

Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2023-25

Overall aim

Our overall aim is to mitigate and where possible minimise our environmental impact and become a truly environmentally sustainable business. We will promote a sustainable/carbon literate culture with our colleagues/customers and take our environmental responsibilities seriously as a landlord and commercial business. We are committed to becoming a net zero organisation by 2050. This strategy is focused on delivering the following primary objective:

- By 2025, understand the scale of our impact on climate change and develop a comprehensive and dynamic plan to tackle our environmental footprint.

Alongside this, we will continue to deliver;

- Carbon Reduction
- Sustainable Resource Management
- Sustainable Procurement
- Enhanced Biodiversity
- Environmental Sustainability Education of Colleagues

An Environmental Management System (EMS) is being implemented to structure our approach and then manage and report on the progress of our objectives.

Our strategy is aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) and will help to build sustainable communities. As an early adopter of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) reporting for Housing Associations we recognise the importance that environmental performance will have upon attracting funders as sustainability increasingly becomes factored into investment decisions.

Background/current position

Baseline reporting (scope 1 & 2) has been undertaken for the Streamlined Energy Carbon Reporting (SECR) and a programme of EPC surveys is underway to inform retrofit investments. Our current reporting and data analysis indicates that our largest environmental impacts are emissions from our housing stock and fleet fuel use. Around a third of our housing stock sits below Band D EPC, which contributes to the challenges of the cost-of-living crisis. In total, work will be needed to 66% of stock to reach our targeted average of Band B.

The actions required to tackle emissions in our existing housing stock are considered in the Strategic Asset Management Plan, with a comprehensive approach to meeting the estimated funding shortfall put forward in the Portfolio Management Plan.

Historically new developments undertaken by GUHG have targeted building regulations as a minimum. However, our New Business and Development Strategy sets out our ambition to use the Future

Homes Standard as a platform to target the development of zero carbon homes, minimising both the operating carbon emissions and energy costs for our customers. Opportunities to maximise the redevelopment of existing asset sites as pilot schemes for zero carbon homes will be explored and work is underway to review Modern Methods of Construction to start to target embodied carbon emissions.

Customer/stakeholder engagement

We will engage with internal and external stakeholders to deliver the strategy (customers, colleagues, contractors, local authorities, regulators etc). We will use our customer segmentation ('Voice') work to gauge customers insights into climate change, sustainability and our retrofit works. This will better help us to understand our customers opinions and knowledge about environmental issues and how we can practically deliver a successful retrofit programme. We will test the language that we use when communicating about sustainability to ensure it is clear, understood and engaging across our customer segments. We are committed to ensuring that our colleagues are carbon literate and have an environmental awareness so that all colleagues can contribute positively to the successful delivery of this and future strategies.

Strategic objectives

To achieve our overall aim, we will:

- Understand the scale of and our impact on climate change

Collating and understanding our data is key to making the right decisions on our pathway to net zero. We will analyse our scope 1, 2 & 3 data to formulate a net zero strategy which will define our approach, provide future strategic targets leading to meaningful change and align with the UK Governments 2050 target.

- Reduce Carbon Emissions

We will research and trial construction methods to reduce embodied carbon emissions in our development of new homes and reduce operational carbon emissions from our housing stock and business through retrofit, sustainable energy sourcing and reduction in use.

- Resource Management

Improve the way that we manage our resources (waste and water). Waste will be managed in line with the circular economy (reducing, reusing, repair, redistributing, maintaining, and prolonging the life of our resources). We shall manage our use of water so that we are using it efficiently.

- Sustainable Procurement

We will use the data that we collect to develop a sustainability procurement policy which will enable us to identify and reduce environmental impacts in the supply chain.

- Enhancing Biodiversity

Our Estates/ Independent Living gardens teams' ways of working will be adapted to enhance biodiversity in

green spaces, which will support flourishing nature, ecosystems and the well-being of our communities.

- Environmental Sustainability Education of Colleagues

We will deliver Carbon Literacy training to empower Managers, Team Leaders and Board Members so they themselves understand the climate challenges and can undertake positive environmental change.

Strategic targets

To keep ourselves on track and be confident we're delivering, we've set these targets:

- Ensure all our existing housing stock is a minimum of Band C EPC by 2030.
- Implement GUHG's EMS by March 2023
- Deliver a biodiversity project that tests the financial, operational and customer demands of delivering this part of our strategy by March 2025.
- Develop a net zero strategy by March 2025.
- Streamline waste and recycling services by March 2025.
- Deliver Carbon Literacy training to every Manager, Team Leader and Board Member by March 2024, then develop a strategic plan to roll out training to the remainder of colleagues.
- Develop a sustainable procurement policy by June 2024.

Delivery and risk

The Director of Property Services is responsible for the delivery of this strategy supported by the Environmental Sustainability Manager and the Head of Assets, Contract & Procurement.

For the strategy to be a success every colleague is responsible for its delivery. This strategy ensures GUHG's compliance with environmental regulatory requirements as highlighted on the Risk Register.

We will deliver this strategy using in-house resources and work with our strategic partners to enhance our communities for the future.