

CLIMATE AND BIODIVERSITY EMERGENCY

The climate emergency is the biggest challenge facing our planet and our profession. As landscape professionals, we need to lead the way in responsible design and best practice to drive change at a national and international level.

As a founding signatory of the Landscape Architects Declare campaign, a call-to-arms on the twin crises of climate breakdown and biodiversity, we pledge to work alongside our industry counterparts to share knowledge, embed sustainable industry standards into our projects and day-to-day practices, and commit to reducing and offsetting our carbon footprint.

With other signatories the actions we are promoting include:

- Raise awareness of the climate and biodiversity emergencies and the urgent need for practical action among clients, co-consultants and supply chains.
- Advocate for faster change in our profession towards resilient and regenerative design practices, and a higher Government funding priority to support these.
- Establish climate and biodiversity mitigation, adaptation and resilience principles as the key measure of our industry's success: demonstrated through awards, prizes and listings.
- Share knowledge and research to that end on an open-source basis.
- Evaluate all new projects against the aspiration to contribute positively to mitigating climate breakdown, and encourage our clients to adopt this approach.
- Preserve and protect existing irreplaceable landscapes and habitats while protecting and optimising areas of functional and biodiverse landscape in all developments.
- Adopt a whole systems approach to landscape design, recognising that soils, bacteria and mycorrhizal fungi are key factors for ecosystem survival and carbon sequestration.
- Work to provide assessment tools for life cycle costing, carbon usage, and biodiversity gains. Develop and promote post-occupancy tools and measures to assist in the management of landscapes.
- In addition to working with mitigation, adaptation and resilience as primary tools, look to using regenerative design principles in the design of landscapes.
- Collaborate with architects, engineers, contractors and clients to further reduce construction waste.
- Promote low embodied carbon, and look to maximise carbon sequestering, responsible and sustainable use of water and biodiversity net gains in all projects.
- Minimise wasteful use of resources in landscape architecture and urban planning, both in quantum and in detail.

OUR APPROACH TO SUSTAINABILITY & CLIMATE-POSITIVE DESIGN

At Gillespies, sustainability is integral to our design approach. It is inherent in our training and in our practice. We endeavour to integrate it at every level of project development, not just as an afterthought. We believe true sustainability must meet the needs of our client, the environment, the community and the budget.

Gillespies recognises the accepted definition of sustainable development as development "meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". Sustainability is a process of ensuring the efficient use of all resources within a system in which environmental, social and economic factors are integrated. We are committed to placing sustainability at the heart of our practice and actions by:

- Placing sustainability integral to the preparation and delivery of our projects;
- Taking positive action to promote continual environmental improvement in our workplaces; and
- Setting and achieving clearly defined sustainable development objectives and targets.

As part of our commitment to placing sustainability at the heart of our operation and activities, and with the support of an external advisor, we are undertaking a **carbon audit** of all our business operations. After this audit, we plan to embark on a pathway to carbon neutrality in our business operations and thereafter, we hope, **Net Zero Carbon** with the support of appropriately targeted offsetting of residual carbon. **Carbon Literacy Training** workshops for all our staff by our external advisor Positive Planet will help educate our team on the practical ways that they can avoid and reduce carbon in their business and private activities.

This **Sustainability Policy** seeks to build on our existing **Environmental Policy** and undertakes to :

1. MAKE SUSTAINABILITY A CORPORATE PRIORITY

- Encourage our clients and our employees to incorporate informed sustainability perspectives within their projects
- Develop the capacities of employees to promote understanding of the principles of sustainability and climate-positive design.

2. DEVELOP AND DELIVER APPROPRIATE TRAINING

- Undertake continuing professional development for our staff in sustainable climate-positive design
- Support and encourage interdisciplinary research into issues of sustainable low carbon development.

3. TAKE A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN SUSTAINABILITY

- Set best practice standards that meet or surpass requirements of environmental legislation and commit to a process of continual environmental improvement
- Promote awareness of all legislative, economic, technical and market developments that assist progress towards sustainability, especially with our clients and project partners
- Establish a working group to oversee implementation of this policy and associated programmes.

4. CONTRIBUTE TO STABLE COMMUNITY-BUILDING

- Build partnerships and create learning networks for sharing experiences and knowledge of sustainability issues
- Operate in ways that maximise social and economic benefit while minimising any adverse impacts to the local community
- Invest in staff development, value stakeholder involvement, and promote social inclusion and equity.

5. OPERATE OUR WORKING ENVIRONMENTS IN A SUSTAINABLE MANNER

- Develop procurement procedures for all materials consumed, ensuring social, ethical and environmental criteria are integrated
- Maximise the efficient use of energy and materials and increase use of renewable and recycled resources
- Minimise waste generation and encourage repair, reuse and recycling ahead of the responsible disposal of surplus materials
- Promote practical measures to reduce the impact of travel to and between our workplaces.

6. MONITOR AND REPORT ON PROGRESS TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY

- Manage responsibly the social, environmental and economic impacts of all company policies and practices, assess potential improvements in our decision making processes
- Conduct reviews of all company policies and operations against internal sustainability targets and best practice standards
- Make the results of social, environmental and sustainability audits and impact assessments, carried out by or for the company, available to all staff and clients.

OUR PRACTICE

Our involvement in sustainability issues is wide-ranging. As planners and designers of urban and rural environments we are in an important position of influence to promote sustainable development in our project-based activities. We believe that creating places and spaces which are appropriate, inclusive, adaptable and long-lasting is fundamental to creating sustainable communities. We believe that effective design is essential for community building and creating a lasting legacy.

As part of our ongoing commitment to sustainable design we are developing a Climate Positive Design Toolkit that will help our team systematically embed sustainable and climate-positive design into our design deliverables and engagement with wider project design team and clients. This toolkit will evolve over time as our expertise and that of the wider industry develops and becomes more fluent in sustainable low carbon design. The toolkit will encourage sustainable decision making to be integral to the design process and provide a more systematic approach to the inherent sustainable design objectives that we already promote within our work. The toolkit is currently split into the following headings that follow the One Planet Living model developed by Bio Regional:

- **Health and happiness** - Encourage active, social, meaningful lives to promote good health and wellbeing
- **Equity and local economy** - Create safe, equitable places to live and work which support local prosperity
- **Culture and community** - Nurture local identity and heritage, empowering communities and promoting a culture of sustainable living
- **Land and nature** - Protect and restore land for the benefit of people and wildlife
- **Sustainable water** - Use water efficiently, protecting local water resources and reducing flooding and drought
- **Local and sustainable food** - Promote sustainable local, seasonal organic food accessible to local communities
- **Travel and transport** - Reduce the need to travel, encouraging walking, cycling and low carbon transport
- **Materials and products** - Use materials from sustainable sources and promote products and materials with low embodied carbon
- **Zero waste** - Support the circular economy by re-using and recycling.

AN ACTION PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

With the support of an external specialist, we have committed ourselves to understand and then reduce our operational carbon footprint, and establish a roadmap to Carbon Neutrality and then Net Zero Carbon. We will establish a robust timescale for this ambition. As part of our annual update of this policy will report on our progress. We will evolve our Climate Positive Design Toolkit: with appropriate training across our technical teams this will further drive our climate-positive design skills and place us at the forefront of sustainable design in our sector. As members, we already support the Landscape Institutes' Carbon Working Group and we will continue to support and share this as well as the wider Landscape Architects Declare campaign and pledge.

DATE OF LAST REVIEW:

1 NOVEMBER 2022

DATE OF NEXT REVIEW:

1 NOVEMBER 2023

REVIEW PERIOD: 12 MONTHS



JIM GIBSON, PARTNER, GILLESPIES,

1 NOVEMBER 2022