



Sustainability Policy

Presented to Board for Approval: August 2023
Next Review: August 2024

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Homes for Life Housing Partnership (HfL) is registered Company Limited by Guarantee (SC199299) and a Scottish Registered Charity (SC028542). We are a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) with the Scottish Housing Regulator (HAC311) and a registered Property factors (PF000219).

2.0 DEFINITION: SUSTAINABILITY

2.1 Sustainable activity has been defined as, activity “which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (The Brundtland Commission).

2.2 For HfL this means that our Sustainability Policy has to incorporate all areas of our work, covering the organisational, social, environmental and economic activities we carry out.

3.0 POLICY STATEMENT

3.1 HfL aims to provide, maintain and manage good quality affordable housing to sustain our rural community. We wish to promote a culture that focuses on the economic, social and environmental improvement of our homes in order to assist with the sustaining of communities.

3.2 HfL recognises that our environment is fragile, and we need to conserve resources to protect our future. As both a consumer of services and provider of homes, there are a number of steps we can take to reduce the impact of our activities on the environment.

3.3 This policy sets out the key principles of our approach to:

- Sustainability of building and the environment
- Sustainable communities
- Sustainable organisation

3.4 HfL is also aware of the current Scottish Government’s (SG) commitment to achieving Net Zero in Social Housing by 2040 and the work of the Zero Emissions in Social Housing Task Force (ZEST). This will continue to influence what we do and how we work towards net zero. Given this we will review this policy on an annual basis and adapt to the current requirements of ZEST and ensure that we budget and plan for works required as a result of the introduction of regulatory and legislative requirements as a result of the work of this task force. Examples would be an updated EESSH2 and retro-fit works.

4.0 ZEST – ACHIEVING NET ZERO IN SOCIAL HOUSING

4.1 The Zero Emissions in Social Housing Task Force (ZEST) recommendations published in late 2021 set out the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1: The Scottish Government and social landlords should develop a collective commitment to a just transition in the social housing sector with clear metrics and sufficient budgetary investment to ensure this is successfully realised.

Recommendation 2: The Scottish Government should promote a Fabric First approach as an essential first step towards decarbonisation, prioritising investment accordingly, and ensure that the promotion of a Fabric First approach is reflected appropriately in its review of EESSH2.

Recommendation 3: The Scottish Government should work with social landlords to ensure capital investment for social housing is adequate, structured and designed in line with the needs of the sector, and supports the social housing sector's aim for a Fabric First approach.

Recommendation 4: Social landlords and the Scottish Government must work together to plan ahead with certainty, including to work with new partners to access and maximise funding opportunities.

Recommendation 5: Social landlords and the Scottish Government should commit to working together in partnership to understand the current condition and investment needs of the existing social housing stock and develop appropriate collaborative solutions.

Recommendation 6: Social landlords and both local and national government should work in partnership to ensure individuals and communities are fully engaged and supported in the net zero transition.

Recommendation 7: All partners must work together to ensure there is sufficient workforce capacity in Scotland to deliver high-quality retrofit works in the social housing sector.

Recommendation 8: Social housing providers should continue to evaluate their wider impacts and ongoing contribution to tackling the climate emergency, through systematic monitoring and measurement.

Clearly the above will have a huge impact on how we will operate in the future.

5.0 SUSTAINABILITY OF BUILDINGS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

5.1 Meanwhile, the sustainability focus of HfL's maintenance activities will be on the following areas:

Reduction of the carbon footprint of our operations. HfL will seek to:

- ensure that our activities reduce waste, reduce energy consumption and minimise CO2 emissions.
- influence the sustainability practices of our contractors and where appropriate include sustainability targets within contract conditions.

Reduce Tenants' Energy Consumption. HfL will seek to:

- support residents to reduce consumption of fuel whilst enabling them to remain safe and warm. This will inform improvement works and providing various forms of learning and information.

Reduce low life cycle products where possible. HfL will seek to:

- use components in our planned replacement programme, that have long life-spans and deliver energy efficient solutions during their lifetime.

Reduce waste. HfL will:

- encourage and participate in recycling activities for both our residents and HfL in order to recycle as much as possible. We will also ensure that goods are re-used as far as possible by supporting and participating in schemes that promote this.

Make the best use of green space. HfL will:

- encourage a range of planting and growing to increase biodiversity across our area of operation. We will engage with residents in the use of their open spaces and where quality of open spaces is poor, we will work with residents to undertake improvements.

Manage water efficiently. HfL will:

- work to reduce water consumption and encourage residents to do the same. We will seek to use components in our planned replacement programme, that limit water usage - such as low/dual flush WCs, aerating taps and flow-restricted showers.

Minimising pollution. HfL will:

- work to minimise contributions to pollution by creating minimum dependence on polluting materials, management practices, energy and transport. We will try to minimise the impact of traffic on the local environment in all of our developments. Where practical, we will also promote the use of clean transport, public transport and environmentally responsible operation of vehicles.

Enhancing biodiversity. HfL will:

- not using materials that threaten species or habitats and improving natural habitats through appropriate planting and water use.

Creating healthy environments. HfL will:

- seek to enhance living, leisure and work environments; not endangering the health of the staff, residents, contractors and the wider community through exposure to pollutants or toxic materials or harmful organisms.

5.2 HfL will consider sustainability as a key factor in decision making implementing our Asset Management Strategy.

6.0 SUSTAINABILITY COMMUNITIES

6.1 HfL will contribute to the establishment and enhancement of sustainable communities through the following:

Provide homes that people want to live in, both now and in the future.

Promote social inclusion within balanced and socially diverse communities.

Assist with Reducing Fuel Poverty: HfL will provide energy efficient housing to reduce tenants' energy costs and endeavour to ensure that all our homes meet the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing.

Supporting communities by identifying and meeting the real needs, requirements and aspirations of communities and stakeholders and involving them in key decisions.

Promote and participate in the use of community facilities and fostering a sense of focus within neighbourhoods.

Work with stakeholders and other partner agencies to engender a sense of ownership and responsibility to promote safer and healthier communities.

Promote and create opportunities for the development of skills and enhancement of knowledge within communities and promote local employment initiatives.

Promote and participating in partnership working with other organisations and agencies to ensure effective delivery of services to local people.

7.0 SUSTAINABLE ORGANISATION

7.1 The sustainability focus of our organisation and our operational activities will be in the following areas:

Reduce the carbon footprint of our operations: we will ensure that our activities reduce waste, reduce energy consumption and minimise CO2 emissions.

Achieve best value for money through consideration of quality and whole life costs of goods and services purchased.

Reduce waste: we will encourage and participate in recycling activities for both our residents and HfL in order to recycle as much as possible. We will also ensure that goods are re-used as far as possible by supporting and participating in schemes that promote this.

8.0 MEASURING OUR IMPACT

8.1 This was a new policy in 2022 and HfL will evaluate how we attain these targets and measure our success annually.

9.0 REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every year or where there has been new legislation, or a change in regulatory requirements or policy guidance.