

CASE STUDY

Moving Beyond the Linear Economy

At Cairn, we are committed to improving all aspects of the construction process to enable real world change that will reduce our negative impact on the environment.

As outlined in our Climate Transition Plan, we understand the critical importance of transitioning to a Net Zero economy. With this in mind, we are developing an action-orientated strategy to enable us to create communities that set the standard for sustainable development in Ireland and beyond.

Our Waste Strategy

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), 9 million tonnes of construction and demolition waste were generated in 2023, an increase from 8.3 million tonnes in 2022. As part of our efforts to adapt our business model to prepare for Net Zero, we developed a five-year Waste Strategy during 2024, and we saw measurable improvements in 2025, our first full year of measurement.

This strategy identifies key areas of focus for Cairn as we strive to reduce the volume of waste generated through our day-to-day operations.

Our Strategic Objectives

- To reduce waste generated.
- To increase our recycling rates.
- To generate a clear focus and accountability for our site teams.
- To embed best practice in our supply chain.

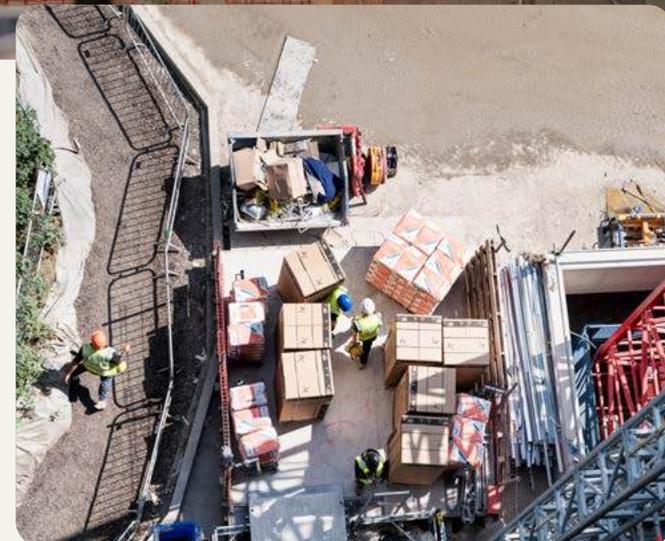
Our Actions for Success

- Waste Coordinators have been appointed across all sites, who are dedicated to managing all waste generated during the construction process.
- Standardised waste segregation areas and signage to further improve clarity on material segregation and management have been implemented across all sites.
- Full implementation across all levels of the business to promote greener construction processes.
- Continuous monitoring and training for both direct employees and contractors to align processes and support the implementation of key actions.

Our Results

- 9% increase in recycling rates across the business.
- Clear and concise waste management plans across all sites.
- Implementation of staff-led initiatives across the business.
- Site level KPIs introduced to promote best practice.

LINK TO STRATEGY:





A Renewed Focus

A critical focus of our Waste Strategy is shifting from a linear approach to waste management, toward a more circular model that incorporates the Irish Government's "Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy".

81% of Ireland's Construction waste is attributed to soil and stone going to landfill. Traditionally landfilled, soil from excavations can instead be seen as a raw material generated as part of the construction process itself. The drive to reduce waste across the construction industry has led to innovations in how this soil and stone is treated and disposed of.

Traditionally our industry has followed a "take-make-dispose" model, where resources are extracted, used and then discarded. We are transitioning to a circular approach that prioritises keeping materials and products in use for as long as possible through reuse, repair, recycling and regeneration. This shift is essential to reducing waste, conserving valuable resources and supporting long-term environmental sustainability.

Applying this circular approach on our sites, we are reusing soil and stone as a resource in our siteworks. This actively reduces our waste production. Adaption of circular economy principles such as this, gives our industry more options to utilise this primary resource within everyday construction. This is a positive step in enabling the development of a road map for our industry to incorporate the management and reuse of site won material into everyday operations.

As a leader in the construction industry, we have been investing significant time and resources into the management of soil and site-won materials across our portfolio. Through collaboration with the EPA and local councils, Cairn has been reusing soil as a resource on site, in line with Regulation 27 of the European Communities (Waste Directive) Regulations. Soil is transferred between sites across our portfolio under Article 27 as a by-product for use on site as capping on permanent roads, installing driveways and footpaths, and constructing the site compounds.

The reuse of soil and stone in this way, allows the business to replace a virgin material within its construction practices and use it as a resource rather than dispose of it as waste.

Building on our success during 2024, Cairn successfully diverted and reused over 66% of the soil and stone waste generated across the portfolio through the Article 27 process in 2025. We were further able to use remaining surplus soil to manufacture different soil types for use in various landscaping operations, resulting in zero soil and stone export to landfill. This also has the additional impact of significantly reducing the associated transport and export emissions.

By embracing these circular principles, we can build more responsibly, help tackle our industry's waste reduction goals and innovate for future circularity.

