

The ASHE logo is positioned in the top right corner of the image. It consists of the letters 'ASHE' in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The background of the entire image is a photograph of two children, a boy and a girl, wearing blue hard hats and high-visibility yellow safety vests. The girl is in the foreground, smiling and holding three large, brown, textured blocks that resemble building bricks. The boy is behind her, also wearing a hard hat. The background is a blurred construction site with yellow and black striped poles and a green sign.

Building Better Communities

Our **strategy** to deliver **25%** social value return by **2025**

The ASHE logo is located in the bottom left corner of the image. It features the letters 'ASHE' in a bold, blue, sans-serif font.

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Building Better Communities

From the first building we constructed back in the 1970s, I'm proud that Ashe Group has always been at the heart of the communities we serve. Buildings don't exist in isolation; anyone who works with us and for us knows this commitment extends beyond bricks and mortar. Our buildings benefit children, nurses, teachers and workers – the everyday heroes of our country. As place-makers, we see every project as a chance to create environments that enhance lives and leave a social legacy for future generations.

Take our work with schools, such as the site visits and careers talks we run to enthuse young people about the world of construction. Or our commitment to charities – thanks to many of you, we raise thousands of pounds every year for local causes close to our hearts: the Extra Mile Challenge for Macmillan and The Pagabo Mental Health Foundation, fundraisers and volunteering days for Milton Keynes College, Milton Keynes Homeless Shelter, Keech Hospice, Letchworth Garden House Hospice, Sye Ryder and more. On environment, the Farmstead at Houghton Regis is a brilliant example of how our buildings can move into the digital age, using the most sustainable methods of construction.

Our Social Value Strategy takes the best elements of what we already do brilliantly while notching it up a level. It's about taking us from solid foundations to second fix. To inform this approach we consulted with staff, suppliers, clients and community groups. We asked where we could make the most impact, as a creator of public infrastructure and major employer for the region. From this work, four priorities were identified:

Communities, Young People, Environment and Wellbeing. It's clear the industry is in a very different place in 2022 – rebuilding from Covid-19, dealing with widespread skills shortages, higher material and living costs and a climate emergency. And all the while, workers in our sector are disproportionately impacted by mental and physical

health conditions. These are the social issues we must positively impact.

Our strategy aims to bring a more rigorous, structured and measurable approach to doing just this. We have closely aligned it to our core business objectives to ensure it's at the centre of everything we do. By 2025, our aim is to create reportable social impact outcomes equivalent to, or greater than, 25% of our turnover.

In turn, it will serve to propel Ashe's own growth and success. Changes to government procurement mean that social value creation is now a key condition of winning work. If we invest in a thriving public sector, the public sector will invest in us.

Here's to building better communities.



Robin Blake
Group Chief Executive



“By 2025, our aim is to create reportable social impact outcomes equivalent to, or greater than, 25% of our turnover.”

Robin Blake, Group Chief Executive

Consultation Findings

Our strategic approach to social value has been developed through consultation, including client discussions, staff questionnaires, board workshops and consultation with community groups.

Our findings highlighted that:

1. There is a good level of understanding about what social value is; however staff were far less aware of specific plans and policies.
2. The majority of staff want to support a children's charity. They can see a natural fit with the company's core activities of building schools and hospitals.
3. The culture within Ashe Group is seen to be Friendly, Progressive, Safe, Caring and Approachable (these words occurred most, unprompted).
4. Staff want to see targeted action on the environment – from waste reduction and greener travel to more sustainable building practices.
5. Communications can be improved to engage and retain staff and build customer loyalty. Staff said they are overwhelmingly more likely to choose to work for, and customers would be more likely to recommend, a company that has a positive impact on communities. However, there was a much lower level of confidence in communicating the great work we do.
6. A more involving approach to social value is needed, in which staff and suppliers feel able and motivated to take part and celebrated for the difference they make.
7. Most of Ashe's suppliers would happily collaborate on social value activities to help us spread our impact; however, they would welcome training.



Our Why

Creating intelligent and efficient buildings, enhancing communities, livelihoods and lives.

Our Vision

To be the contractor of choice in the markets we serve.

Our Mission

To provide the highest quality construction services to all our clients with the highest levels of safety.

Our Social Value Ambition

“By 2025, our aim is to create reportable social impact outcomes equivalent to, or greater, than 25% of our turnover.”

We will do this by delivering our ‘Building Better Communities’ strategy. This focuses on our core activities as a business and targets five areas of impact: Leadership, Communities, Young People, Environment and Wellbeing.



Responsible Leadership

Commitment: We will create a culture in which positive impact is cultivated, celebrated, and steers our commercial decision-making.

Ashe strives to deliver positive and sustainable social, environmental and economic impacts in the communities in which we operate. Each project has specific Social Value initiatives and targets which are cascaded through the Ashe organisation to our projects. Each site plans and monitors social value through a project Sustainability Action Plan (SAP).

- Social responsibility starts at the top of the company with our board, who are responsible for ensuring an ethical, compliant culture. Andrew Morris is our executive sponsor for social value and oversees delivery against our commitments.
- Each project represents an opportunity to build brilliant communities. We will work in meaningful partnership – investing our knowledge and skills, supporting local charities and involving local people – in turn creating pride and ownership.
- Our people will be given the right opportunities to grow and develop. We will continue to invest in talent and provide opportunities for training and career progression.
- Women make up only 14% of the construction workforce; we see this as a huge, missed opportunity. By joining Women into Construction, we will encourage greater diversity in our workforce.
- In 2022 we introduced the Thrive and Loop social value measurement systems. These will be fully embedded to enable us to independently measure, report and communicate our social impact outcomes.
- A Balanced Scorecard will be introduced for our supply chain, to encourage direct involvement and spread our collective impact. This will ask for a series of commitments to communities, staff and the environment.
- We will continue to use our 'AsheForce' Approval process to select our suppliers and sub-contractors with their ongoing performance monitored by our procurement and delivery teams.



“By encouraging **women into construction**, we will help address the skills gap and **better represent** the communities we serve.”

Lauren Wandless, Social Value Coordinator

Regenerating Communities

Commitment: We will use our role as place-makers to regenerate communities, enhance local wealth and create environments that enrich lives.

As developers of public infrastructure, we create the exceptional places our communities need for learning, work and healthcare. This gives us a unique role in community regeneration – creating environments that enhance lives. Thousands of teachers, children and health workers are using the facilities we’ve built for them over the years.

We are also a major regional employer – the average Ashe contract creates opportunities for our supply chain, contributing to local wealth and social mobility.

Our Communities programme draws on our strengths as place makers to support families across the region. It includes a more structured approach to charitable giving and fundraising, based on the causes that most energise our staff.

- **Happy Days Children’s Charity will be our Group Charity of the Year.** Through fundraising, we will provide at least 4 experience days per year in support of children living with life-limiting conditions, learning disabilities or emotional trauma. We will reinforce each other’s role in the lives of young people, through events, activities and experience days.
- We will work with **local charity partners** including Sye Ryder, Letchworth based; Garden House Hospice Care and Keech Hospice Care in Luton, Extra Mile Challenges and The Pagabo Mental Health Foundation, to support young people, engage local communities and to support our work force.
- Through the ‘**Ashe Pledge**’ – our new Group volunteer scheme – staff will be encouraged to donate 2 days per year to our charities and the causes they care about. We will do this through volunteering days, time banking, fundraising and donations. The Ashe Pledge will also help staff develop skills, knowledge and community networks.
- Our supply chain partners want to support our social value goals but we need to make it simple for them. By introducing Social Value webinars, we will increase understanding and encourage direct involvement.

Our 2023 Charity Partners

Happy Days are a children's charity based in Hitchin. They work with almost 25,000 young people each year, ranging in age from 3 to 17.

The children suffer many different conditions including learning difficulties, physical or mental disabilities and life-limiting illnesses. Happy Days also help young people who have been abused or neglected, witnessed domestic violence or who've been bereaved.

Happy Days funds holidays, day and residential trips, experiences and activities that give them a chance to make new friends, develop new skills and build confidence.



Developing Young People

Commitment: We will help future-proof our industry by donating 1000 hours of school engagement each year, inspiring and equipping the next generation.

The construction industry is experiencing the highest skills gap on record, with some 40% of trades reporting shortages. Estimates suggest our sector will need an extra 217,00 workers by 2025.

At Ashe, we believe young people are the future.

Through our projects, we will support the development and growth of young people into the construction industry and on their journey in society. We will target our social impact actions to provide educational support, promote diversity and address the key issues that young people face.



We already work extensively with schools and colleges. Our strategy brings this together into the 'Ashe Academy' programme, with a central commitment to deliver over 1000 hours per year of student engagement. This support will take the form of:

- Visits to schools and colleges to promote the industry.
- Mentoring opportunities, mock interviews and CV support.

- Engagement with young people on the careers available to them.
- The provision of over 300 weeks of work experience.
- The creation of 25 apprenticeships.
- Engagement of 40 Careers in Construction events.
- Work with our charity partners to support key issues faced by young people such as homelessness and mental health.
- Additionally, we are joining two new schemes for 2023 in support of our commitment to young people:

The 10% club aspires for 5% of our workforce to be made up of apprentices and graduates within 5 years of joining.

Through the Open Doors programme in March 2023, we will actively participate in a week-long showcase of construction-based careers, encouraging school pupils to experience our industry.



Adam did work experience with us while studying a level 3 Technical and Professional Construction Extended Diploma. We have taken on Adam full time as an Apprentice Site Supervisor.



Ashe have been excited to work with T Levels students at Milton Keynes College. Whilst on site the students have been shadowing site managers and getting first-hand experience.

Sustainable Environments

***Commitment:** We will achieve industry-leading environmental performance, reducing our carbon footprint to achieve Net Zero by 2040.*

Ashe is a leading provider of design and construction management for private and public sector clients for new build, extensions, internal and external refurbishments, alterations and fit-outs. The company employs over 120 people and operates a sizeable fleet of vehicles.

Carbon emissions are the company's most significant sustainability impact. We recognise that global warming is a climate, ecological and social emergency and are committed to playing our part in mitigating global warming.

Our ambitious net zero plans align with, and support delivery of the aspirations of many key organisations, including:

- The UN Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 13, Climate Action.
- The UN's Race to Zero campaign.
- The UK Government's commitment to be Net Zero by 2050 and the Decarbonising Transport: A Better, Greener Britain (2021).
- The Science-Based Target Initiative's best practice recommendations in relation to near-term and net zero targets.
- Fleet Operators Recognition Scheme (FORS) Silver standard fuel, emissions and air quality requirements.

“As a Trustee of the Pagabo Mental Health Foundation, I’m passionate about reversing the trend of poor mental health in our industry. We need to be honest, open and realistic to ensure no-one suffers in silence.”

Andrew Morris, Business Development Director

Net zero strategy

Our net zero strategy is structured around seven goals which will enable delivery of our near-and long-term scope 1, 2 and 3 targets. The first five goals support achievement of our scope 1 and 2 near- and long- term reduction targets. Indirectly these also support achievement of our near-term scope 3 reduction target through the reduction of well-to-tank fuel-related emissions.

The final two goals support achievement of our long-term net zero targets with a focus specifically on supplier engagement and neutralising our impact.

Please see Ashe Group's Net Zero plan for more information.

Reducing our travel

- Smart transport planning and monitoring using logistics and telematics tools.
- Using technology such as solar powered traffic lights to eliminate site visit requirements.
- Using video conferences as the default option for meetings.

Improving the efficiency of our fleet

- Introducing vehicle emission caps and integrating CO2 emissions into vehicle purchase decisions.
- Replacing vans with cars where possible.
- Reducing fuel wastage.

Enabling low carbon transport by our employees:

- Installing electric charging points at office hubs and employee homes.
- Introduce fuel cards to allow the charge of electric vehicles.
- All new company cars to be electric from FY23/24.
- Trial use of electric vans in all Group companies by FY22/23.

Pioneering new innovations:

- Establishing an Innovation Fund, funded by an internal carbon price.
- Trialling use of HVO on plant.
- Introducing an electric fleet.
- Facilitate customer carbon emission reduction through mobile electric charging points.

Integrating carbon reduction throughout the business

- Working with our landlords to source renewable energy sources wherever possible and seeking opportunities to reduce and avoid gas usage.
- Moving to cloud-based servers and software.
- Embedding climate change mitigation into the business culture and communications.

Collaborating with our supply chain:

- Measuring our scope 3 emissions and working with our supply chain to make this as specific and relevant as possible.
- Working together to reduce carbon emissions from materials and packaging.

Neutralising our impact:

- Using high quality and certified carbon offsets to offer customers a carbon neutral fuel proposition.
- Developing an approach to emissions removal for the achievement of net zero once >90% emission reductions have been achieved.

Investing in Wellbeing

Commitment: We will support staff and suppliers to feel mentally and physically well, underpinned by a culture of honesty, openness and practical help.

Mental health is described as ‘the silent crisis’ within our industry. As a sector, we still fall short when it comes to opening up about issues like stress, depression and anxiety. At Ashe, we will start a conversation to help instil a culture of openness, backed up by training, workplace policies and routes to support.

Through our new membership of the Lighthouse Club – a charity for mental health in construction – we will start a group-wide conversation about mental health and suicide prevention, with specific initiatives including:

- Toolbox Talks.
- Head Office sessions.
- Designated helpline.
- Awareness campaign.
- Evening wellbeing events.
- 10% of the workforce will be trained as Mental Health First Aiders – offering a first line of support across the organisation.
- Our annual Health Surveillance days aimed at staff and suppliers will discuss practical steps to positive physical and mental health.
- In People & Development, we will enhance our recruitment, development and retention activities to better accommodate people with a disability or mental health condition. Staff will be upskilled in inclusive interview techniques such as unconscious bias.
- We will implement the six standards of the Mental Health at Work commitment, and outline plans to engage the contract workforce in deciding the most important issues to address.

Our role as influencers

- Ashe is ambitious about taking a leadership stance on wellbeing. Once our own activities are embedded with positive impact, we will influence our partners and suppliers, too. This will include involvement with our charities, such as the Lighthouse Club, sessions with schools or best practice toolkits to spread health and wellbeing.

Measuring our Impact

Increasingly, our clients want to see demonstrable evidence to show precisely how social value is being created. For public sector tenders, new procurement guidelines (under PPN06) require us to commit to social value generation as a key condition for winning business.

We’ve always taken our role in communities seriously; this gives us additional impetus to properly quantify our social impact and legacy. We are therefore working with two market-leading social value tools.

Thrive Social Value

The Thrive software allows us to capture, measure and report social value in ‘real-time’. It generates tailored dashboards, reports and case studies to help tell the story of our impact as an organisation and to measure the effectiveness of our strategy.

www.thrivesocialvalue.com

Loop Social Value

Some framework partners and clients may ask us to adopt their preferred measurement approach. Pagabo is one example, and we will continue to work with them on the use of the Loop social value capture and recording tool. Loop calculates our social, economic and environmental impact, and the financial value of that impact on Pagabo projects.

www.loop.org.uk

Theme	Commitment	Supporting KPI / Measure
Responsible Leadership	We will create a culture in which positive impact is cultivated, celebrated, and steers our commercial decision-making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership of Women into Construction • Percentage of supply chain who've taken our balanced scorecard pledge (%)
Regenerating Community	We will use our role as place-makers to regenerate communities, enhance local wealth and create environments that enrich lives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount raised for Happy Days and partner charities (£) • Number of children supported to enjoy a Happy Days experience • Number of Ashe Pledge days volunteered • Number of training hours delivered in support of social enterprise • Number of training hours delivered in support of raising awareness among our supply chain
Developing young people	We will help future-proof our industry by donating 1000 hours of school engagement each year, inspiring and equipping the next generation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total hours of school engagement (target 1000) • Weeks of work experience created (target 300) • Apprenticeships provided (target 25) • Membership of 5% club • Hours of school careers interaction as a result of Open Doors participation • Number of Careers in Construction events delivered (target 40) • Hours donated to CV writing and employability skills • Hours of mental health training interventions delivered to schools

Theme	Commitment	Supporting KPI / Measure
Sustainable environments	We will achieve industry-leading environmental performance, reducing our carbon footprint to achieve Net Zero by 2040.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Net Zero by 2040 • Incremental reduction in scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions • Reduction in car miles travelled • Reduction in fleet emissions • % of fleet switched to electric
Investing In Wellbeing	We will support staff and suppliers to feel mentally and physically well, underpinned by a culture of honesty, openness and practical help.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value of time resource invested in health interventions for staff and suppliers (£) • Number of training hours delivered in support of health • Percentage of the workforce trained as mental health first aiders • Implementation of Six Standards of Mental Health • Percentage of staff / suppliers who believe the interventions have made a difference to their physical or mental health • Percentage reduction in staff absence / sickness days (%)



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**building
better**