



SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 National and international policy is increasingly aimed at reversing unsustainable trends in a range of sectors including transport, agriculture, energy and construction. Regulations and taxation are increasingly penalising resource consumption, pollution, inefficiency, waste and toxicity to reverse unsustainable trends.
- 1.2 Almond Housing Association Limited (AHA Ltd.) recognises that improving our overall performance and especially the performance of our buildings in relation to these issues will mean that we are better placed to meet our commitments to best value, and to respond to current pressures as well as to changing economic and social policy.
- 1.3 This policy describes AHA Ltd.'s arrangements for integrating sustainability into our strategic planning and day-to-day activities.

AHA Ltd. will also incorporate sustainability planning and management into any wider role activities we undertake for the benefit of our communities, linking sustainability objectives with those designed to empower local communities and improve their quality of life.

- 1.4 AHA Ltd.'s overall aim in pursuing this policy is to make a positive contribution to the quality of life in the areas we are involved in. In all of our activities AHA Ltd. will seek to adopt an approach that recognises the role of social and environmental issues in enhancing the delivery of services. We will seek to improve our knowledge and understanding of sustainability issues and increase our operational efficiency.
- 1.5 In the context of this policy, 'sustainability' is defined as:

"The capacity of an organisation to continue to deliver social, economic and environmental value into the long-term future."

2.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 Board of Management

- To ensure that there is in place a Sustainability policy that complies with current legislation, guidance and good practice.
- To monitor AHA Ltd.'s compliance with the policy through relevant reports and to deal with any matters arising that require a Board decision.

2.2 Management

- Chief Executive: To ensure that the policy's principles are communicated to all employees and applied consistently in all relevant activities.
- Heads of Section: To ensure that the policy is applied in relevant activities, and that medium to long term objectives or targets are identified and, where appropriate, included in the association's current strategy and Business Plan.

2.3 Employees

- To apply the policy's principles in their day-to-day activities.

3.0 DEVELOPING AND INTEGRATING SUSTAINABILITY

General

- 3.1 In developing this policy AHA Ltd. will consider the impact we can have in improving the economic, social and environmental circumstances of the community within which we work.
- 3.2 AHA Ltd. will ensure that all relevant policies and procedures are designed to promote sustainability across our activities, and that our sustainability policy and objectives are linked to and compatible with our broader corporate plans and strategic priorities.
- 3.3 AHA Ltd.'s sustainability policy and procedures will be based on relevant and comprehensive information, current good practice, internal service reviews and, where appropriate, benchmarking with other organisations.
- 3.4 AHA Ltd. will identify the sustainability issues that are most significant in terms of our activities and over which we can be expected to exercise an appropriate level of control and influence. These will include issues relating to:
 - the acquisition and development of land
 - our impact on the environment
 - the consumption of energy and water in our properties
 - the use of materials in new build, modernisation, general repairs and maintenance
 - the production of waste
 - in the wider sense of sustainability, seeking to develop balanced communities and assisting tenants to maintain their tenancies.

Objectives

- 3.5 Insofar as they are appropriate at any time, AHA Ltd.'s objectives will include seeking to:
 - provide housing with a good living environment;
 - enable residents to reduce the running costs of their homes;
 - avoid building on 'greenfield' sites, where the use of redevelopment land is feasible;
 - reduce the dependence on non-renewable resources;
 - promote the re-use and recycling of materials;
 - avoid the use of potentially toxic and environmentally damaging materials and processes;

- reduce the use of resources in our daily operations, both within and outwith our office;
- reduce the number of new tenancies which end in less than 1 year.

Property development

- 3.6 AHA Ltd. will seek to integrate sustainability measures at all stages of the new-build process, including decisions on:
- the location, mix and function of the project;
 - the layout, design and specification;
 - the integration of external space;
 - the most effective form of procurement;
 - construction methods and materials specification;
 - energy sources and energy efficiency;
 - the future use and maintenance of the buildings;
 - waste management and site management.
- 3.7 AHA Ltd. will seek to contribute to sustainable developments and sustainable communities by:
- providing homes that people want to live in, both now and in the future;
 - creating living environments that are healthy, safe and secure;
 - encouraging designers and developers to adopt an approach to sustainability that is based on reliable, affordable and replicable techniques that offer social, environmental and economic advantages;
 - reducing fuel poverty amongst tenants where we are able to make a practical contribution.

Property maintenance and modernisation

- 3.8 In delivering planned, cyclical and reactive maintenance services AHA Ltd. will seek to:
- maximise the life cycle of components by high quality specification at initial installation;
 - maximise the life of components through repair rather than replacement, where this is feasible and compatible with tenants' expectations and any other requirements such as the Scottish Housing Quality Standard;
 - improve the energy efficiency performance of our existing building stock by appropriate refurbishment and wherever possible achieve the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing by 2020;
 - regularly review standard specifications taking into account the environmental impact of individual products and materials such as heating boilers, paint, timber etc.;
 - review procurement practices to maximise local sourcing of materials and the reduction of transport (energy) costs, where this is feasible and practicable to achieve;
 - implement energy efficiency measures, such as loft and pipe insulation, external wall cladding, and the installation of cost effective energy generation, that contribute both to a sustainable environment and a reduction in tenants' heating costs;
 - seek to influence the sustainability practices of the contractors we use, where appropriate including sustainability targets in contract conditions.

Housing Management services

- 3.9 AHA Ltd.'s approach to sustainability includes seeking to support tenants in maintaining their tenancies, and addressing social and economic issues that impact on tenants.
- 3.10 AHA Ltd. will:
- work in conjunction with local partners and other relevant organisations to improve the social and economic well-being of those we house and the communities we operate in, including securing funding for specific initiatives, e.g. for money advice projects etc.;
 - seek to develop tenant participation through our tenant participation strategy;
 - seek to reduce the number of tenancies that terminate within the first year;
 - through tenant newsletters, our website, or seeking funding for specific initiatives:
 - provide tenants with appropriate energy advice, or direct them to sources of advice, to reduce their energy costs and create healthy internal environments;
 - provide tenants with information about how they can play their part in addressing environmental issues;
 - encourage tenants to maximise their use of local recycling facilities.
- 3.11 Through developing and implementing a comprehensive range of housing policies, in particular those dealing with the issues arising from rent arrears and anti-social behaviour, AHA Ltd. will seek to prevent homelessness and help tenants to sustain their tenancies.

Wider role activities

- 3.12 Through maintaining and developing the role of Almond Enterprises Ltd., AHA Ltd. will seek to contribute to the economic benefit and sustainability of the local community.
- 3.13 AHA Ltd. will implement, regularly review and update our Community Engagement Strategy, initially focussing on digital and financial inclusion.

Workplace facilities

- 3.14 AHA Ltd. will seek to maximise sustainability measures in our office through:
- reducing waste;
 - reducing energy consumption;
 - reducing the proportion of information held in paper files and increasing the proportion held in electronic format;
 - maximising recycling opportunities.

Employee awareness and involvement

- 3.15 AHA Ltd. will be proactive in raising awareness amongst employees about sustainability issues and the practical contribution they can make to sustainable development. We will encourage them to share knowledge of best practice.
- 3.16 AHA Ltd. will encourage employees to be involved in developing corporate social responsibility across the organisation, with a commitment by senior management to 'lead by example' both in their own practices and in developing a long term environmental strategy.

Procurement

- 3.17 When making purchasing decisions AHA Ltd. will consider environmentally friendly choices, i.e. those products with a low adverse environmental impact.

Renewable energy technologies

- 3.18 AHA Ltd. will consider how we may integrate renewable energy technologies into the planning of new housing developments, or maintenance works such as renewing heating systems, and will seek to access all current sources of funding for such technologies so as to minimise the effect of such works on overall project costs and thus on rent levels.

Performance Indicators & Benchmarking

- 3.19 As part of establishing ways of measuring our progress towards achieving agreed objectives AHA Ltd. will select appropriate performance indicators. We will ensure that we only choose those indicators that are appropriate, reasonable and realistic at each stage of the process.
- 3.20 AHA Ltd. will also measure our performance by 'benchmarking' against relevant best practice standards and by comparing our achievements with other similar organisations.

Consultation

- 3.21 AHA Ltd. will ensure that there is effective internal consultation and feedback regarding the setting and subsequent monitoring of objectives. Where an aspect of our policy or current actions impacts on others, e.g. Contractors, we will where appropriate invite comment or feedback from those involved as part of the overall monitoring process.

Training

- 3.22 Training requirements for Board Members and/or employees will be identified and integrated into current learning and development strategies.

Resources

- 3.23 AHA Ltd. will identify and seek to provide the facilities and resources we will need to implement this policy and achieve our current objectives and targets. The setting of objectives etc. will be carried out having regard to the availability of the resources required to achieve them, i.e. objectives will not be set if they require a level of resources which we are not able to provide at that time.

4.0 REVIEW

4.1 The Head of Corporate Services will ensure that this policy is reviewed by the Senior Management Team at least every five years.

The review, and any resulting changes proposed, will be based both on the practical experience we gain as we develop our knowledge of sustainability issues, and on any internal or external feedback we receive from the actions we take.

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