



Northumberland  
Estates

# IMPACT REPORT

2024/25



Northumberland  
Estates

# CONTENTS



**03 FOREWORD**

**04 INTRODUCTION**

**05 ESG STRATEGY**

**06 SOCIAL VALUE**

**07 EDUCATION**

**06 COMMUNITY FUND**

**07 CHARITIES OF THE YEAR**

**08 PEOPLE**

**09 PLACE**

**10 ENVIRONMENT**



# FOREWORD

As we look back over the past year, our focus on environmental stewardship and community wellbeing remains stronger than ever. The importance of understanding and managing our impact—both on the natural world and within the communities we serve—continues to shape the way we plan for the future.

We believe that Northumberland Estates has a vital role to play in preserving the heritage and natural beauty of our landscapes, while also actively supporting the wellbeing, resilience, and prosperity of those who live and work within them. We recognise our responsibility to protect and enhance them for current and future generations.

This commitment is embedded in our operations. It informs decisions that aim to balance economic growth with sustainability and social responsibility, ensuring that our stewardship today safeguards the legacy of tomorrow.

From creating access to quality housing and green spaces, to enhancing employment, health, education, and community cohesion, we strive to deliver long-term value for individuals, families, and the wider region. Achieving these goals depends on the extraordinary commitment of our colleagues, who work hand-in-hand with local communities, tenants, suppliers, visitors, and stakeholders in a spirit of collaboration and partnership.

This report offers a chance to reflect on the progress we've made over the past year, and to reaffirm our dedication to continued improvement in the years ahead. We are proud of what we've achieved—and optimistic about what lies ahead.

President  
The Duke of Northumberland

Chairman  
Earl Percy



# INTRODUCTION

Northumberland Estates manages a diverse portfolio that spans farming, residential and commercial property, renewable energy, and environmental conservation. Our commitment is to the long-term stewardship of the land and the communities we serve, blending traditional estate management with forward-looking social and environmental values.

Through our integrated operations, we deliver large-scale environmental and heritage projects—from generating renewable energy to restoring river habitats and supporting targeted species recovery initiatives, such as grey partridge conservation and habitat creation for golden eagles. These efforts help protect biodiversity, enhance ecosystem services, and strengthen the natural capital of our region.

We maintain nearly 300 miles of public rights of way across our landscapes and offer access to thousands of acres of open green spaces, promoting outdoor recreation and wellbeing. In close partnership with local communities, we also extend permissive rights of way, improving connectivity and access beyond statutory routes. This collaborative, inclusive approach reflects our dedication to responsible land management and increasing public engagement with nature.

We play a vital role in the local economy through commercial property, tourism, and heritage—driven by key brands such as Alnwick Castle, Syon Park, and the Bailiffgate Hotel.



# ESG STRATEGY

The Estates' environmental, social, and governance (ESG) strategy outlines the risks and opportunities related to sustainability. It reflects our responsibility to address the challenges we face and supports Northumberland Estates' economic and carbon neutrality goals.

## Environmental

- Set clear targets for Scope 1, 2, and where relevant, Scope 3 emissions.
- Generate renewable energy use through investment and partnerships.
- Protect and restore biodiversity through strategic land and resource management.
- Minimise waste and pollution.

## Social

- Creating jobs and economic opportunities
- Deliver high-quality, accessible workspace
- Allocate resources to initiatives that improve local well-being, infrastructure, education, and cultural life, ensuring long-term community resilience.

## Governance

- Ensure leadership is effective, transparent, and aligned with the Estate's goals.
- Ensure accountability and full compliance with legal, regulatory, and ethical standards.
- Engage inclusively with stakeholders to ensure decisions reflect diverse perspectives and community needs.

# SOCIAL VALUE

In 2024, Northumberland Estates took part in an assessment of the social value generated by the Estate's activities conducted by The Country Land and Business Association (CLA). The 3 primary categories against which the Estate was assessed were:

- Environment management
- Community participation, health and identity
- Social economy, inclusion, housing

Northumberland Estates' Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis shows that a £15.65 million investment delivered £36.56 million in social value (2018-2023) —more than doubling the original input with an overall return of £2.34 for every £1 spent.

The greatest impact came from environmental management, accounting for 84% of the total value, with a return of £2.31 for every £1 invested. Other areas also made important contributions: housing and development generated £2.4 million in value, access to green space delivered strong returns of over £3.23:1, and community projects achieved a return of £3.41:1. Education and interpretation also added value despite smaller investments.

These results demonstrate our strategic commitment to delivering meaningful, lasting benefits for people, nature, and place.



## EDUCATION

Alnwick Castle continues to play a key role in supporting learning and engagement, welcoming **78** schools and a total of **4,313** educational visitors over the year—an **18% increase** from the previous period. A diverse programme of educational sessions, workshops, talks, tours, and written resources was delivered, enriching understanding of local heritage, the history of the castle, fortifications, and themes related to travel and tourism.

These themed workshops and learning packages for schools and educational visits cover a wide range of topics, and are organised by Key Stage to align with the learning objectives outlined in the National Curriculum.

Of those taking part, 56% were Key Stage 1 or Key Stage 2 pupils, 5% were home-educated learners, and 3% had special educational needs (SEN), highlighting our commitment to accessible and inclusive education for all.

In partnership with Countryside Learning, Syon Park hosted a Countryside Classroom Day for **local primary schools**, providing an immersive outdoor learning experience. Pupils explored the park's biodiversity, observed wildlife, and discovered its heritage through guided activities. The event supported our CSR goal of connecting young people with nature, promoting environmental stewardship, and strengthening community engagement.



# COMMUNITY FUND

The Northumberland Estates Community Fund has supported 84 projects in this period. Below are some of the projects that received funding through the Community Fund in 2024/25.

## People

Cancer Research | Alnwick Rugby Club | Marie Curie | Newcastle Hospitals Charity | Veteran's Breakfast Club Alnwick | Longhoughton Children's Party | Macmillian Cancer | Alnwick Homes for Ukraine | Maggie's Newcastle | Brentford Penguins | Rothbury and Coquetvale British Legion | Alnwick Foodbank | Hounslow Foodbox | Newcastle Foodbank | Walking with the Wounded | Dragon Tale Theatre Group | Brentford Boat Club | The Oswin Project | The Skill Mill | North Northumberland Hospice

## Place

Alnwick Greenway | Brentford Voice | Glendale Countryside Day | Longhorsley Village Fete | Hexham Forum Cinema | Rennington Community Field | Cambo Village Hall | Alnwick Lions | The Heritage Centre - Bellingham | Alnwick Town Juniors | Blyth Rugby Club | Alnwinton Show | Alnwick Tennis Club | St Michael's Church Christmas Tree Festival | Duke's Memorial Plaque

## Environment

Atlantic Salmon Trust | RSPCA | The Rivers Trust | Red Squirrel Trust | Country Trust | Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust



## CHARITIES OF THE YEAR

Northumberland Estates' staff chose **Maggie's Newcastle** as their charity of the year for 2024/25.

Maggie's provides free, expert emotional, practical, and psychological support to anyone affected by cancer, including families and friends, regardless of cancer type or stage. Many staff are NHS-trained Cancer Support Specialists, with access to psychologists, benefits advisors, and specialists in nutrition, exercise, and wellbeing.

Northumberland Estates raised **£38,966.35** through events like a charity golf day, Christmas fair, runs, bake sales, raffles, and staff challenges—helping Maggie's offer vital support across the North East.

Syon Park in Brentford chose **Brentford Penguins FC** as their charity of the year for 2024/25. Brentford Penguins FC, also known as the Planet Penguin Football Foundation, is a football club for children with Down's Syndrome, supported by Brentford Football Club and Brentford Community Sports Trust. The partnership focused on raising awareness, generating funds, and creating inclusive, fun activities throughout the year. This supported Syon Park's commitment to community wellbeing and inclusion, providing opportunities for children with Down's Syndrome to enjoy sport in a welcoming environment.

Brentford Penguins received a **£10,000** grant from Northumberland Estates.





# PEOPLE

Across the Estate, we employ **542** people, including 200 seasonal roles, and provide multiple pathways into employment through work experience placements, traineeships, and apprenticeships.

During the construction phase of Bailiffgate Hotel, we partnered with CITB, Robertson, and Thompsons of Prudhoe to deliver a Careers in Construction session at the Duchess's Community High School. To date, the project has:

- Supported **253** local jobs in 2024
- Delivered **228** weeks of apprenticeship experience
- Helped **5** long-term unemployed individuals into work

We are committed to building lasting community relationships through meaningful engagement and outreach. Our partnerships with schools and charities enable educational visits, workshops, and events across heritage, farming, land management, and biodiversity.

At Syon Park, we hosted inclusive, wellbeing-focused events. For Dementia Action Week 2025, we offered free activities for those affected by dementia, culminating in a concert by the Hounslow Symphony Orchestra. A family fun day also raised funds for the Rainbow Trust Children's Charity, supporting seriously ill children and their families. Alnwick Castle welcomed **275,000** visitors in 2024. In June, we marked the 80th anniversary of D-Day with free community events in partnership with Alnwick Town Council, honouring local veterans.

We actively encourage employee volunteering, with staff contributing over **250** hours in the past year—strengthening our connection with the communities we serve.

# PLACE

Northumberland Estates remains committed to supporting the people, places, and heritage that underpin thriving communities. In 2024, we continued to invest in initiatives that promote wellbeing, enhance community life, and safeguard our historical assets.

Our support for sport and wellbeing included providing land for community events such as Alnwick Harriers and Park Run, alongside a **£20,000** donation to Alnwick Town Juniors to improve pitches for grassroots football. Hulne Park hosted a Charity Clay Pigeon Shoot, raising vital funds for NE Youth. We also sustained our backing for local traditions, including the century-old Shiremoor Treat, a much-loved celebration for children in North Tyneside.

Heritage preservation remained a core focus, with **£2.5 million** invested in conservation projects. This included essential maintenance at Hulne Priory, the restoration of the Alnwick Station Clock, and the installation of a commemorative plaque at the Duke's Memorial Cottages, honouring local war heroes.

We continued to collaborate with councils and partner organisations to strengthen local economies, culture, and tourism. This included providing affordable workspaces for charities, schools, and small businesses, as well as maintaining our commitment to affordable housing so that local residents can live and work within their communities.

Access to nature is central to our mission. We maintain over **350 miles** of public footpaths, cycleways, and green spaces, supporting both public health and countryside enjoyment. In 2024, we partnered with the Alnwick Greenway Project, granting Borderline Greenway CIC a 25-year peppercorn lease on a 2.9km route that once formed part of the Alnwick to Cornhill railway line. This initiative will create an accessible route for pedestrians and wheelchair users, with provision for cyclists and horse riders to follow.



# ENVIRONMENT

Environmental protection is a core business priority. The Estate recognises its responsibility to conserve and restore the natural environment. Its biodiversity and land management strategy promotes farming methods that align food production with ecological restoration and long-term rural viability. Forestry and woodland are managed sustainably, and active projects in carbon sequestration, habitat conservation, and land regeneration are ongoing.

We continue to drive for sustainable farming practices, in particular building soil health, crop rotation and promoting biodiversity. We have planted approximately 50,000 meters of new hedges to support environmental aims.

We have been actively rolling out rooftop solar PV installations across its commercial portfolio across the North East and at Syon Park, demonstrating a strong commitment to low-carbon energy and sustainability. Rooftop solar supports both carbon reduction and reduced energy costs for tenants, while minimising land use impacts and embedding biodiversity considerations in system design. During the 2024/25 financial year **51.9** tonnes of carbon was saved within the buildings and **47.3** tonnes of carbon free electricity was exported to the grid.

At Buston Links, just south of Alnmouth within the Northumberland Coast National Landscape, Northumberland Estates delivered a habitat creation/restoration scheme in partnership with the National Landscape team. The initiative includes:

- Replacing an aging culvert to enable expanded saltmarsh, brackish, and freshwater habitats, supporting wading birds like curlew and redshank.
- Raising the adjacent bridleway and Coast Path above flood levels, which both improves public access and provides resilience as sea levels rise with climate change.
- Outcomes include enhanced biodiversity, landscape value, climate resilience, and improved recreational access.

