



Urban Wildlife Strategy



Our commitment

Sustainability is something we're building our future on at Cala, and we will be a business that leaves a positive legacy for both people and the planet.

As part of our strategy for reducing our environmental impact, we have made a commitment to make the most of opportunities to support urban wildlife throughout all our new developments.

Our Urban Wildlife Strategy outlines our plans to incorporate biodiversity improvement measures into every new home we build.

It does not represent the extent of our aspirations from a biodiversity and habitat creation perspective, but instead looks to establish a baseline of urban wildlife measures on our homes, regardless of what our planning permission asks for.



Our strategy

Moving forward, all new developments delivered by Cala Homes and our sister company, Legal & General Homes, will incorporate a range of wildlife-friendly measures, including travel corridors for hedgehogs, bat roosting features, invertebrate bricks and planting.

All this is vitally important for pollinators, and provides food for birds and bats to thrive in urban areas – which they're well placed to do with the right infrastructure.



An average of one universal bird nesting feature per house and apartment building



An average of one bat roosting feature per house and apartment building



Where the rear garden of a property adjoins other gardens or green space, hedgehog-friendly fencing will be used



Each house and apartment building which have boundary walls to have at least one invertebrate brick



Where a rear or front garden has a depth of at least 10 metres, one tree sapling will be planted as standard

We will always work with an ecologist to ensure that our Urban Wildlife Strategy is delivered in the most appropriate way for each individual development and its local wildlife. For example, bird nesting features may be clustered for colony establishment purposes, and bat roosting feature locations may depend on presence of bats in the area and the species.

If it is not possible or advisable for us to include every measure on a new development, our teams will implement an alternative plan of an equivalent nature.

Information and maintenance tips on how to look after each of the implemented urban wildlife features included on dwellings will be provided to new homeowners.

Green and open space

Alongside the measures within our Urban Wildlife Strategy, the delivery of high-quality green space is a priority for Cala, supporting wildlife while also having a positive impact on our customers and local communities.

We have an abundance of experience in delivering green spaces, wildflower meadows, and in handling areas designated as Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANG).

SANGs are vital as a means of offering the public alternative outdoor space away from Special Protection Areas (land designated to protect rare, vulnerable, and migratory birds).



A proactive response

A 2021 study estimated that the UK has lost almost half of its native biodiversity. Our Urban Wildlife Strategy is an important project to help Cala deliver homes that will aid in restoring these numbers and making our homes more hospitable for Britain's wildlife.



Many bird species have suffered significant decline over recent decades, with research revealing that the UK swift population has fallen more than 50%.



Hedgehog numbers are estimated to have fallen by up to 30% since 2000, in urban settings.



UK bat populations have also declined over recent decades due to a variety of factors, including loss of foraging habitat and roosting sites as well as severance of habitats by roads.



Invertebrates are critical to the majority of food chains with large numbers of species relying on them for both food and pollination. Significant numbers of species have declined due to habitat loss.

Bird nesting

All new Cala homes will incorporate nesting opportunities for a range of bird species. Given their use by other species as well as swifts, this will be an integrated swift brick, considered a universal bird nesting feature.

These bricks are hollow, rectangular boxes made of either woodcrete or stonecrete. This is a breathable, seamless material that can be integrated into walls while not compromising insulation. The only part visible from the exterior of the house is the small entry hole that allows for small birds - such as swifts and other species - to land and nest.

On some streets, these bricks will be clustered in groups of three to five on a single house, in particular adjacent to suitable foraging habitat.

If cladding or render is used on the facade of a house, a suitable integrated or external nesting feature will be provided.





Looking out for bats

Some bat species are very photophobic and will avoid all sources of light, so bat-friendly street lighting may need to be a design consideration. Other species, such as the common pipistrelle, will actively forage around street lights because they attract insects. If they have roosting locations nearby by, they are therefore able to thrive in urban settings.

We will work with ecologists to identify the most suitable location for bat roosting features on site.

They may be incorporated into the fabric of the building, for example high on gable ends or under soffits on front/rear elevations. Although they will be blocked off behind to prevent access into the wall/loft space, they will provide opportunistic roosting for crevice dwelling bats.

Alternatively, they may be placed in communal areas of the development or off-site in local woodland.



Invertebrate bricks

To encourage invertebrate populations, boundary walls to all Cala properties that feature masonry will include bee bricks to welcome solitary bees and encourage other invertebrates. They will be set low in walls and near to areas of planting to help facilitate pollination.

Prickly garden visitors

Hedgehog-friendly fencing will be used to ensure permeability for this species through the site, adjacent to areas of open space and where there are interconnecting gardens. This will be created by cutting small holes at the base of the fence panels and installing a small sign to highlight what the gap is, to avoid accidental destruction or filling.

HEDGEHOG HIGHWAY

Please keep this access hole open

Supplied by Chorley Hedgehog Rescue in partnership with Fabriplas



John Richards, Land & Planning Director,
Cala Homes Thames, said:

“ We’re moving into an important time when we must transition from environmental goal setting to taking action. We’re passionate about seizing every opportunity to enhance biodiversity in all new developments. This network of interventions will ensure that our new developments play their part in delivering diverse ecosystems for species such as swifts, bats, bees and hedgehogs to help them thrive in urban areas. ”

The Urban Wildlife Strategy in action

Our Urban Wildlife Strategy was initially developed in collaboration with Hampshire Swifts and Hampshire Ornithological Society and rolled out at our King’s Barton development in Winchester. Here, we’re installing 1,500 swift bricks across 2,000 homes. We’ve also created a new nature reserve known as Barton Meadows which will be handed over to the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust. This holistic approach to the natural environment, alongside infrastructure like bricks and movement corridors, provides the necessary ingredients for diverse ecosystems that help to revitalise species at risk of endangerment.

We were thrilled to welcome TV naturalist and wildlife presenter Chris Packham and The One Show to the site in June 2022, where we talked Chris and The One Show team through the work we’re doing in installing our swift bricks, alongside a host of other simple interventions.



John Richards and Chris Packham filming at Kings Barton, Winchester

Our sustainability journey

Our commitment to enhancing biodiversity is part of our wider Sustainability Strategy which will see us achieve net-zero operational greenhouse gas emissions across our business by 2030.

From October 2023, all new Cala developments in England will achieve a minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (in line with the Government's Environment Bill).

In Scotland, our approach to biodiversity will be aligned to the outcomes of the Scottish National Planning Framework once published.

For now, all new Cala developments – across the UK – will adopt the Cala Wildlife Strategy to support and enhance local biodiversity.

You can find out more at cala.co.uk/sustainability





Building with a conscience

Find out more about Cala's
Sustainability Strategy at
cala.co.uk/sustainability

CALA.CO.UK

