



strata

# **BIODIVERSITY & NATURE POLICY**



## Introduction

At Strata we believe in putting people and communities at the heart of what we do. As a team we are designing homes and places that are mindful of the planet and its resources, while creating healthy, inclusive, and resilient communities. Our Sustainability Strategy, "Uplifting places where people can flourish", outlines our commitment to sustainability and the steps we plan to take to achieve our vision of becoming the market leading customer experience homebuilder. This is underpinned by our sustainability and social purpose credentials.

We understand that nature provides us with a variety of ecosystem services that Strata, our customers, communities and suppliers rely on to thrive and enjoy a good quality of life. This is why we have developed our first Biodiversity & Nature Policy. In conjunction with our Sustainability Strategy, this outlines our commitments to biodiversity and nature, and the steps we plan to take to curate a culture that continues to protect and enhance the nature around us.

## Objectives

We have developed a set of objectives informed by national policy, industry best practice, the Next Generation Benchmark, and our own internal Approach to Nature:

- To design in biodiverse landscapes and faunal features from the outset of a development.
- To design and deliver tailored features identified in the Biodiversity Checklist across all developments to ensure connectivity to, and enhancement of, existing wildlife and green corridors.
- To implement the mitigation hierarchy to avoid and minimise any negative impacts on the environment from the design, construction and management of our developments in relation to biodiversity and nature.
- To provide access to nature to promote health and wellbeing benefits to our customers and neighbouring communities.
- To ensure long term management and monitoring of landscapes that we create within our developments to allow nature to flourish.
- To ensure all employees and customers are aware of how developments are designed with biodiversity and nature at the forefront, and the benefits to nature and customers.
- To ensure that all employees, subcontractors and persons carrying out work on behalf of Strata are aware of, and comply with, this policy and all criteria identified in the Biodiversity Checklist.
- To ensure that our plans and proposals comply with ecological legislation, national and local policy.

## Targets

- By financial year 2024, create and publish Strata's Biodiversity & Nature Policy to establish and practise a flexible and holistic approach to biodiversity and nature that supports and enhances local ecosystems and community access to nature.
- Reinforce the biodiversity hierarchy to enhance nature and achieve Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)  $\geq 10\%$  (maintained for 30 years) across all developments submitted through planning from 2023, prioritising on-site enhancements where possible.

## Governance

This policy is owned and maintained by the Biodiversity and Nature Working Group who are responsible for the communication and dissemination of relevant tools and information for implementation.

The policy is reviewed annually and approved by the Sustainability Committee and Board of Directors.

**Name:** Gemma Smith  
**Title:** Chief Executive Officer  
**Date:** 10.06.2024  
**Version:** 1.0  
**Origin Date:** 10.05.2024

**Signed:** 

# Biodiversity Checklist

This checklist has been developed to ensure that all Strata sites are assessed to determine their suitability to deliver best practice initiatives to promote and enhance biodiversity and nature.

Alignment to the checklist will be mandatory on Open Market schemes, desirable on Pre-Sold schemes, and not applicable on contract only schemes.

## Biodiversity and Nature Enhancement

- Design developments to deliver a minimum of 10% BNG, prioritising on-site where possible.
- 25% of POS (Public Open Space) areas to be retained for nature through either habitat enhancement or designated wildlife areas.
- In excess of 10% of POS areas to be given over to wildflower meadow.

## Landscaping and Species Selection

- 100% of trees planted in POS areas to be native to the UK or fruit bearing in the first instance. Where this is not practical, suitable alternatives to be identified and agreed with Strata, which may include native cultivars or those that have a recognisable, proven benefit to wildlife.
- Where possible, street trees will be incorporated into the design of all primary streets across Strata developments.
- Wildlife and pollinator friendly species to be incorporated into garden landscaping, in line with best practice guidance for pollinators.
- Native hedging to be incorporated into site boundaries where practical.
- Native hedging and alternative fencing to be offered to homeowners of properties with non-neighbouring boundaries.
- Lawn species to be native to the wider local ecosystem or have proven benefit to wildlife.
- Wildflower turf offered to customers at customer choices as an alternative to grass lawn.
- POS areas to include sensory and edible species.
- Peat free soil to be utilised across all Strata's soft landscaping.

## Landscape Management

- Implement differential mowing regimes to provide a variety of habitats for wildlife and recreational areas for residents.
- New wildflower areas will receive one single cut no earlier than 1st July, with established meadows to receive an additional cut in early spring.
- All customers will receive information on managing their garden for biodiversity.
- Biodiversity, nature information and signage to be included on all developments.
- No pesticide will be used to manage the POS areas of Strata's developments.

## Wildlife

- Hedgehog highways will be installed (dependent upon levels) in all garden and boundary fences where hedgehog migration would otherwise be restricted.
- Where practical and beneficial, wildlife corridors will be incorporated into sites, linking at least two of its boundaries to existing wildlife corridors in the local area.
- In-built bat boxes to be included within 25% of plots.
- In-built Swift boxes to be included within 25% of all plots, with additional specialist bird or generic nestboxes to be installed to equate to one per plot in line with ecological advice.
- Where possible, wildlife friendly lighting to be installed on plots and in POS areas, considering lighting intensity, duration and orientation.
- Install or create habitat for solitary bee species in POS areas.
- In addition to planning requirements, install at least one faunal feature to complement an area's wider ecological context, for example, hedgehog house, insect box, log pile, etc.

## Resource Management

- All customers with a garden to be offered a garden compost bin or access to a communal composting site.
- Wherever possible, all developments to incorporate an oil receptor tank as standard.
- All customers with a garden to be offered the installation of a water butt.

## Climate Regulation and Resilience

- All sites to assess the suitability of nature-based solutions to flood risk, including detention basins and retention ponds.
- Enforce the Mitigation Hierarchy throughout the design and construction process.
- Follow the Hierarchy of Drainage set out in the National Planning Practice Guidelines to promote the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems where appropriate.

## Community Access to Nature

- Assess opportunities to include community allotment space within development.