



**the BIG
Biodiversity
Challenge**
do one thing

MAKING SPACE FOR NATURE AND BEAUTY: CREATING NET BIODIVERSITY GAIN NATIONWIDE BERKELEY GROUP

BIG Biodiversity Challenge Award Category: Client of the Year

Project overview

In 2016, Berkeley Group made a commitment to creating a net biodiversity gain on all new developments from May 2017 onwards. We use our biodiversity toolkit to measure, implement and monitor biodiversity and have developed a guide called [The Nine Concepts](#) to inform our approach.

What were the biodiversity conditions on site, prior to the enhancement?

Prior to our net biodiversity gain commitment, Berkeley Group were undertaking some fantastic developments which enhanced people's access to nature; we worked in partnership with Thames Water and the London Wildlife Trust to develop Woodberry Wetlands, created a new park at Kidbrooke Village, and through our business strategy, Our Vision, required all new developments to consult an ecologist and encourage living roofs, such as the biodiverse living roofs at Goodman's Fields in Aldgate. Whilst we worked with ecologists and landscape architects to design these areas, we had no way of measuring the value of the habitats we were creating.

What were the reasons behind this project?

We recognise the important role that biodiversity plays in our daily lives; it helps to improve air quality, provides resilience to climate change and adds amenity value. Despite this, it continues to decrease at an alarming rate. We wanted to demonstrate our commitment to the natural environment and ensure that we have a positive effect on the places we create. We also wanted to lead the industry and do something to not only halt the decline of biodiversity, but reverse it.



Woodberry Wetlands, Finsbury Park



What were the biodiversity measures taken?

In 2016, Berkeley Group made a commitment under Our Vision to “develop and apply an approach to ensure that all new developments create a net biodiversity gain”.

Working with Waterman Infrastructure & Environment Limited, we developed a biodiversity toolkit which is now used by our project teams and their appointed ecologists on every site. The toolkit helps to establish a baseline of what ecological value is on the site and then highlights the volume and types of habitats that will need to be created on site to ensure that there is a net biodiversity gain. In addition, the toolkit helps our teams to manage and monitor the biodiversity requirements during the development process.

We recognise the key role that our ecologists and landscape architects have in helping us to deliver our commitment and so have run a series of training workshops to ensure that they are familiar with our approach and the toolkit.

To help our teams take a holistic approach to designing and delivering biodiverse places, we also worked with The Ecology Consultancy to develop guidance called *The Nine Concepts: Making Space for Nature and Beauty*. This guide helps our teams consider concepts such as connectivity, links to the community, and local ecological character and distinctiveness. Our internal teams have a copy of this document and we also share it externally on our website, through social media, and at industry events.

Since launching our toolkit in 2017, 100% of our developments that have gone into planning are on track to creating a net gain and we have shared our experiences with Natural England and the GLA, to help inform future policy.

The biodiversity toolkit is a management tool for biodiversity throughout the development process.

The calculator within the biodiversity toolkit is used to baseline the habitat on site before development and demonstrate how the landscape design will create a net gain.

Further information

Creating a net biodiversity gain continues to be an area of focus for us; we were the first developer to commit to creating biodiversity net gain and remain committed to enhancing biodiversity and leaving a legacy of places where people can live an enjoyable, sustainable life.

Underpinning our approach is the biodiversity toolkit which is based on industry leading best practice. The calculator within the toolkit is based on the Defra metrics that were developed for their Biodiversity Offsetting trials. This process encourages us to follow the mitigation hierarchy to retain the most valued habitats on site and then create new habitats which provide the greatest biodiversity benefit whilst also offering amenity benefits. We appreciate the benefits that biodiverse places bring, both to the environment and our customers, and therefore our approach is to, wherever possible, ensure that the net gain is achieved on site.

Our approach to biodiversity has led to a ‘buzz’ about nature within the business, and has also encouraged sites already in construction to revisit their landscaping strategy. For example, at Kidbrooke Village we have partnered with the London Wildlife Trust to enhance biodiversity by transforming the parkland, delivered as part of the early phases of the project, into a wetland area that will attract wildlife and people. The London Wildlife Trust baselined the site using the toolkit and created a new landscape strategy that would ensure a net gain for the site.



The Nine Concepts: Making space for nature and beauty, available on the Berkeley Group's website: <https://www.berkeleygroup.co.uk/creating-net-biodiversity-gain>

Project Team

- Developer: Berkeley Group
- Ecology Consultants: Waterman Infrastructure & Environment Limited; The Ecology Consultancy; London Wildlife Trust

What was the motivation for carrying out the enhancement?

Developments are often thought of as having a negative effect on our environment, however in reality they can enable its enhancement. This is because they often provide the opportunity for incorporating higher quality habitats which provide multiple benefits.

By committing to creating a net biodiversity gain on all new sites, we demonstrate our commitment to the natural environment, to having a positive effect on the places we create, and to helping to address UN Sustainable Development Goal 15: Life on Land. At the time of launching our commitment, no other developer had committed to improving biodiversity across all developments.



Cator Park, Kidbrooke Village, Greenwich

All images taken by Berkeley Group.