH: Becoming a Sustainable Framework

1

Tackling Carbon  
Emissions

2

Reducing Single  
Use Plastics

3

Biodiversity  
Net Gain

# Introduction

In the ever-evolving landscape of the construction industry, sustainability is no longer a buzzword – but an imperative. This was made evident at the North West Construction Hub Client Engagement Event, which tackled the topic of decarbonisation head on. A talk by Tom Cullingford of Equans, followed by a panel discussion, emphasised the urgency of sustainable building, presenting directly to Clients who wield considerable influence in the design process.

In light of this, I am pleased to share with you all some recent developments within the North West Construction Hub that underscore our commitment to a greener future. The NWCH held our re-focused Sustainability Special Interest Group (SIG) meeting at the end of September – bringing together Contractors, Consultants, and Clients, to drive forward the change we want to see.

We are addressing three key topics going forward: Carbon Emissions, Single Use Plastics, and Biodiversity Net Gain.

## 1. Tackling Carbon emissions

A key Takeaway from the Client Engagement Event was the need to address Carbon Emissions, and particularly Embodied Carbon. NWCH are taking this seriously and will be introducing new Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), developed by contractors in collaboration with the NACF, to monitor embodied carbon emissions on all new build projects valued over £5 million. This data driven approach will help us track and reduce the carbon footprint of our projects effectively.

Additionally, going forward, the NWCH will align with the Carbon Reduction Code for the Built Environment, which forms part of the Construction Leadership Councils Construct Zero Initiative. The first step is achieving 'Pledger' status - this will guide us in minimising our organisational carbon emissions, and we will encourage our contractors to do the same. To achieve Pledger status, organisations must achieve a minimum level of compliance to the core commitments of setting out plans to meet net zero by 2045, including annual targets, and publishing these and the progress made against them yearly. Pledger level also requires setting an interim target to reduce net direct and indirect carbon emissions for 2030, which aligns with or exceeds government strategy.

Creating a community of built environment organisations to support the journey to net zero will help everyone to reach the destination of net zero. The more organisations that sign up to the Code the greater the difference we can make.

## 2.Reducing Single Use Plastics

A pressing issue that emerged during our Special interest Group Meeting is the use of Single Use Plastics (SUP) on-sites. Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) have already recognised the environmental impact of these materials and pledged the 'eradication of avoidable use of Single Use Plastics' by the end of 2024.

Following this, NWCH will work closely with GMCA and our Contractors to create strategies that reduce avoidable single use plastics on site. We believe that small changes can lead to significant reductions in plastic waste, contributing to a cleaner future.

## 3.Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity is a critical aspect of sustainable building. There are many benefits to rich biodiversity, including providing resistance to climate change, flooding, and improving the well-being of residents. During our Sustainability SIG, Faye Durkin from Greengage provided a very topical presentation on changes to Biodiversity Net Gain legislation in the UK, and why it is so important. The NWCH is looking to further educate our framework partners and supply chains on this topic and implement future strategies that ensure our projects not only meet but exceed environmental standards.

To conclude, the North West Construction Hub is working proactively with our partners, contractors, consultants and clients, to drive forward a sustainable construction sector in the North West.

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