

2022 Brabners' Sustainability Progress Report

June 2022



2022 Brabners' Sustainability Progress Report




We believe that business should bring about positive change.

In 2021, we launched our sustainability goals to demonstrate how we will drive positive change in the area of sustainability and play our part in helping to tackle the climate emergency. We wanted ambitious yet achievable targets and to be candid and transparent as to our efforts to achieve these goals and drive sustainable change; this report is a key element of our transparency.

Throughout the past year, we have made strong progress, however, there is much more to achieve. We have achieved impressive reductions in carbon emissions, waste and paper usage, laying firm foundations which we intend to build upon over the coming year and beyond. We plan to launch our formalised approach to pro bono, have allocated funds for bursaries and fundraising and are working on providing a broader selection of employer supported volunteering opportunities for our people.

Also, we are thrilled with the launch our partnership with conservation project Kingsdale Head and support for the wider Great North Bog, a four-year project to restore more than 3,500 hectares of peatland and blanket bogs across Northern England.

	Goal	Target	Progress
	1.2 Reduce poverty by at least 50%.	Support the Brabners Foundation in its goal to alleviate hardship.	In the period April 2021 to March 2022 the Brabners Foundation made grants totalling £65,814 to 26 different causes, covering a wide range of issues; examples include support for homeless men and ex-offenders, support for disadvantaged children and children's mental health. The firm now pays entrance fees for fundraising events; the first use of this budget will enable colleagues, in the name of charity, to jump off the Liverpool Anglican Cathedral attached only to a rope and abseil down.
	1.4 Equal rights to ownership, basic resources, technology and economic resources.	Donate a year to pro bono projects. As a firm donate the equivalent of 365 days of fee earner time to pro bono projects.	Having previously had no formal pro-bono structure, the firm has now put in place the framework to measure and increase pro-bono activities. There is still a long way to go to reach this ambitious target, but the firm have spent the last year building solid foundations.
	8.5 Full employment and decent work with equal pay.	Ensure all suppliers pay real living wage.	The firm now makes specific enquiry of suppliers of their living wage performance and all outsourced staff are paid at least the real living wage.
	8.6 Promote youth employment, education and training.	Introduce alternative work experience and recruitment processes (to include internships and apprenticeships) to become more accessible to a diverse range of candidates.	The firm has established a bursary scheme with We Love Manchester in memory of Maurice Watkins. The scheme will provide young people with financial grants to remove obstacles to personal growth opportunities. Examples include assistance with the purchase of technical equipment for studies as well as suitable clothing and travel expenses for interviews/work placements. The firm has been looking to introduce formal summer vacation schemes but COVID restrictions have delayed implementation – participants will be paid to reduce the risk financial considerations may deter some applicants.

	Goal	Target	Progress
	11.1 Safe and affordable housing.	Measure the support we give to clients to deliver new homes. Initially establish a baseline figure for client new home delivery and look to improve upon this year on year.	The firm acknowledges that there has been minimal progress towards this goal in the past year and the hope is to renew efforts in the coming year.
	11.6 Reduce the environmental impact of cities.	Reduce commuter miles through the encouragement of agile working where feasible. Reduce the number of non-electric car journeys by staff (commuting and business related).	Prior to the COVID pandemic the firm had been moving towards agile working but this was on an ad hoc basis. The firm now has a formal policy that enables colleagues to split time between home and office with an assumption that at least some days are spent working from home; thus reducing the commuter miles of the firm dramatically. The firm has installed electric car charging points at its Liverpool and Lancashire offices and its new Manchester offices will also include charging points.
	11A Strong national and regional development planning.	Engage with regional development projects, including the Northern Powerhouse.	The firm is supportive of a number of projects on an ad hoc basis such as Growth Platform in Liverpool, HOST in Manchester and BOOST in Lancashire. However, there is not yet a structure in place dedicated to measuring and achieving this target.
	12.2 Sustainable management and use of natural resources.	Accurately measure our carbon footprint and achieve meaningful reductions year on year.	We measure our carbon footprint and are part of the future Net Zero scheme. With carbon emissions falling by more than 24% in 2021 (even though office attendance in 2021 was much higher due to the easing of COVID restrictions) we have managed to achieve the future Net Zero Platinum Standard. The firm offsets emissions by purchasing carbon credits (via Forest Carbon Ltd) but does not believe this is sufficient. The firm has therefore entered into a partnership with the Kingsdale Head peatland restoration project to provide £50,000 over the next 3 years to unlock funding sufficient to restore more than 400 hectares peatland (with a conservative estimated carbon reduction of more than 450 tCO2e each year by the end of the project).
	12.5 Substantially reduce waste generation.	No waste to go to landfill from any of our offices. Reduce paper consumption by to 50% of 2019 levels by 2023.	No waste goes to landfill. There has been a 25% year on year reduction in waste generated (despite greater office attendance) and the proportion of waste sent for recycling has increased from 58% to 69%. 2021 saw paper consumption reduced by 66% against 2019 levels but the firm acknowledges a large portion of the reduction is due to lower office attendance. 2021 paper consumption was 10% lower than 2020 despite higher office attendance so progress is definitely being made, even though a proper picture will not be available until 2022 figures are available.
	12.6 Encourage companies to adopt sustainable practices and sustainability reporting.	Lead by example by adopting best practices to encourage sustainability.	In March 2021 the firm submitted its application to become a certified B Corporation. Due to a backlog in applications at B Labs the firm has not yet completed the process, however the firm is confident of achieving this accreditation.
	13.2 Integrate climate change measures into policies and planning.	SEGG reports to go directly to Management Board.	Both the Managing Partner and Chief Executive sit on the SEGG committee and so have direct engagement with the sustainability efforts of the firm.
	13.3 Build knowledge and capacity to meet climate change.	Enable staff to take up to 2 days' paid volunteering leave to further sustainability goals.	The employer supported volunteering scheme (through which the 2 days are offered) is still in its early stages and take up by colleagues has been sporadic. The firm is continuing to raise internal awareness and over the course of 2022 will start to organise volunteer opportunities for colleagues.

