

B Corp Impact Report

Together we make progressive places





Our first year as a B Corp has been an exciting time, with the whole practice working to embed more sustainable and socially conscious principles in all that we do.

In terms of projects, we have achieved planning permissions for our first 46 passivhaus affordable homes and submitted planning for an innovative eco business park which is targeting the emerging UK Net Zero Carbon Building Standard and BREEAM Outstanding. Alongside these new build solutions, we are also working to retrofit over 450 affordable homes and 80,000 sqft of commercial space to net zero carbon standards.

Internally, we have achieved ISO14001 accreditation for our Environmental Management System and we have consolidated our people offer, ensuring that our review and remuneration packages remain at the forefront of the industry. We've also kept social value a core focus of everything we do.

After only a year certified, we are still at the beginning of our B Corp journey, but we look forward to continuing to improve our social and environmental performance ahead of our recertification in 2025.

Governance



Andy Rainford
Managing Director

We have continued to improve our governance structure to ensure we meet the highest standards of social and environmental performance, public transparency and legal accountability in the pursuit of balancing profit and purpose.

At the highest level, our articles of association have been revised to include B Corp legal amendments that requires consideration of all stakeholders in all our decision making. This Mission Lock has been at the heart of our approach to governance in the past year.

Seeking to provide further clarity to our approach, and following engagement with our team and our clients to better understand who we are as a practice, we also updated our Mission, Vision and Values to our Offer, Differences and Behaviours to capture our commitment to positive social and environmental impact.

During the year we implemented our new practice management software, Rapport3, to better manage our financial, HR, customer and project information. The major investment now provides an integrated, single source of truth against which we can benchmark and report on our performance. This proved invaluable in the analysis of the company’s strong performance in all areas which was then communicated to all staff at the End of Year Presentation.

During the year, the competencies of all our Team were revised to incorporate knowledge of social and environmental issues, which is supported by an ongoing targeted programme of continued professional development for both existing and new employees. Personal Development reviews and our annual Sustainability Knowledge Survey were also used to measure individual and collective understanding of these topics, allowing us to set targets for our ongoing improvement.



What’s next for governance?
Systems thinking training for all senior managers ahead of business planning sessions...



Our approach in numbers

Offer

We're a collaborative placemaking practice with our communities, clients & environment at the heart of our thinking.

Differences

We bring diverse expertise and a broad perspective to all projects / We're focused on creating places for the future / We're inspired by our people and our communities

Behaviours

Aspire
Empathise
Welcome



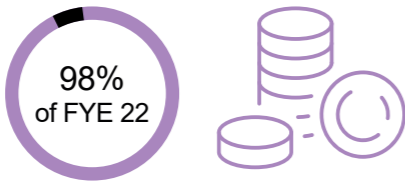
£7,621,556

Turnover FYE 23



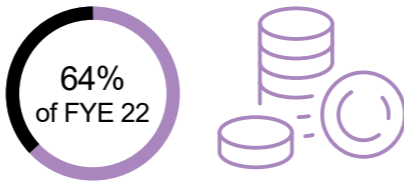
£6,948,930

Net Turnover FYE 23



15.2%

Net Profit FYE 23



4.6%

Investment of Net Turnover in Research & Development



£0

Borrowings

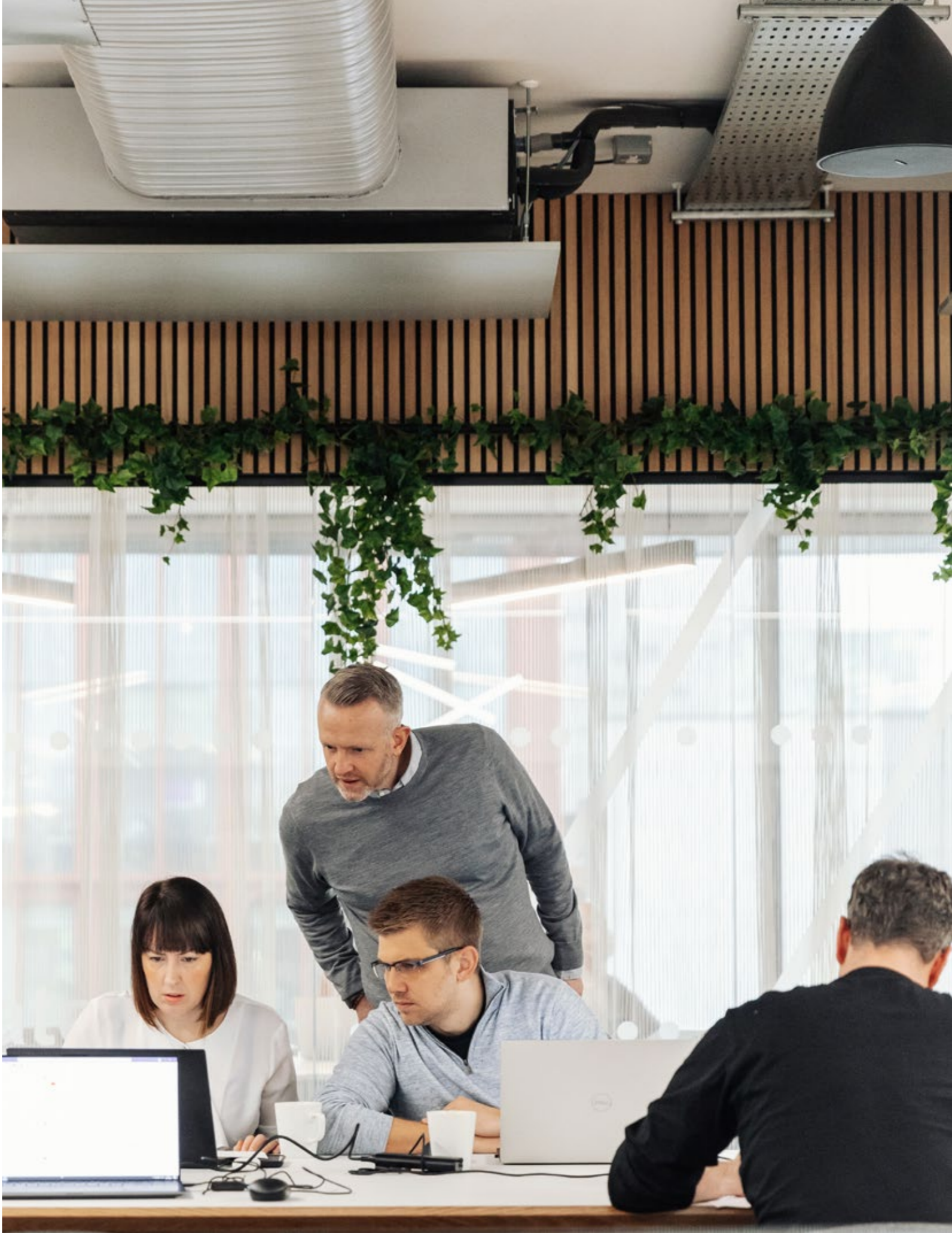


Ranked equal
100th in the
Architects Journal's

AJ100



Shortlisted for
Architectural
Practice of the Year
at the Insider NW
Awards for the 4th
consecutive year



Our approach in action

Parkmount & Princedom, Harpurhey



At Parkmount & Princedom, we are working with housing association MSV to deliver 46 affordable homes across 2 sites in Harpurhey. The new developments form part of Manchester City Council’s low carbon affordable homes programme ‘Project 500’ and are seeking certification against passivhaus standards.

Our Governance procedures have seen us make a significant time and financial investment in the professional development of our team. This included supporting Associate Dan Sutton to become Certified Passivhaus Designer and Parkmount & Princedom would not be possible without his knowledge and expertise.

The final proposals for the site will provide 46 new affordable homes in the local area, 24 on Parkmount and 22 on Princedom. The development will address demand for affordable housing locally and will help tackle fuel poverty through a fabric-first, sustainable design. Features and considerations include super insulated MMC off-site manufactured timber panellised system, fixed solar shading and natural ventilation.

Following completion, we will undertake Post-occupancy evaluation of the homes to understand the success of the proposals and to drive continuous improvement in our passivhaus and sustainable design knowledge and expertise.



Workers



Karey Wardhaugh
People Manager

Our “people first” ethos is at the centre of our approach as a business. The past year has seen us make further improvements to our people offer, which in turn has been recognised by numerous awards and accolades.

We understand that our team may need support in various ways throughout their employment. We ensure that our strategy recognises this and provides resources to help in a holistic way - supporting in the key areas of physical, mental and financial wellbeing - as well as supporting their ongoing development.

During the year we sent out our annual ‘Reward & Remuneration Survey’ to all staff to ask for their views on the benefits we offer. Following analysis, we implemented enhanced maternity and paternity pay, free sanitary products and added further flexibility to our hybrid flexible working policy.

We also rolled-out group life insurance and critical illness insurance for all staff from day one of employment. Beyond this, we maintained our programme of quarterly practice wide social events and regular team socials as well as opportunities to get involved with social value activities using their Volunteering Day.

To ensure the professional development of our team we continued our busy Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme, our mentoring programmes and started to roll out our new online “Coaching Culture” platform.

Finally, we completed our annual salary benchmarking exercise, uplifted salaries in line with inflation and published this to all staff to ensure transparency. We also joined the Living Wage Foundation, as a sign of our commitment to fair pay, and became a member of the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter.



Our approach in numbers

People statistics FYE 23



From the first day of employment, everyone in the business now receives life insurance and critical illness insurance.



8.7%

Inflationary salary increase & transparent salary benchmarking



Upgraded our Employee Assistance programme and trained 2 more:

Mental Health First Aiders

Bringing the total to 11.



Annual People Survey FYE 23

How likely are you to recommend AEW as a good place to work? We received an NPS score of:



63

Investors in People 'We invest in Wellbeing'

GOLD



Named in the Sunday times Best Places to Work 2023



Our approach in action

Sunday Times Best Places to Work 2023



In May 2023, we were named in the Sunday Times Best Place to Work List. The list honours and celebrates Britain's top employers and acknowledges the best workplaces for women, LGBTQIA+ community, disabled employees, ethnic minorities, younger and older workers and wellbeing.

To create the list, The Sunday Times partners with employee-experience platform WorkL to survey applicants' staff using 35 questions from WorkL's employee engagement survey. This covers six categories that an employer needs to address and work on to engage their staff and improve workplace engagement.

The six categories and our scores were as follows:

- + Reward & Recognition - 86%
- + Information Sharing - 87%
- + Empowerment - 88%
- + Wellbeing - 88%
- + Instilling Pride - 89%
- + Job Satisfaction - 90%

We scored above both the industry average and the global average in every area. Despite this success we aren't complacent and have analysed the detailed results in each category to identify where we still have work to do and will look to apply improvements in the coming year.

A walking tour of Manchester hosted by AEW's EDI group to mark Pride Month



Community



Alex Southall
Director

Supporting the communities in which we work is at the heart of everything we do. Over the year, we supported communities nationwide through various campaigns and initiatives.

Our Social Value and Wellbeing Group continued to lead events throughout the year, raising money for charities including Cancer Research UK, Breast Cancer Awareness, Comic Relief and Macmillan. In May, 27 people took place in the annual “Cumbrian Challenge” supporting Walking with the Wounded, and this autumn we raised nearly £5,000 for the Steve Burne Charitable Trust through our “AEW Big Fundraiser” which saw staff take on fundraising challenges over 3 months.

We also continued our wide-ranging support of long-term charity partner, Ronald McDonald House Charities UK.

Beyond fundraising, we also undertook several volunteering days to help with day-to-day tasks at the Manchester House, as well as our annual window painting sessions to help celebrate Easter, Halloween and Christmas. We are also pleased to have several Architectural projects with the Charity, which included small remodelling projects at the Manchester and Birmingham Houses, as well as the complete refurbishment of the Alder Hey House which is due to start on site next year.

With regards to EDI, our ‘Annual Diversity Survey’ again showed positive results, and we carried out EDI training for all our management team. However, we have seen a slight widening of our gender pay gap, and therefore as part of our People Strategy we have committed to the development of a longer-term EDI strategy, with one of the key drivers to try and increase the number of women at management level within the practice.



Window painting at RMH Manchester



Our approach in numbers

1,000+

social value
hours recorded



100+

hours of our time
donated for
volunteering



£5,000

raised for the Steve Burne
Charitable Trust during the
“AEW Big Fundraiser”



13

work experience
students supported



Over 25% of our
team took part
in the Cumbrian
Challenge for
Walking with the
Wounded

£28,000+

Combined fundraising
of staff and company



DEC Partnership with Ashton-on-Mersey School 22/23

35

Learners

700

Learning
Hours

18

DEC
Awards

“The students have really
enjoyed the input from
AEW Architects. Thank you
for this opportunity.”

Sarah, Teacher at Ashton-on-Mersey School



RMH Alder Hey, Liverpool - An AEW designed refurbishment

Our approach in action

Sale West Masterplan: Social Value Plan



Sale West is a 43ha housing estate, which we have developed transformational masterplan and architectural proposals for. Over the next decade, 263 new homes and a range of estate improvements will be delivered for the benefit of the community.

We have a comprehensive social value plan in place which includes the three year “adoption” of Ashton on Mersey School under the ‘Class Of your Own’ (COYO) programme. We are using COYO’s ‘Design Engineer Construct!’ training initiative to inspire local children to discover unique pathways into the construction industry. We have established an after-school architecture club, led site visits across the estate and hosted a number of candidate in our office for work experience.

Other initiatives we have been involved with include gifting Easter Eggs to a local Special School, the donation of decommissioned laptops to a the local Community Centre and supporting the Our Sale West Climate Crisis March with local schools and colleges.

The success of our own and our partner’s social value activities has led to the projects being nominated and winning a number of awards, including:

- + Regeneration of the Year (Northern Housing Awards), Winner
- + Neighbourhood Transformation Award (Affordable Housing Awards), Finalist
- + Social Impact Award (Insider NW Residential Property Awards), Finalist



Environment



Peter Bartley
Sustainability Manager

The environment is an ever-increasing focus of the practice, and the past year has seen us make great strides to improve environmental management and drive sustainable design.

This year we achieved ISO14001 certification for our Environmental Management System. The scope covers both our business operations and project impacts - encompassing all we do as a business.

We continued to work towards our commitments to reduce our carbon emissions by 50% in 2030 and to net zero carbon in 2040 (against a 2019 baseline). This has proved challenging as we have grown in headcount and turnover and, like many businesses, have seen a post-covid bounce back in emissions.

We have made great progress in reducing our office energy consumption by optimising our space conditioning controls and implementing enhanced shut down procedures on our remote desktops. We have also increased the proportion of our electricity sourced from good quality green tariffs.

We have grown our sustainability team to 4 and expanded our service offer. This now includes environmental assessment, embodied carbon calculations and building performance modelling. We support both new build and retrofit projects practice-wide.

Our “Pioneer Projects” have gone from strength to strength with innovative schemes across a range of sectors. Alongside this we have continued to provide training and support in the implementation of our EMS and client engagement sessions with the aim to uplift the sustainability of our projects beyond “business as usual”.

Parkmount & Princedom, Harpurhey



What's next for the environment?
Providing sustainability services as standard for our major projects...



Our approach in numbers

passivhaus homes



46

in technical design



77

at feasibility stage

467

affordable home retrofits in design




115,000 sq ft commercial development



Will meet UK Net Zero Carbon Building Standard & BREEAM Outstanding






10

sustainability client engagement workshops


80,000 sq ft

of commercial retrofits to net zero carbon operational energy standards in design




100%

emissions offset through accredited offsets




100%

emissions invested in UK woodland creation and peatland restoration



50%

office electricity from good quality green tariffs

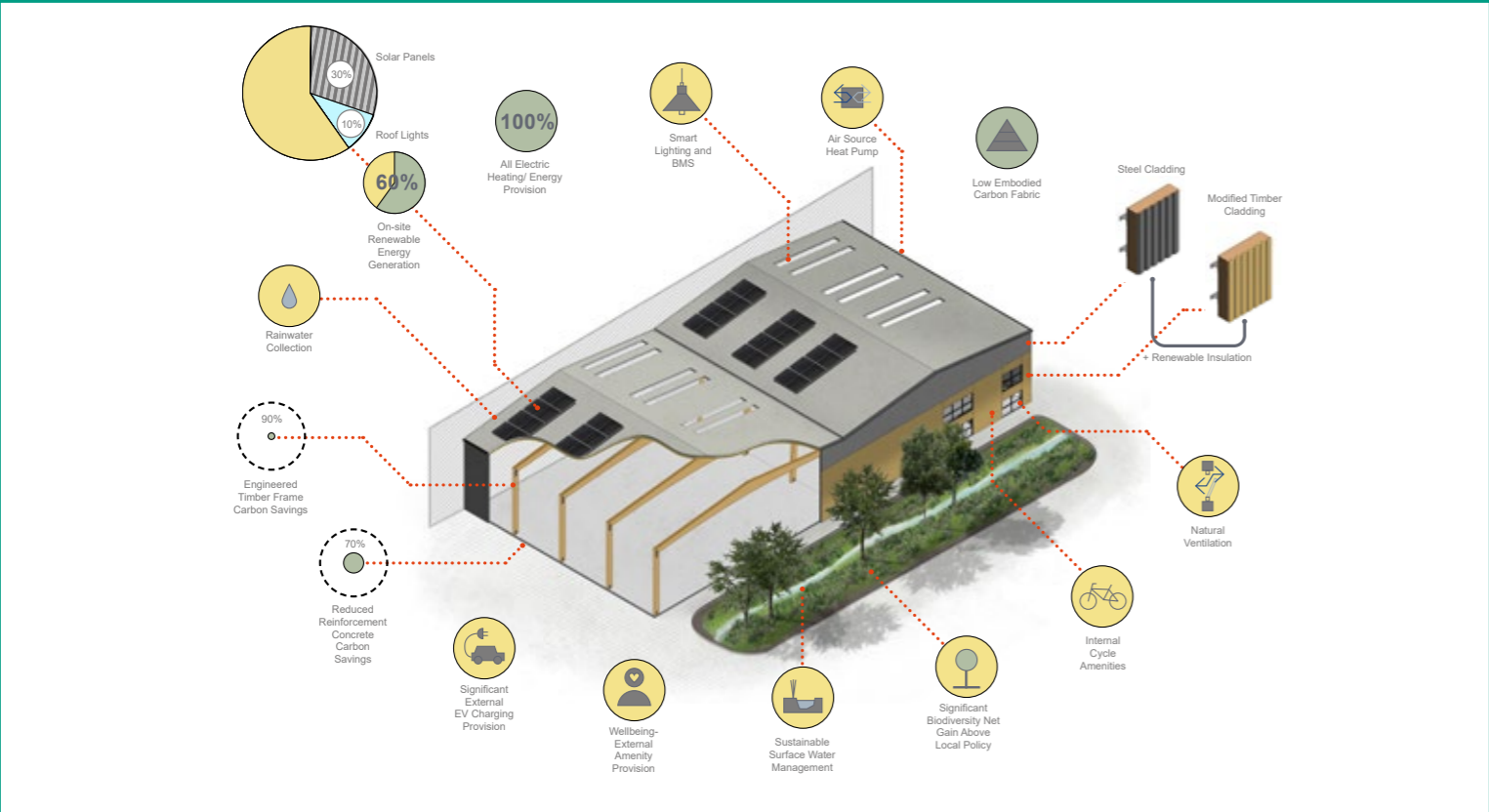




Talbot House, London - One of AEW's latest retrofit projects

Our approach in action

Cheadle Eco Business Park, Stockport



Cheadle Eco Business Park is one of our “Pioneer Projects” and comprises a 115,000 sq ft industrial development for Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council.

Our brief for the project was to create an environmentally exemplar light industrial employment development with building fabric and technologies of innovative standards.

The project is targeting BREEAM Outstanding, putting it within the top 1% of developments in terms of environmental performance, and the design has been developed in consideration of the emerging UK Net Zero Carbon Building Standards in terms of both construction and operation.

Upfront embodied carbon is minimised through a glulam timber frame, fibre reinforced ground floor slab, and accoya timber cladding.

The operational energy performance is enhanced through high enhanced thermal performance, hybrid natural ventilation and solar PV energy generation. Operational energy performance and occupant wellbeing will benefit from rooflights and sunpipes for enhanced daylighting.

The wider site prioritises green space with significant onsite net gain in biodiversity, achieved though enhanced landscaping and a SUDs strategy that promotes multi-functionality through blue green features such as swales and rain-gardens.





Phil Hepworth
Director

Ensuring client satisfaction remains a key focus for AEW. We have refined and developed our range of tools to manage and monitor our client relationships in the past year with a view to improving both our service offer and our project outcomes.

In accordance with our ISO9001 Quality Management System, we have maintained our 'Annual Client Survey' and reinforced our newly integrated 'Client Listening Interviews'. We also began to roll-out our 'Key Client Management Process'. We also maintained our robust security procedures and renewed our Cyber Essentials accreditation to ensure the safety of our clients data.

Our 'Annual Client Survey' was sent to representatives from all companies invoiced throughout the Financial Year. Results were analysed and trends identified, these were subsequently presented practice wide to drive continuous improvement.

For each completed survey, we also donated £25 to long term charity partner, Ronald McDonald House Charities UK.

The survey was supplemented by our 'Client Listening Interviews' where we undertook one-to-one discussion with some of our key clients to gather further detail and intelligence on our performance with interview reports issued to teams to share feedback, remedial actions and opportunities.

Translating client feedback into actions, this year we also commenced our 'Key Client Management Process' with training to all staff about the importance of good customer relationships and how to manage this process. Our tried and tested approach has seen us manage long-term relationships with clients like McDonald's Restaurants with whom we've worked for over 25 years.



Our approach in numbers

Maintained
ISO9001
for our QMS

This guides our approach to client satisfaction.



Renewed our
Cyber Essentials
Accreditation to
ensure the safety
of our client's
information



Annual Client Survey FY23

15%
Response
rate from 163
recipients

Contactability & Attitude rated

“Exceptional”

Across all questions,
achieved an NPS
score of
68



£625
donated to
RMHC from
completed
client surveys

“...AEW's client facing
approach and 'can do'
culture seems to be the
theme of the practice.”



Kieron Moore, Senior Technical & Design Manager
Your Housing

Client Listening Programme FY23

16
Interviews
undertaken

“Exceptional”

NPS score when asked if the interviewees would recommend us



McDonald's Kings Cross - A recent project for a long-standing client



Our approach in action

Moor Lane, Bolton



Moor Lane is a key part of the regeneration of Bolton Town centre. The masterplan accommodates 208 sustainable homes, high quality new public realm and improves connectivity across the town - helping unlock and inspire future regeneration.

The project, which is now under construction, comprises 164 apartments with ground floor retail across 4 purpose-built blocks, 44 timber-frame townhouses and a network of high-quality streets, squares and parks.

The project is a commission for joint clients Bolton at Home and StepPlaces and we have worked closely with both since 2019 to develop our relationship and improve our client offer.

Representatives from each have received our annual client surveys and have taken part in our client listening programme.

Stephen Lythgoe of StepPlaces said of us: "It has been a pleasure working with the AEW team on Moor Lane. They have consistently provided a responsive, agile service and demonstrated a pragmatic approach to design."

Meanwhile Dominic Conway of Bolton at Home has fed back: "...The response, involvement and commitment from AEW has been fantastic. It really has felt like a team effort between AEW, Bolton at Home, Step Places and the rest of the design team. It's clear that AEW have led this process and that the central core design concept was driven by them."





After only a year certified, we are still at the beginning of our B Corp journey, but we look forward to continuing to improve our social and environmental performance ahead of our recertification in 2025.



AEW Architects
Trinity Court
16 John Dalton Street
Manchester
M2 6HY

www.aewarchitects.com