



# **Sustainable Development Policy**

## July 2019

Consultation Completed:	June 2019
Approved by Management:	July 2019
Review Date:	July 2022

## **Our Vision**

Excellent housing in vibrant communities

## **Our values**

### **Respect**

We see the positive in everyone, especially our tenants. We treat everyone fairly, regardless of age, race, gender, sexuality or background. We ask for opinions even if we know we might not like what we hear. And we address people's concerns in any way we realistically can.

### **Integrity**

What we say in public is the same as what we say behind the scenes. If we say we'll do something, we mean it. Our tenants can count on us to solve their problems and make sound decisions.

### **Aspiration**

We want the best for all our current and future tenants. We're not afraid to strive for things that won't be easy – or try things that haven't been done before. We seek out opportunities and welcome change. If it doesn't turn out as planned, we learn and improve again. And then we try again.

## **Our Strategic Objectives 2017-2020**

- A. Build more desirable homes in popular neighbourhoods
- B. Deliver more excellent services to suit our tenants' lives
- C. Invest in our people to grow and develop their skills
- D. Find more ways to ensure value for money
- E. Continue to challenge poverty
- F. Put even more focus on community health and wellbeing
- G. Be ready for opportunities

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## **1.0 CONTEXT**

- 1.1 This Policy provides a framework for a sustainable approach to Development activity to be undertaken by Queens Cross Housing Association.
- 1.2 Sustainable Development has been defined by the Scottish Government as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Brundtland Commission of the United Nations, 1983). This Policy will reflect that definition in progressing the Association’s Strategic Aims and ensuring compliance with all relevant regulations.
- 1.3 The Association is committed to its vision of providing excellent housing and vibrant communities, as set out in its current Business Plan. This is underpinned by the Association’s Development Strategy 2018-21.
- 1.4 All development projects are co-ordinated by Development staff, located within the Property, Enterprise & Regeneration Directorate, who will be responsible for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Policy.
- 1.5 Key stakeholders within Property and Housing teams have been consulted and have contributed to the development of this Policy and any associated procedures.

## **2.0 PRINCIPLES**

- 2.1 This Policy shall apply to all development projects taken forward by the Association and to any projects undertaken as a result of our services provision to other RSLs, through the NWP Development Hub, where appropriate.
- 2.2 The promotion of sustainable development will provide benefits for the Association and its stakeholders through:
  - The enhancement of our social, economic and environmental impact within our communities;
  - The long-term health & well-being of residents;
  - The ability of the built and natural environment to be maintained and balanced;
  - The responsible use of resources.
- 2.3 The Association will continue to challenge poverty and particularly fuel poverty as a key Strategic Aim.
- 2.4 The Association will promote social balance across communities with the provision of inter-generational or lifetime homes for residents in mixed tenure developments.
- 2.5 The Association will consider the environmental impact of its Development programme as part of its overall Sustainability agenda.
- 2.6 The Association will continue to engage fully with our communities, through tenant participation and consultation, as part of its decision-making process in all aspects of its work, including Development.
- 2.7 The Association will comply with all regulations relating to sustainable development and energy performance in design, with the Scottish Government’s Building Standards and the City Council’s Glasgow Standard for Affordable Housing setting the minimum requirements in all new developments.

- 2.8 The financial implications to the Association of the implementation of any objective will always be considered, with alternative sources of funding considered, prior to any action required under an objective being confirmed.

### **3.0 OBJECTIVES**

- 3.1 The Sustainable Development Policy will assist the Association in meeting a number of its core Strategic Aims defined in its Business Plan, namely:
- Build more desirable homes in popular neighbourhoods;
  - Deliver more excellent services to suit our tenants' lives;
  - Invest in our people to grow and develop their skills;
  - Find more ways to ensure value for money;
  - Continue to challenge poverty;
  - Put more focus on community health & well-being

This will be achieved through addressing a number of key objectives outlined below, designed to take account of the wide range of projects promoted by the Association.

- 3.2 Creating sustainable communities for the benefit and enjoyment of the residents.
- Achieving a sense of ownership and interest amongst residents through active participation in the development process.
  - Responsive developments which recognise housing demands in the area and are compatible with the ethos of Lifetime Homes.
  - Neighbourhoods offering a range of tenures, housing types and amenities.
  - Retaining the community of existing or initial residents by enabling it to evolve naturally.
- 3.3 Promoting high quality urban design proposals to maximise the potential of any site for the development of housing.
- Considering remodelling, adaptation or extension of existing structures, before demolition and new build.
  - Designing at a density that makes the most efficient use of land, and ensuring our developments promote accessibility and active travel.
  - Inclusion of new high quality common open space for leisure, play and other social activities, and improving access to existing natural assets.
  - Using the Scottish Government's 'Place Making' tool to evaluate the design of larger developments.
- 3.4 Embedding sustainability in the Procurement Policy and Procedures we use to deliver Development projects.
- Ensuring that potential suppliers are assessed for their knowledge and track record in sustainable design and construction.
  - Addressing the Scottish Government's Sustainable Procurement Duty as defined within the 2016 Procurement Regulations.
  - Community Benefit provisions are used to ensure wider social and economic opportunities are generated for local residents from our capital investment.
- 3.5 Seeking to reduce, if not eliminate, fuel poverty for residents through a range of energy efficiency measures, underpinned by a 'fabric first' approach.
- Compliance with all relevant legislative and regulatory requirements on energy performance.
  - Consideration of increased energy and environmental performance standards in the design of new homes.
  - Ensuring residents will be able to benefit from the full potential of their new home by designing for ease of operation and controllability.

- 3.6 Minimising the environmental impact of construction through the design and specification of its new housing.
- Promotion of off-site construction methods.
  - Optimise the use of renewable and recyclable materials in construction, whilst encouraging the reduction of waste produced on site.
  - Designing for low maintenance with robust and durable components.
  - Seeking to use innovative SUDS designs which add value to the amenity of developments.

#### **4.0 PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES**

- 4.1 The Association will ensure that Sustainable Development processes are implemented from the inception of every development project by:
- Regularly reviewing the approved Design Guide and Standard Specification;
  - Incorporating a clear statement on sustainability objectives and outputs into the individual Project Brief;
  - Seeking participation internally across departments and with external Stakeholders, to promote partnership working and utilise expertise;
  - Compliance with all design standards required in the provision of Grant-funded affordable housing.
- 4.2 The Association will undertake a range of practices to promote an awareness of sustainability within the community, such as:
- Affected residents are consulted throughout the Development process, from inception to completion;
  - A Resident's User Handbook which incorporates generic energy saving and recycling advice as well as providing instructions and information on the use of the specific systems provided within the home, with assistance available from front-line staff;
  - Resident Satisfaction Surveys to specifically refer to the sustainable agenda. The surveys will seek to identify the running costs of, as well as customer satisfaction with, any new or improved housing and the systems provided.
- 4.3 The Association will ensure our developments create neighbourhoods where people want to live and work by providing:
- A housing mix that offers variety in form, type, size and tenure across the development to address all identified needs;
  - Appropriate parks, play areas and associated green infrastructure to facilitate active life styles;
  - Active travel routes and bicycle storage to help promote a shift towards sustainable transport solutions;
  - New lifestyle technologies such as high speed broadband, electric vehicle charging infrastructure and Technology-Enabled Care ;
  - Environments that are safe and free from crime to foster a sense of well-being, accredited as 'Secured by Design' by Police Scotland.
- 4.4 Site selection will be governed on the following basis:
- Prioritising brownfield or derelict sites and redundant buildings for new developments;
  - Assessing the existing natural and urban environment of any site to establish the local ecology, exposure, topography and orientation, to ensure future development proposals work with nature and enhance the natural environment;

- Detailed consideration given to how a development would impact on the wider community with design proposals that take into account the existing service infrastructure, including the local public transport networks.
- 4.5 Procurement processes will take account of the following criteria as well as that required under the Procurement (Scotland) Regulations 2016:
- Selecting Consultants and Contractors with knowledge and experience of sustainability issues, included as a key component of all quality assessments;
  - Exploring innovative design concepts, including off-site manufacturing, with Consultants and Contractors to maximise added value to the contract;
  - Community Benefit requirements which not only address training and work experience for local residents, and also provide contributions to sustainment of tenancies and local amenities.
- 4.6 In line with the Scottish Government's Energy Strategy, energy performance will be maximised, while maintenance requirements are minimised, on all new developments, through:
- Enhancing the thermal performance of new housing through design, predominantly by high levels of insulation and optimising solar gain;
  - Developing designs and specifications which maximise efficiency across building lifecycles, including cyclical maintenance requirements;
  - Consideration of new energy performance technologies and associated standards, such as Group Heating systems and Passivhaus,;
  - Embracing Low & Zero Carbon generation renewable technologies where possible, such as PV Cells, Solar Thermal, CHP and Ground & Air Source Heat Pumps to off-set a reliance on fossil fuel sources.
- 4.7 Efficient use of physical resources is promoted and a sustainable approach is taken towards selection and use of materials on any project, such as:
- Specification of environmentally-friendly materials and the use of limited embodied-energy products, wherever possible;
  - Seeking that all house designs will minimise the production of and disposal of on-site waste in the use of materials;
  - Design proposals which seek to minimise the movement of materials to and from the site.

## **5.0 MONITORING & MANAGEMENT**

- 5.1 The Development Staff will be responsible for the implementation of the Policy on each project. This will be monitored by the Director of Property, Enterprise & Regeneration and the Head of Development as distinct criteria within the regular monitoring of the Development activities.
- 5.2 The effect of new legislation, regulation or procedural guidance on Development activities will be evaluated and changes to the Association's Policy and Procedures will be recommended and adopted as appropriate.
- 5.3 Development staff will ensure that they receive, evaluate and respond to all relevant consultation documents issued in advance of national or regional policy change.
- 5.4 The Association will seek to ensure its Policies and Procedures continue to comply with current requirements, through staff attendance at training, briefing sessions and courses, organised by relevant organisations within the housing sector, as required.

## **6.0 REVIEW**

- 6.1 This Sustainable Development Policy will be subject to review every 3 year, on the basis of:
- Current legislation, regulation and guidance;
  - Changes in organisational structure or operations;
  - Continuing Best Practice.
- 6.2 The Policy will be subject to substantive review outwith this cycle in the light of significant changes to the Association's operating environment.

## **7.0 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY**

- 7.1 The Association is committed to promoting an environment of respect, understanding, encouraging diversity and eliminating discrimination by providing equality of opportunity for all. Through the implementation of this Policy, the Association will seek to provide a consistent approach in promoting equality and diversity across all areas of its Development activity.

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