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# Ambitions for 2027

**Sustainable Development, Second Nature**

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# About us

UK-GBC is an industry-led network with a mission to radically improve the sustainability of the built environment.

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A charity with over 400 member organisations spanning the entire value chain, we represent the voice of the industry's current and future leaders who are striving for transformational change.

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We inspire, challenge and empower our members, helping them to identify and adopt the most sustainable, viable solutions.

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We also engage our members in advocating a progressive message to government, informing and influencing policy.



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# Becoming second nature

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**Foreword by Julie Hirigoyen , Chief Executive**



**The Climate Change Act has committed Britain to reducing carbon emissions by at least 80% against 1990 figures. This needs to be achieved by 2050. Government clearly has a role to play in ensuring a clear and consistent set of policies to facilitate the transition to a low carbon economy. But unless radical step changes take place across the built environment in the near future, there is very real danger of falling short of that target.**



UK-GBC is passionately committed to helping the built environment sector make those changes. And we want to go further than that. We want to help bolster our members' business models to ensure their viability long into the future. A successful business is one that is resilient to external shocks, able to meet the rapidly changing needs of its customers. Sustainable development and commercial success go hand in hand.



This document offers a road map towards making sustainable development second nature. It sets out in detail our vision, and shows how we intend to measure our own – and the wider sector's – progress towards it.

Since UK-GBC's formation in 2007, we and our members have achieved an enormous amount – creating deep knowledge banks of sustainability expertise and building powerful networks across the built environment sector from refurbishment to infrastructure. There have been many successes along the way which we are proud of.

But if the last 10 years have been important, the next 10 years are crucial. Sustainable development must become the norm - the obvious and only option in property and construction practices.

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**“We need to accelerate our collective progress and make sustainable development second nature to us all.”**

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It is true that new buildings today are more energy efficient than they were 10 years ago. But we know that they do not always perform as intended – many still consume vast amounts of energy. And we should be aware that 80% of the buildings of 2050 have already been built – most of them not designed according to sustainability principles.



The scale of the challenge has informed UK-GBC's ambitions for the decade ahead. We want to see buildings and places that have a neutral or net positive carbon footprint, that are well integrated into public transport infrastructure, whose component parts can be disassembled for recycling. We want to see nature integrated within cities and communities contributing to clean air, and resulting in places where people are healthy, happy and productive. As urbanisation intensifies, so will the urgency of successfully tackling these issues.



**“Sustainable development must become the norm – the obvious and only option in property and construction practices.”**



We will make faster and surer progress towards sustainability becoming second nature if we start to measure our collective impact against a set of meaningful metrics. Such a systematic approach will underpin UK-GBC's own Impact Reporting in the coming years, and will bring new rigour to the way we produce evidence-backed calls for action. We will work with others in the sector to collate data and evidence that indicates the progress being made across the whole industry, and how much further there is to go.

Of course, as the pace of change in technology, politics and society in general accelerates, these metrics themselves will need regular updating. Hence this document is intended to be 'live'.



**“The commercial viability of the built environment is wholly dependent on the health of the planet and its natural resources.”**



It's worth reminding ourselves that the commercial viability of the built environment sector is wholly dependent on the health of the planet and its natural resources. Individuals working in it have enormous opportunity and scope to make a tangible difference. That's why the next 10 years are so crucial. And why a thriving and effective UK-GBC is so essential.

Building on what we and our members have already achieved, we need to accelerate our collective progress and make sustainable development second nature to us all.



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# Our vision

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## A built environment that enables people and planet to thrive by:

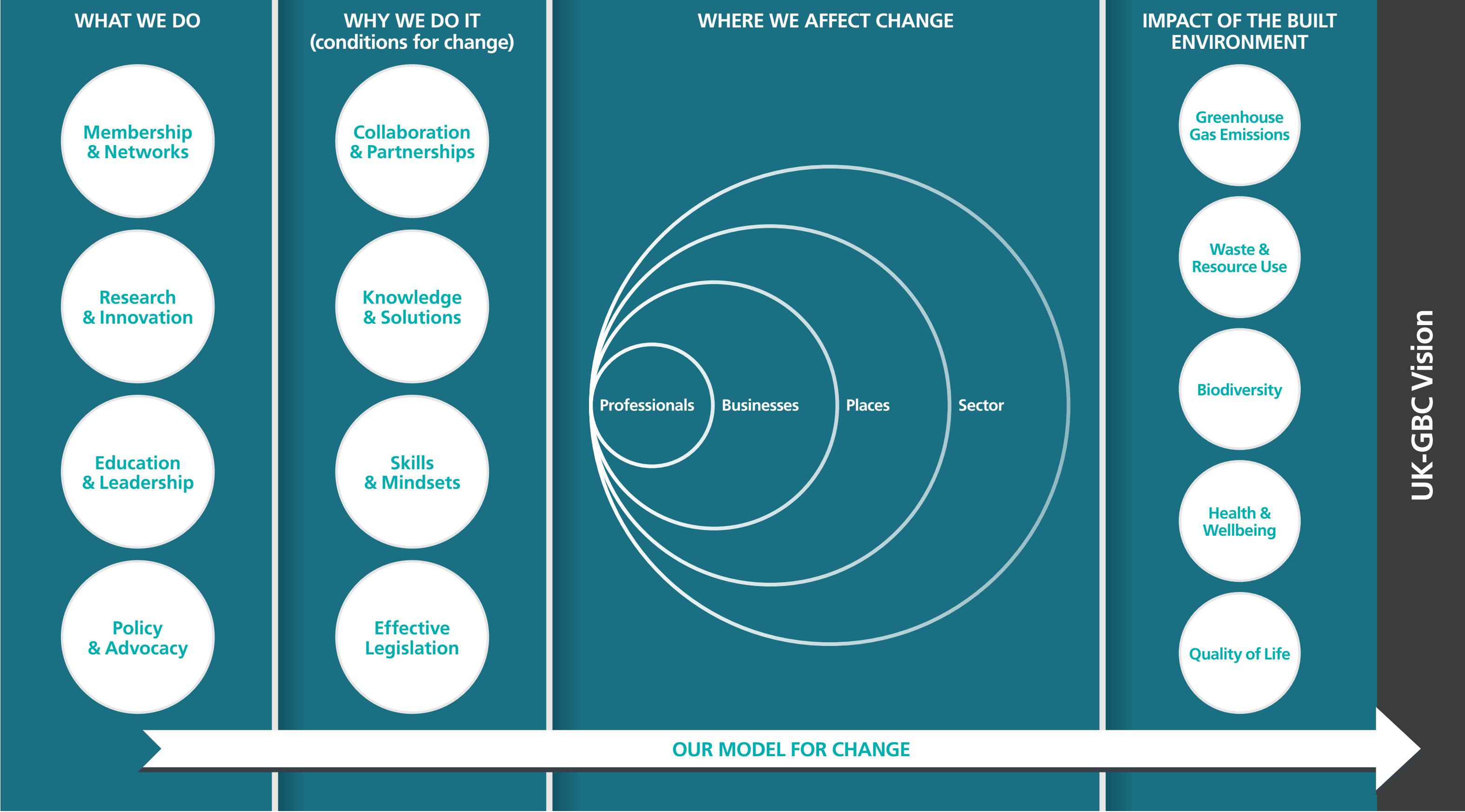




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# Our model for change

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# Professionals

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**Everyone working in the built environment sector has a role to play in helping to achieve its radical transformation. Managing the balance of economic, social and environmental priorities requires a new way of thinking. Ultimately, the transformation of organisations is entirely dependent on individuals working for them adopting new attitudes and fermenting a culture that challenges the status quo.**



UK-GBC will engage as many people as possible in our mission, inspiring them to deliver a sustainable built environment. We will deepen the technical knowledge of practitioners through learning interventions which tap into world class expertise, supporting the application of new learning on real projects. And we will cultivate purpose-driven leadership amongst individuals, strengthening collaboration and innovation in the sector through our leadership networks.

We will place great emphasis on continuing to nurture the industry's current and future leaders, ensuring sustainability becomes central

to business leadership.

Leading by example, these individuals will inspire others on their own sustainability journeys, thus accelerating the pace of transformation in the sector.

**“UK-GBC will engage as many people as possible in our mission, inspiring them to deliver a sustainable built environment.”**

## Ambitions for 2027

- 1 Raise awareness of sustainability amongst all built environment professionals
- 2 Deepen technical knowledge and application of green building practices
- 3 Support the transformation of member organisations through embedding customised learning solutions for their staff
- 4 Make sustainability central to leadership in our member organisations, and cultivate purpose-led leadership amongst both current and future leaders





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# Businesses

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**The commercial success of the business community is increasingly dependent on its ability to create social value. Shareholder pressure, transparency rules and pressing environmental, social and geo-political challenges are forcing businesses to manage their environmental, social and governance risks better. But the corporate sustainability debate has moved on. Rather than being driven purely by cost or compliance, businesses are now realising – and some even measuring - the significant commercial value to be derived from sustainable practices.**



UK-GBC will continue to support and encourage our member businesses with best-practice guidance and insightful research, as well as through our collaborative networks and forums. We will facilitate peer to peer discussions around best practice and challenge our members to adopt more stretching goals. We will also guide and encourage them to evaluate and advocate the solid business-case for sustainability. We will continue to leverage our international network to accelerate the momentum behind sustainable buildings globally, and to facilitate connections between all GBC members across borders and continents. Businesses are of course crucial to achieving the 17 global sustainable development goals that have been set for 2030 by the United Nations.

Extending the breadth and diversity of our membership to become fully representative of the built environment sector, in all parts of the country, will strengthen our collective voice. So we will be forging strategic partnerships wherever we see opportunities to collaborate with others on sustainability outcomes.

## Ambitions for 2027

- 1 Grow our membership to be fully representative of the entire built environment sector
- 2 Deepen and strengthen our members' engagement with UK-GBC activities
- 3 Track the corporate sustainability journeys of our business members against key commitments such as:
  - Long-term science-based carbon targets and clean renewable energy
  - Substantial carbon, water and waste reduction goals and circular economy principles
  - Net zero or net positive impact across a range of different issues
  - Workplace impacts on both staff and the environment
- 4 Enable our Gold Leaf members to demonstrate commercial success through their leading corporate sustainability commitments and performance





# Places





**We are witnessing a political shift towards greater devolution, and a growing recognition that our cities and communities are vital in addressing social, economic and environmental challenges. This has led to a renewed emphasis on local policy and place-making in the UK.**





UK-GBC is well placed to respond. We will significantly expand our engagement with cities and combined authorities, as well as community groups, strengthening their relationships with our industry members to accelerate the delivery of genuinely sustainable places.

We will engage with both public and private sector to inspire and inform the application of stretching, but consistent standards and best practice, particularly on the largest, long-term regeneration schemes. This will require us to think beyond the building, and

**“We will significantly expand our engagement with cities and combined authorities, strengthening their relationships with our industry members, to accelerate the delivery of genuinely sustainable places.”**

consider neighbourhood and city-scale solutions that truly deliver for the people using them.

We will develop active UK-GBC networks and partnerships in every UK region, which will support all aspects of our work.

## Ambitions for 2027

- 1 Forge strong relationships between city policy-makers and industry members
- 2 Inform ambitious, consistent local policy on place-making, which supports industry leadership – on key topics such as zero carbon, health and wellbeing, natural environment, resource efficiency and quality of life
- 3 Influence the majority of the UK’s largest regeneration projects to demonstrate best practice in sustainable place-making, backed by robust evidence and consistent standards
- 4 Develop and maintain active UK-GBC networks in every region





Sector





**Buildings and infrastructure account for around 35% of resources globally and nearly 40% of energy use and carbon emissions. They also have a major impact on people's quality of life, health, wellbeing and productivity. Our ultimate goal is to future-proof the built environment sector as a whole – enabling it to play a major part in accelerating the transition to a low carbon UK economy.**

Such a vision requires the bar to be set high – with tightening performance standards for both existing and new buildings. UK-GBC will continue to press for higher sustainability standards to be reflected in national policy and regulations, and for sustainable development to be a mainstream concern within sector-wide industrial strategies and plans.

We will convene and work together with our members to break through some of the sector's biggest challenges, and identify and develop innovative solutions to overcome market failures. We will drive the adoption of new technologies and help our members understand their potential for delivering ambitious sustainability goals.

We will enable our members to connect with the wider global network we are part of, and learn from international best practice. And we will encourage them to look beyond the built environment sector itself, reaching out to adjacent sectors for collaboration and cross-fertilisation of ideas.

## Ambitions for 2027

- 1 Positively influence national built environment policies, regulations, and sectoral strategies
- 2 Inspire and support the creation of sustainable innovations which address market failures
- 3 Measure the sector's year on year progress against tangible metrics including:
  - Carbon emissions from the built environment sector compared with 1990 levels
  - The number of buildings and schemes achieving net zero or net positive impact
  - Total floor space of buildings certified under a sustainable building rating scheme
  - Total investment in research and development and innovation by UK construction
  - Growth in market demand for sustainable buildings



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UK-GBC  
going forward

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**By 2027, we will have become an undisputed centre for excellence in the UK built environment. Through the outstanding quality of our work in the coming decade, we will have cemented our reputation as the independent expert on the sustainability of the built environment, and we will continue to be highly regarded in both business and political circles. Our media profile will reflect this status.**



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**“We will seek  
to maximise  
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alliances.”**

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Expanded membership plus grants, charitable donations and corporate partnerships will continue to ensure our financial security. We will always use our resources efficiently and cost-effectively, and strive for a net zero environmental footprint.

This will require us to act as a networking hub, leveraging the skills, knowledge and expertise from across our membership and treating our members as an extension of our team. Importantly, we will reach out to other reputable organisations whose missions are aligned with our own, and seek to maximise combined impact through meaningful partnerships and alliances.

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UK-GBC's organisational culture will reflect our core values – wisdom, courage and compassion. We will maintain our robust approach to governance, always prioritising full transparency and accountability.

Our staff will continue to be highly motivated, fully committed to our vision and enjoy a sense of wellbeing and collective purpose.

And we will continue to form part of a growing and thriving global family of green building councils – including staff, members and partners - through our valued membership of WorldGBC and our active role in furthering the momentum of this international network.



**“UK-GBC's  
organisational  
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# Second nature

*noun*

1. A tendency or habit that has become characteristic or instinctive.

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# Contact us

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