

## Sustainability Policy

<b>Purpose:</b>	To provide a framework in which informed decisions can be made to ensure the Association undertakes its business activities in a sustainable manner.
<b>Review Date:</b>	New Policy
<b>Guidance:</b>	The Bruntland Commission (definition)
<b>Regulatory Standards:</b>	<p><i>Standard 2 - The RSL is open and accountable for what it does. It understands and takes account of the need and priorities of its tenants, service users and stakeholders and its primary focus is the sustainable achievement of these priorities.</i></p> <p><i>Standard 3 - The RSL manages its resources to ensure its financial well-being and economic effectiveness.</i></p> <p><i>Standard 5 - The RSL conducts its affairs with honesty and integrity.</i></p>
<b>Other Relevant Policies</b>	<p>Asset Management Strategy</p> <p>Maintenance &amp; Housing Management related policies</p> <p>Data Privacy Policy</p> <p>Equality &amp; Human Rights Policy</p>
<b>Date reviewed by Policy Review Working Group (PRWG):</b>	2 August 2022
<b>Date approved by the Board (or PRWG if delegated)</b>	2 August 2022
<b>Publish on the Website</b>	Yes

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy shows how Dalmeir Park Housing Association (DPHA) aims to undertake its business activities in a sustainable manner. We will strive to support and deliver improvements in the quality of life for individual customers and the communities in which we work, without negatively impacting on the needs or aspirations of future generations. We aim to minimise the impact of our business on the environment and be recognised as a socially responsible and ethical business.
- 1.2 DPHA's policy sets out how sustainability will underpin the activities of our housing management services, the development and maintenance of our properties, of our care and support services and our other services. It also sets out how sustainability will inform our governance and the financial standards which we apply to our business.

## 2. Objectives

- 2.1 This policy is intended to contribute towards achieving the Scottish Government's targets established by the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 and West Dunbartonshire Council's vision for sustainability in the Association's area of operation.
- 2.2 According to the Brundtland Commission, Sustainable Activity is that "which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". For DPHA, this means that our Sustainability Policy has to incorporate all areas of our work; **organisational, social, environmental and economic**. The Action Plan which arises from this policy contains key objectives in these areas. (Appendix 1).
- 2.3 The policy objectives are to:
- Manage our local and global environmental impact by moving towards zero-waste and increasing the use of renewable energy.
  - Help to create physical conditions for sustainable communities by realising the opportunities offered by our geographical location, environment, heritage and relationship to local or regional factors such as opportunities for business growth and existing transport links.
  - Create social conditions for sustainable communities by the delivery of a wide range of socially inclusive regeneration projects, housing, care and support services and activities.
  - Support the stability of communities and tenancies.
  - Use resources in a sustainable way.
  - Reduce unnecessary expenditure.
  - Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.
  - Reduce our carbon footprint.

## 3. Principles

- 3.1 The policy is based on these principles:
- The management and development of all services provided by DPHA will be designed to minimise any adverse impact of our business on the environment.
  - Our buildings and associated infrastructure will be developed, improved and maintained to provide high quality living or working environments.
  - Our design brief for all new build and major repair and improvement works will include a

requirement to design homes which optimise the use of finite natural resources, energy consumption and the production of waste and emissions.

- Methods of building construction and maintenance, and procurement, will be evaluated by assessing their impact and benefits in relation to sustainability objectives. Evaluation will take account of the whole life of properties including construction and decommissioning phases.
- DPHA will be open to introducing new technology, materials and ways of working to achieve sustainability objectives.
- DPHA will seek to spread risks attached to new initiatives by adopting and evaluating a range of approaches when introducing novel or unproven methods.

#### **4. Organisational Sustainability**

- 4.1 To deliver sustainable products and services we need a sustainable organisation. We will maintain strong, appropriate governance and an ongoing commitment to ensuring high quality Board member knowledge, training, recruitment and selection.
- 4.2 Our partnerships with others including statutory organisations, our customers and other relevant parties are crucial to our sustainability. We recognise that resources are required, e.g. time, commitment and finances, to sustain and benefit from partnerships.
- 4.3 Our office is in an ideal location, we own it and it is part of the heritage of Dalmeir Park. However, it is larger than we currently require and is not sufficiently accessible to all potential users, so we recognise the need to update it. In doing so there is great potential for partnership and community use. We aim to exploit our proximity to the local canal and cycle path as part of making this asset contribute more to our organisational sustainability.
- 4.4 We will continue to develop hybrid and mobile working to sustain DPHA's position as an employer of choice while meeting customer needs for flexible and convenient contact and excellent service delivery.
- 4.5 We will maintain and improve mechanisms for customer engagement, tenant scrutiny and customer focus groups so we are always aware of, and planning to meet, our customers' needs, preferences and aspirations.
- 4.6 We will continue to develop our approach to equality and diversity in employment, services, contracts and activities.
- 4.7 We will play our part in influencing local and national policy for housing, care services and community activity in our area by taking a role in local representative groups, working groups, partnership working with local housing associations and by making representations to national and local representative bodies such as SFHA (Scottish Federation of Housing Association) and EVH (Employers in Voluntary Housing).
- 4.8 The financial resources available to us are increasingly constrained while demand for products and services are increasing. As an organisation receiving public funds we welcome the need to achieve value for money and recognise that meeting our sustainability objectives will require astute financial management and innovative cost saving practices.

4.9 Delivering sustainability requires genuine staff commitment which will only be achieved in an environment where sustainability is at the centre of everything we do. We know we need to support staff by changing work practices and by encouraging innovation and new ideas.

## **5. Social Sustainability**

5.1 A key factor in our sustainability as a business will be our success in contributing to the creation and maintenance of sustainable communities in Dalmuir Park.

5.2 We will support the availability of advice services, often through partners, so residents can get support with energy efficiency, financial inclusion, debt, tackling fuel and food poverty and other issues essential to sustaining tenancies.

5.3 We will continue our rigorous approach to tackling anti-social behaviour while supporting people with the factors that may be contributing to it.

5.4 We will regularly review and improve the ways we listen to and work with our residents; to improve the relevance and affordability of our services and the attractiveness of our estates.

5.5 We are committed to continuing and improving our own community services such as after school care and care services to older and vulnerable residents,

5.6 We will support like-minded organisations, like those who tackle loneliness, encourage volunteering among local communities or provide “handy” services and assistance to first-time tenants.

## **6. Environmental Sustainability**

6.1 DPHA has a carbon footprint and we want to identify the scale of that footprint so we can look meaningfully at reducing any damaging impact upon the environment.

6.2 Housing construction and maintenance are significant consumers of resources and contributors to waste, which in turn contributes to CO2 emissions and climate change. We want to work with our building and maintenance contractors to reduce these adverse outcomes.

6.3 Given the resources needed to construct a property it is important for it to be sustainable in the long term. We aim to provide new homes in sustainable communities, which will then be maintained efficiently, with a focus on planned rather than reactive maintenance.

6.4 Any future new homes will be built to a minimum of silver standard as defined by the Scottish Building Standards.

6.5 We intend to achieve the environmental standards in existing buildings as required by the Scottish Government’s EEESH2 (Energy Efficiency Standard in Social Housing) policy;

on time and on target.

6.6 DPHA's Asset Management Strategy recognises sustainability in our approach, by:

- Sustaining tenancies through the provision of affordable, well designed, maintained and managed homes.
- Maximising the life cycles of our property assets, through well planned maintenance processes and programmes.
- Well managed and maintained housing environments.
- Improvements which extend the life of our property assets and add value.
- Adapting properties to meet tenants/residents' particular needs.
- Environmental standards and energy efficiency improvements which make a positive contribution to the government's climate change objectives and which address fuel poverty.
- Taking an environmental preference approach to the selection of materials and components for our repair and replacement programmes, where this is financially feasible.

6.7 We aim to have all our corporate properties on the most efficient energy tariffs and, in the longer term, to identify ways to transfer to more sustainable energy sources.

6.8 We already encourage employees to use public transport or the least environmentally adverse mode of transport available, practical and reasonable for business travel. We aim to encourage this approach to journeys between home and work.

6.9 We will work towards prioritising walking, cycling, car share and public transport to attend meetings and visit sites and customers.

6.10 We will try to minimise physical travel to meetings by making more use of online alternatives without sacrificing the benefits of regular contact with partners and customers.

## **7. Economic Sustainability**

7.1 We are a significant direct employer and purchaser of goods and services in our local area. Where it is feasible and does not disadvantage our customers, we will use our purchasing power to deliver benefits to the wider community. We want particularly to improve life chances for school leavers and the unemployed, as well as environmental benefits.

7.2 We will work collaboratively with other local organisations to try to maximise the community benefits we can all lever from our procurement.

7.3 We aim to procure in a way that does not unduly restrict the ability of local social enterprises and SME's (Small to Medium Enterprise) to deliver our requirements.

7.4 We will continue to work with relevant owners and private landlords to encourage them to access grants to upgrade their properties or make them more energy efficient, contributing to driving up housing quality in areas they share with our tenants.

7.5 Many of the aims in the Social Sustainability section above will contribute to desirable

economic improvements such as money and energy advice.

## **8. Equality & Human Rights**

8.1 We are committed to promoting an environment of respect, understanding, encouraging diversity, and eliminating discrimination by providing equality of opportunity for all. This is reflected in our Equality and Human Rights Policy.

## **9. Making a Complaint**

9.1 Although we are committed to providing high levels of service, we accept that there may be occasions where you may not be satisfied with the service you have received from us. We value all complaints and use this information to help us improve our services. Our Complaints Policy describes our complaints procedure and how to make a complaint.

## **10. Data Protection**

10.1 We will treat your personal data in line with our obligations under the current data protection regulations and our Data Protection Policy.

## **11. Policy Review**

11.1 This policy will be reviewed by the Board every 3-years or earlier if required.



## SUSTAINABILITY ACTION PLAN 2022 - 2025

Sustainability Work Area	Objective	Action	Target, Owner & Completion Timescale
<b>Organisational</b>	Reduce unnecessary Expenditure	Postage to be 2 <sup>nd</sup> class by default.	Corporate Services to review purchasing and internal procedures and set targets to reduce cost of supplies and increase recycling by end of 2023/2024
	Move towards zero waste	Use recycled products, materials and consumables	
	Reduce, reuse and Recycle	Reduce paper, printing and postage by increased use of digital communication. Any office printing to be double sided and black/grey, double-sided papers for meetings + policy circulation, Re-use of scrap paper for non-formal purposes. Recycle waste in all premises	
	Use resources in a sustainable way	Reduce energy consumption in all business premises and explore renewable energy alternatives	Corporate Services to implement reduced consumption by November 22 and alternatives by Apr 24
	Reduce unnecessary expenditure	Formalise arrangements for mobile and flexible working, which could assist re-use/sharing of office premises	Finance & Corporate Services Team Leader (F&CSTL) to get policy/amendments approved by Dec 23
		Pursue a plan for partnership/grants for full and appropriate use of the main office	Leadership Team report to the Board by December 23
	Equality & HR	Screen all policies for equality and diversity	Leadership Team to check their policy areas for screening in line with Equalities & HR Policy by May 23
	Policy & Strategy	Incorporate sustainability in relevant policy reviews	F&CSTL to add item in policy review programme by March 2023
<b>Social</b>	Socially inclusive projects,	Update connections with, and awareness of, local support and voluntary groups to align activity where possible	F&CSTL to add information exchange sessions to the Training Plan by February 23



	services and activities	Update staff training on diversity and human rights and equalities screening for policies	F&CSTL to arrange staff training and contacts by June 2023
	Equality and HR	Establish contacts with support groups so residents who wish it can be put in touch with appropriate LGBTQ+ facilities	
	Stable communities and tenancies	Update Community Benefits requirements in all contracts, not only property-related	Customer Services Team Leader to ensure requirement is added to investment contracts by March 23
<b>Environmental</b>	Reduce our Carbon footprint	Measure our carbon footprint and produce a carbon management plan.	Leadership Team to develop a Carbon Management Plan by March 24
		Carbon management plan to encourage walking, cycling, car share and public transport for travel to work and business travel.	
	Reduce, Reuse and Recycle	Add a requirement to all building contracts requiring contractors to incorporate a minimum % of recycled content into new developments	Customer Services Team Leader to amend standard terms by February 23 and implement in all new contracts
		Recycle waste in all managed premises	Customer Services Team Leader to set target to increase recycling by tenants by the end of 2023- 2024
	Use resources in a sustainable way	Encourage tenants to reduce energy consumption and explore renewable energy alternatives	Customer Services Team Leader to assist tenants to reduce consumption by March 23 and propose alternatives for buildings by March 24
		Increase the biodiversity of common ground owner by DPHA, introducing native plant species, upgrading and increasing lifespan of mature trees – attractive places for community to use	Customer Services Team Leader to include in specification for ground maintenance works by February 2025
	Create physical conditions for sustainable communities	Review investment strategy to build to a minimum of silver standard as defined by the Scottish Building Standards	In next review of Asset Management strategy – due 2025
		Review life cycle modelling to identify all sustainable properties	

		Consider the introduction of a ratio of planned investment to reactive repairs to exceed 60:40%	
		Add a requirement to all contracts (building, maintenance and decommissioning) to exclude materials that threaten species or habitats and to improve natural habitats through appropriate planting and water use	Customer Services Team Leader to amend standard terms by March 23 and update all contracts at renewal dates
		Add a requirement to all contracts to minimise pollution - creating minimum dependence on polluting materials and toxic substances in management practices, energy and transport	
<b>Economic</b>	Support the sustainability of communities	Propose more joint procurement with local housing associations	Customer Services Team Leader by March 23 and insert in relevant policies during regular reviews
		Propose more joint community benefits relating to employment and training with local housing associations	
		Investigate an increase in legitimate purchasing from local SMEs and social enterprises	

