



PLACES

We want to create places that deliver a positive impact on our people, our communities and the planet. We're aiming for net zero carbon buildings, finding ways to use fewer resources, and helping build stronger communities in and around our properties.



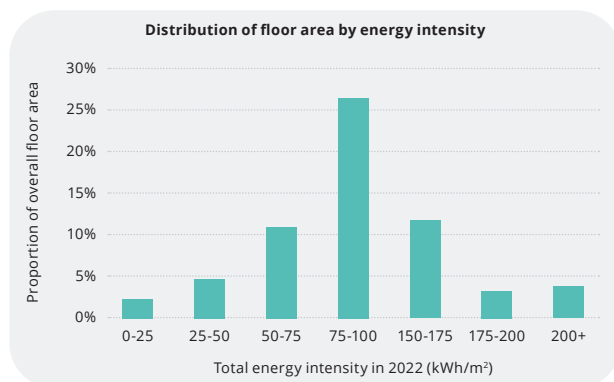
Tackling climate change

We're playing our part in keeping global warming below 1.5°C, reducing greenhouse gas emissions from operations and new buildings in line with science-based carbon targets to be net zero carbon by 2030.

Existing properties

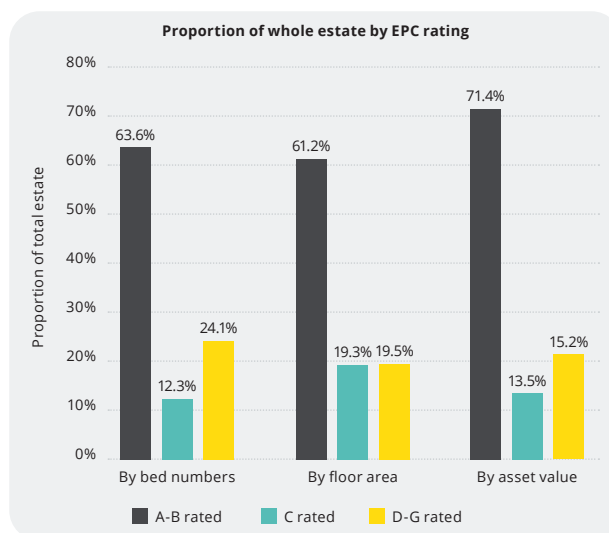
In 2021, we set out our ambition and approach to tackling climate change in our Net Zero Carbon Pathway document (see unitegroup.com/sustainability/our-net-zero-pathway) including science-based carbon targets aligned with a 1.5°C limit to global warming, in line with the Paris Climate Agreement. In 2022, we completed detailed site surveys and modelling of every property in the estate, creating building specific Asset Transition Plans that set out the measures needed to deliver the required energy, carbon and EPC improvements. This provides a full picture of the c.£100 million of capital investment required to hit our 2030 net zero carbon targets, including our energy intensity target linked to CRREM (the Carbon Risk Real Estate Monitor tool).

The chart below shows the portion of total floor achieving different levels of energy intensity (consumption per square metre of floor space) in 2022. As on page 60, 2022 whole estate average energy intensity was 117.9kWh/m², slightly above the CRREM pathway benchmark for 2022 of 113.6 (v1.093).



We've invested c.£20 million in energy initiatives in the past two years, achieving a 6.5% cut in absolute energy consumption from our 2019 base year (see pages 60–61 for more details of our energy and carbon performance). This investment has helped us achieve significant improvements in EPC ratings, with 61% of total floor area now A-B rated and a further 19% of floor area C rated as shown on the chart, compared to 35% and 22% respectively in 2021.

We have c.£7 million of capital investment in energy efficiency planned for 2023, including LED lighting, air-source heat pumps, and improved heating controls, and are exploring options to bring more of our purchased electricity under long-term corporate power purchase agreements (cPPAs) to meaningfully decarbonise our energy supply.



New developments

2022 saw the recruitment of a new Sustainability Construction Manager role in our Development team to steer our development pipeline towards our 2030 targets. In-house modelling using the OneClick LCA (life cycle assessment) software package has given us our best-ever understanding of embodied carbon and the options open to us to reduce. We will publish our Sustainable Construction Framework later in 2023 to help deliver our net zero carbon development ambition.

Working closely with our supply chain, this LCA work has allowed us to achieve significant reductions in embodied carbon of new developments. Our Campbell House development achieved a figure of 817kgCO₂e/m² (RIBA stages A-C) compared to the RIBA 030 Climate Challenge target of 1,000kgCO₂e/m² for 2020 and 800kgCO₂e/m² for 2025.

In 2023, we will continue to collaborate with leading industry bodies around themes of embodied carbon, circular economy and operational energy performance.

SUSTAINABILITY AND NON-FINANCIAL REPORTING continued



PLACES continued



Greener, sustainable buildings

We're designing, constructing and managing our buildings to be sustainable, support nature, and provide a healthy, inspiring environment for those who work or live there.

We have targeted BREEAM Excellent for all new buildings since 2017 as well as an EPC A rating to help ensure they achieve the levels of performance we demand across areas including energy efficiency, material selection, biodiversity, health and wellbeing, and safety.

- Campbell House, our latest BREEAM Excellent, EPC A-rated development in our home city of Bristol, includes over 400 student bedrooms in a new purpose-built block, as well as the sensitive redevelopment of the original Bristol Royal Infirmary building dating from the 1730s to accommodate 431 students. The development makes use of air source heat pumps for domestic hot water, networked smart-controllers on all heating, and on-site solar panels to achieve levels of energy performance we need to support our environmental targets. See case study on page 57 for more details.
- 2022 also saw major refurbishment of two large sites in Manchester, New Medlock Way and Parkway Gate, which included over £3 million of energy efficiency improvements to building fabric and services, including new insulation and glazing, air-source heat pump, solar panels and building control improvements.



Responsible use of resources

We're reducing resource consumption and waste, working with suppliers to improve circularity, and helping students and staff adopt life-long sustainable behaviours.

We're working hard to cut water use, reduce waste and improve recycling across our estate, and to engage with our supply chain to quantify and decrease the impact of products and services we consume. In 2022, we retendered our waste and recycling contracts, ensuring that our new suppliers would be able to support our transition to a more circular supply chain.



Playing an active role in local communities

We want to ensure that our activity brings real benefits to local communities, undertaking detailed community engagement as part of any new development.

We've collaborated with local youth intervention charity Streets of Growth at our new Hayloft Point development in central London, providing them with their first ever permanent and dedicated space on a peppercorn rent. Here, they can deliver a real positive impact for marginalised young people in Tower Hamlets and the Isle of Dogs through their street intervention model. Built on the former site of The Boar's Head, a sixteenth century playhouse, the space includes a fully equipped theatre space which Streets of Growth use for workshops and an ongoing partnership with The British Bangladeshi Fashion Council.

Our Positive Impact scheme has been developed in conjunction with the NUS and provides a framework to help employees support their communities and adopt sustainable behaviours, including recycling and donations to charity. 2022 was a milestone year, with 100% of our properties achieving bronze awards, and teams across the business working towards silver and gold awards by setting up long-term projects and collaborations within their local community to deliver real social or environmental benefit.



WE CONTINUED OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH THE BRITISH HEART FOUNDATION THROUGHOUT 2022

Total raised in donations in 2022:
£213,162

Total bags donated in 2022: **15,108**

Our commitment to invest 1% of profit (on an Adjusted Earnings basis) in social initiatives represents a target of £1.6 million for 2022 so we are pleased to have invested a total of over £2.0 million during 2022 in this area. This includes our contribution to the Unite Foundation, investment in the Leapskills programme, and the value of spaces we provide in our buildings such as Hayloft Point.

Through various initiatives including our ongoing partnership with the British Heart Foundation and the provision of rooms in Central London free of charge to IntoUniversity for their summer schools, in-kind donations have totalled over £260,000. We are working with leading social impact organisation B4SI to better understand the impact of our investment in this activity, so that we can target effort where it delivers the greatest societal benefit and quantify the impact achieved.



CASE STUDY

HAYLOFT POINT

A major investment in a prime location

London is an area of key strategic importance for Unite. The capital is the UK's largest student market, and suffers from a shortage of purpose-built student accommodation.

Hayloft Point, costing £187 million, is our newest flagship property located in the heart of central London. The development reached practical completion in September 2022, and was fully let in its first year.

The 24-storey, 29,000 square feet development in Aldgate contains 920 beds and offers proximity to prestigious university campuses. The building boasts facilities including a cinema, karaoke rooms, gyms and study spaces.

As part of our commitment to being an active part of our communities, we partnered with youth intervention charity, Streets of Growth. The charity is utilising two floors of the building to offer production, filmmaking and textile activities to young people.

Hayloft Point is built on the location of a sixteenth century playhouse, so we worked closely with the Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA) to ensure findings of national significance were preserved within the footprint of the development.

Due to strong university relationships, Unite is well placed to operate in London, and our development team has extensive experience navigating the complex planning environment in the city. We have entered into a five-year nomination agreement at Hayloft Point with King's College London, covering just over 67% of beds in the building.

Following the development of Hayloft Point, we are now the capital's largest owner, manager, and developer of purpose-built student accommodation, with over 11,500 beds across the city and 2,400 more beds in our development pipeline.



For more about this project, go online to:
unitegroup.com/sustainability/positive-impact