

ALMOND HOUSING ASSOCIATION

HOMES STRATEGY



Our approach

We want to provide high quality, energy efficient, safe and affordable homes. These will be delivered through our new build programme and significant investment in our existing stock. It is important to us that we get that investment right and that we maximise the opportunity to meet the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing 2032 (ESSH2) target, modernise our older stock and reduce the amount of energy required to heat homes.

Our objectives

1

Know our Bricks and Mortar: We will ensure the information we hold is robust and that we are in a position to make informed decision in relation to investment and long term viability of our homes.

2

Improve the Energy Efficiency of our Homes: We will develop an ESSH2 delivery strategy to ensure we know and can plan the work required to make our stock as energy efficient as possible by 2032.

3

Develop an Almond Standard: We will work with our colleagues and customer to develop an Almond Standard to ensure that we are modernising our homes in a consistent and desirable manner.



To enable delivery against the above objectives we will establish a 30 year investment plan, a stock appraisal model, an ESSH delivery strategy and an Almond standard. Over the first 10 months of the strategy these will be prepared to allow us to plan delivery in future years. Progress against prescribed timescales will be closely monitored to ensure delivery.

ALMOND HOUSING ASSOCIATION

KNOWING OUR BRICKS AND MORTAR



Our Homes

In late 2020 a stock condition survey was carried out to almost 50 % of our stock. The data was subsequently reviewed and prepared for upload onto our Aareon Housing Management System. As a result from summer 2022 we will deliver our component replacement programmes via this system resulting in greater visibility across the business.

We firmly believe that good robust stock data is pivotal to ensuring that we can make informed decision regarding investment and viability as well as longer term investment in new developments. As such a comprehensive programme of ongoing surveys will be developed and implemented.

Our 30 year investment programme will be prepared based on this stock data and specialist surveys procured to validate data as required.

We will be continually reviewing our information and ensuring it remains current is essential. We will invest in mobile technology to allow stock condition surveys to be carried out by our own team and uploaded directly to Aareon. This will allow the team to have accessible data in relation to renewal cycles when visiting our customers.

We will continue to deliver our planned, cyclical and compliance works to ensure that our customers have safe and comfortable homes and that our stock continues to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard.

Leases will be reviewed in the year ahead to ensure obligations in respect of compliance checks, cyclical and planned maintenance are clearly defined.

Our activities:

- We will procure a consultant early in Spring 2022 to work with us to develop a stock appraisal model which is tailored to our properties, investment requirements and the social demographic in which they are located. Data will be prepared to allow stock to be reviewed prior to the end of the Calendar year.
- Our Asset and Finance colleagues will work together to smooth the programme of works and prepare a programme that is deliverable both in financial and practical terms.
- A comprehensive suite of reports will be prepared to allow repairs data and stock data to be analysed.
- The pandemic and Brexit have resulted in some very significant challenges for the construction Industry in terms of supply chain issues and inflated costs. We will continue to work with our Contractor's and Supplier's to ensure we are achieving value for money.

Our measures of success:

- Delivery of programmes of work via the Aareon Housing Management System with real time information accessible to colleagues across Almond.
 - The stock appraisal model is utilised to inform the preparation of the next update to the business strategy.
 - Further assessment carried out where long term viability of stock is in doubt.
 - The 30 year investment plan has been fully reviewed and presented to Board prior to the next cycle of budget preparation.
- Planned programmes and compliance works delivered as planned and full years budgets utilised.

ALMOND HOUSING ASSOCIATION

IMPROVING ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN OUR HOMES

Energy Efficiency

The climate emergency and requirement to reduce our impact on the Environment is a significant priority for the Scottish Government. The Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing 2032 target (EESH 2) and the recently published Achieving Net Zero in Social Housing report define the scale and challenge faced by social landlords in delivering the targets. A new Sustainability Strategy has been prepared to ensure sustainability is delivered across the Business.

At Almond reducing fuel poverty is a primary driver in our desire to improve the energy efficiency of our stock. The unprecedented rise in energy costs from Spring 2022 makes this requirement all the more urgent. We are however mindful of how important it is that we maximise what will be significant investment. The 'fabric-first' approach which is likely to form the early part of our strategy will be utilised to transform some of our more tired stock and programmed with planned component renewals to minimise disruption for our customers.

We have and will continue to explore new technologies and energy efficient options for heating our homes but only when it would result in a saving or cost neutral position for our customers.

We will identify grant funding or innovative procurement models to allow us to deliver energy efficiency projects.

Following the development of our EESH delivery strategy we will establish the baseline carbon footprint of our stock which will allow us to monitor progress towards Net Zero.

Our activities:

- Currently 99.68% of our stock meets the EESH 2020 standard. Two properties have an energy efficiency rating of less than a D and would effectively be unlettable from 2025. Access to complete required works will continue to be pursued to these properties to ensure they meet this deadline.
- A specialist Architect has been appointed to carry out a feasibility study on a sample of properties across Almond's stock and this will be used to prepare the EESH 2 deliver strategy.
- Pilot projects will be carried out during financial year 2022/23 to ascertain the disruption, costs and deliverability of proposed works.

Our measures of success:

- EESH 2 delivery strategy prepared and budget costs outlined. Investment required in stock will be assessed as part of stock appraisal model.
- Improved energy efficiency ratings of our stock with continuous progress towards target mapped.
- Impact of rising energy costs reduced for customers.



ALMOND HOUSING ASSOCIATION

DEVELOPING AN ALMOND STANDARD



Almond Standard

We know the impact a good home can have on the lives of our residents and we strive to offer desirable homes that we and our customers are proud of. The majority of our stock was built in the 1960's and while Almond has invested significantly some is starting to look aged. While there is no quick fix we aim to ensure we are taking a consistent approach to works delivered and maximising the investment we are making.

While the cost of delivering our EESSH strategy remains unknown and the 30 year investment plan costs are still to be confirmed we are mindful that there is little capacity for additional expenditure and as such our Almond Standard will look to enhance the options within existing programmes.

Consultation with the frontline teams at Almond will allow us to develop options which we will use as the basis of consultation with our customers. We will get an understanding about what are the priorities for our residents when it comes to investment.

Our void cost's are typically high by comparison to Association's we benchmark with. We are keen to ensure that we maximise the benefit of this expenditure and deliver properties to a consistent standard.



Our activities:

- Pilot projects being carried out at void stage including rewires and replastering to allow costs to be established.
- Options will be prepared and best methods for consultation considered.

Our measures of success:

- Meaningful consultation with customers re programmed works and Almond Standard with defined outcome that meets customers aspirations.
- Defined standard for voids to ensure planned disruptive works including re-wires are carried out during the void period to ensure impact for the customer is minimised once they have moved into their new home.
- Almond standard defined and Capital works projects reviewed to ensure the proposed work will meet the standard.
- Increased levels of satisfaction from customers moving into their new homes