

Sustainability Policy

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Scottish Social Housing Charter Relevant Standard Outcomes

STANDARD	OUTCOME
<p>Section: Housing quality and maintenance</p> <p>4. Quality of housing</p> <p>Social Landlords manage their business so that:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>tenants' homes, as a minimum, meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standards (SHQS) when they are allocated; are always clean, tidy and in a good state of repair; and also meet the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) by December 2020.</i> 	<p>This standard describes what landlords should be achieving in all their properties. It covers all properties that social landlords let, unless a particular property does not have to meet part of the standard.</p> <p>If, for social or technical reasons, landlords cannot meet any part of these standards, they should regularly review the situation and ensure they make improvements as soon as possible.</p>
<p>Section: Access to housing and support</p> <p>11. Tenancy sustainment</p> <p>Social Landlords ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>tenants get the information they need on how to obtain support to remain in their home; and ensure suitable support is available, including services provided directly by the landlord and by other organisations.</i> 	<p>This outcome covers how landlords on their own, or in partnership with others, can help tenants who may need support to maintain their tenancy. This includes tenants who may be at risk of falling into arrears with their rent, and tenants who may need their home adapted to cope with age, disability, or caring responsibilities.</p>

SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

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SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

1.1 This policy has been devised to show how Lochalsh and Skye Housing Association (The Association) will undertake its business activities in a sustainable manner. We will support and deliver improvements in the quality of life for individual customers and the communities in which we work without compromising the needs or aspirations of future generations which will include:

- Creating and sustaining communities where people want to live and make a contribution
- Reducing the energy requirements of our activities and those of our residents
- Creating and sustaining a workplace where people want to work and give their best.

1.2 Sustainability will apply to all aspects of the Association's operations and development and the Plans, Policies and Key Principles that guide these.

2.0 ASPECTS OF SUSTAINABILITY

2.1 There are three main aspects to sustainability which are all linked and interdependent on one another:

- Environmental
- Social
- Economic

2.2 For the Association:

- Environment is our houses and the land around them and, on a wider level, Skye and Lochalsh as a whole
- Society is our residents and the communities they live in and the Skye and Lochalsh community as a whole
- Economy is the financial aspect of our operations, and how this fits into the Skye and Lochalsh economy.

2.3 Only when all three aspects are dealt with satisfactorily is true sustainability achieved.

3.0 DRIVERS

3.1 The main drivers for ensuring sustainability throughout the Association's operations are international and national and include:

- EU Directive on the Energy Performance of Buildings (recast) 2010
- DECC's Energy Efficiency Strategy: The Energy Efficiency Opportunity in the UK 2012.
- Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009
- Scotland's Sustainable Housing Strategy.

3.2 Other reasons for promoting sustainability include:

- Enhanced reputation for the Association.
- More sustainable living conditions for our residents and the communities in which they live
- Financial savings from energy efficiency, energy conservation and renewables
- Benefiting future generations.

4.0 MEASURING SUSTAINABILITY

The Association will aim to quantify improvements as set out in its Key Principles in its Business and Internal Management Plan in order to see how far its objectives have been met.

5.0 PRIORITIES AND PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

Our aim is to develop sustainable products and services, and the Association will strive to deliver on the following priorities and programme objectives:-

Priority One

Make our homes and our tenants and our community's lives better

Programme Objectives

- Help reduce the impacts of fuel poverty
- Improve the energy efficiency and thermal efficiency standards of our properties to meet all building standards including EESSH, but equally to help deliver accountable affordable warmth

- Support residents and tenants with money, benefits, energy, fuel, mobility and access advice signposting them to resources and schemes of assistance
- Deliver effective in-home support schemes to help sustain vulnerable households

How will we achieve these?

Unique amongst Scottish Housing Associations we have a dedicated Energy Advice Services team who not only support our tenants but also offer free in-home support to all residents of Skye and Lochalsh. Our Care and Repair and Handyperson teams deliver a range of support packages and work closely with the NHS Highland and local authority and health providers and charities to help sustain people in their homes, and our Tenant Adviser and Housing Officers work closely with tenants to ensure they have access to the best money and tenancy sustainment advice. Our Property Services teams have both proactive and reactive programmes which aim to ensure our homes retain good quality occupancy standards. All of our teams have dedicated work programmes and operational plans which contribute to improving homes and sustaining households.

Priority Two

Procure and deliver goods and services, and deliver homes in a sustainable manner

Programme Objectives

- Maintain a proactive procurement strategy and processes which deliver value for money and community benefit
- Maintain a suite of Development Policies that ensure compliance with all relevant standards, but remain innovative and make best use of our financial and staffing resources to achieve maximum community and environmental benefit.
- Provide a sustainable range of housing in affordable, shared equity and mid-market housing options, and maintain an active Disabled Adaptations programme

How will we achieve these?

There are two important initiatives. Currently we are refreshing all of our procurement protocols to best meet EC procurement directives and new Scottish Government Public Contract and Procurement reform regulations. Sustainability and Social Value are underpinning principles and key to us is the leverage of additional social value within the local community, and supporting small local contractors to effectively compete against suppliers and contractors from outside the region whilst delivering value for money and environmental sustainability.

In terms of sustainable homes we have a wide range of development policies which are constantly being updated. Living in an off gas area has already driven the Association into being a pioneer in the use of renewable energy for heating via district heating and heat pumps – 53% of all of our stock has renewable heat installed. Moving forward we have worked in partnership with the Local Authority and other Highland-based Housing Associations to complete a single shared design brief for new homes in Highland, entitled “Firm Foundations”. This design brief has a fabric first approach to help limit the challenges of fuel poverty. Major elements of the new design brief match current Building Standards (Scotland) Regulations (Silver Level) and show a desire for us to exceed the base environmental standards requirement by Government. The key benefit of the new shared design brief is to facilitate better pricing and improved value for money from our contractors and consultants.

Priority Three

Improve business, operational and community sustainability through efficient use of resources and the appropriate sharing of expertise.

Programme Objectives

- Identify and maintain effective community, governmental and sectoral partnerships that help deliver enhanced outcomes and improve the sustainability of the Association and our communities

How will we achieve these?

We are a small Housing Association. A key and important aspect of our work and ethos has always been to look to develop effective partnership working to most effectively build and share resources and expertise, to generate consequential benefits for our organisation and community. We have worked with partners to build the Highland Housing Register; we lobby on energy pricing and try to influence Government policy via the Highland and Islands Housing Associations Affordable Warmth Group. We are currently working with our partner housing associations and the local authority and NHS Highland to improve the onward delivery of Care & Repair, Handyperson and Energy Advice Services. We are happy to have strong and effective partnership with Citizens Advice and a wide range of local support organisations, and we participate regularly in national forums and taskforces in the health, housing and fuel poverty areas.

6.0 IMPLEMENTATION AND AWARENESS RAISING

- 6.1 The Director of Investment is responsible for ensuring that this Policy is implemented throughout the Association and will provide the Management Committee with updates on its implementation in Development Services Reports.

6.2 The Association will promote awareness of sustainability issues and will:-

- Ensure the co-operation of all our staff;
- Provide information and advise to our residents and clients on environmental benefits;
- Promote and adopt good practice;
- Encourage all consultants, contractors and suppliers appointed by the Association to adopt sound environmental and sustainable practices and policies, where possible.

7.0 **REVIEW**

7.1 This document will be reviewed by the Management Committee or Sub-Committee set up for that purpose in accordance with the requirements of the Association's Register of Policies and Procedures.
