



Sustainability Plan 2016 to 2020

May 2016

Foreword

WDH is one of the leading housing providers in the north of England. WDH continues to evolve from a traditional housing provider to an organisation that aims to be a regional provider that maximises social capital for the Wakefield District. We take energy efficiency and the reduction in our carbon footprint seriously and are committed to continuing to be a responsible business that plays a key role in the region in promoting sustainability, tackling climate change and alleviating fuel poverty. We want to build on the significant achievements we've made over the last 10 years and make even more of an impact on our operations, assets and residents in future.

There have been a large number of changes in government policy in recent years that has made progress in this area more difficult than it might have been and the policy landscape still remains uncertain. As leaders in the housing sector, the local community and the region it is imperative that we push on with our sustainability agenda, lead by example and share best practice to raise awareness to stakeholders.

This plan sets out how we will continue to take action to reduce our environmental impact and carbon emissions as a business and, as a priority, reduce the costs for our residents to heat and power their homes.

Kevin Dodd
Chief Executive
WDH

Stephen Green
Chair of Board
WDH

Sustainability Plan 2016 to 2020

Contents

1.	Plan Aim	1
2.	Our Vision.....	1
3.	Background to the Plan	2
4.	Targets and Plans for Change	3
	Background Papers	5

1. Plan Aim

Since 2005, we have made embedding sustainable development principles, reducing its carbon footprint, combatting climate change and tackling fuel poverty a key priority for the business. Although a lot has changed since then, we are still as committed to these priorities now as we were 10 years ago.

This plan demonstrates our commitment to sustainability and our belief that it should be central to everything we do as a business.

From a customer perspective, we aim to improve the livelihoods of its residents by:

- improving the energy efficiency of our homes;
- identifying and promoting ways of making energy more affordable; and
- supporting good health and wellbeing through initiatives in both homes and communities.

As an organisation, we will continue to strive to be a sustainable, responsible business by:

- minimising its impact on the environment;
- reducing its carbon footprint;
- reducing running costs through less carbon and resource intensive activities and operations; and
- considering the implications of a changing climate and how we need to adapt in order to safeguard WDH and its assets for future generations.

2. Our Vision

We have a Vision to create confident communities. It has three, five year reviewable milestones.

2020 An enterprise with social impacts

2025 Make real change through social outcomes

2030 Improving lives through social enterprise

WDH has four **Strategic Objectives**.

- Be a landlord of choice by putting the customer first.
- Adopt best practice in good governance to be a well-managed business.
- Be a positive force through leadership and influence to develop the potential of our people.
- Be a partner of choice to create better places to live.

3. Background to the Plan

3.1 What we've achieved so far

Over the last 10 years we've had some significant achievements that have helped to tackle fuel poverty and deliver low carbon, energy efficient homes for our residents. In particular we have:

- Improved all our properties to a basic retrofit standard.
Through the Wakefield Improvements Programme we have installed high efficiency heating systems, secure by design doors, double glazing and loft and cavity wall insulation.
- Installed renewable energy technologies in to more than 900 properties.
Through our Advanced Retrofit Programme we have installed solar photovoltaic, solar thermal, ground and air source heat pumps, combined heated and power and biomass.
- Applied external wall insulation to more than 580 homes.
We have targeted our hard to treat properties for energy efficiency improvements – improving the street scene of our communities and lowering fuel bills.
- Significantly improved the energy ratings of our properties.
The average Standard Assessment Procedure rating of our properties has increased from 55 to 71 over the last 10 years.
- Provided training and advice to hundreds of frontline workers and residents about energy efficiency and switching in the home.
Through our training programmes we have provided frontline workers with the tools to provide advice – enabling us to reach more residents.
- Delivered more than 800 new homes to higher than building regulation standards.
We have delivered highly efficient homes to Eco Homes and Code for Sustainable Homes standards.
- Built 72 homes using offsite technology and taking a fabric first approach.
We've achieved a high build quality, built using in-house teams and utilising the local supply chain wherever possible.
- Developed and delivered the largest Code for Sustainable Homes Level 6 development in the country in 2012 – 91 properties at Park Dale.
The properties on the Park Dale Estate are not only energy efficient, they are also water efficient, promote waste reduction and recycling and are lifetime homes.

As a business we've also lowered our carbon emissions and environmental impact. We have:

- installed solar panels at our offices and service access points;
- fitted efficient, low energy lighting in our offices;
- reduced paper waste and colour printing across the business;
- improved segregation of waste and increased the amount of waste re-used, recycled and diverted from landfill;
- delivered toolbox talks to operatives on the importance of recycling and reusing materials wherever possible;
- promoted sustainable travel to employees including cycle to work, cycling proficiency and car sharing; and
- embedded sustainability in to key decision making.

3.2 Awards and Recognition

Our efforts in this area have been recognised through:

- being awarded ISO 14001 (Environmental Management System) accreditation – an internationally recognised standard – that further underlines our environmental credentials;
- receiving the Sustainable Homes Index for Tomorrow Gold Award in 2012, through which we were benchmarked against others in the housing sector;
- various accolades for the Park Dale development including from the Committed to Construction in West Yorkshire Awards, Housing Excellence Awards, Builder and Engineer Awards 2012 and Wakefield Council's Local Authority Building Control Awards;
- Becoming finalists for the Project of the Year Award at the Green Deal and ECO Awards 2015 for our energy efficiency scheme at Featherstone' and
- Being named winner of the Arts, Environment and Technology Special Award at the Research, Innovation, Sustainability and Enterprise (RISE) Awards 2015 – recognising our innovative approach to sustainability and improving the energy efficiency of our new build properties through our Knowledge Transfer Partnership with Leeds Beckett University.

4. Targets and Plans for Change

To build on what we've achieved to date, this plan sets out our key objectives to improve the sustainability of our properties, residents and operations.

As the key housing provider in the Wakefield district, we recognise the importance of improving the energy efficiency of its properties not only through physical measures but also through the provision of advice, giving residents the tools to heat and power their homes more affordably. As energy prices have risen significantly over the last decade and are forecast to continue to do so, we realise that it is important to look at energy supply costs as well as reducing energy demand and will be investigating ways in which we can maximise the number of residents switching to cheaper tariffs. In addition to energy supply and demand, we will also be focusing on water efficiency and the provision of green, accessible spaces in our communities.

By delivering a variety of sustainability initiatives in the community it is endeavoured that the livelihoods of our residents will be improved – achieving positive outcomes such as lower energy bills, warmer and more comfortable homes and reduced environmental impact.

As a sustainable, responsible business, we have ambitions to further improve its sustainability credentials and demonstrate and promote itself as a leader in the housing sector and beyond. This plan sets out targets to improve the environmental performance and reduce the carbon footprint of our operations year-on-year to 2020.

Through the delivery of this plan we will be taking a lead in climate change mitigation. However, as a responsible business, we acknowledge the need to consider climate change and if there is a need to adapt in order to prepare and protect its residents, assets and operations for a future climate. As part of this plan, we will undertake an assessment of the risks posed by a changing climate and consider potential implications for the business.

There are, therefore, three key aspects to the Sustainability Plan with respect to our residents, assets and operations.

- Greener, Healthier Communities: Reducing Energy Consumption and Supporting Good Health and Wellbeing.
- Affordable Energy: Maximising Resident Engagement with Energy Switching.
- WDH: A Sustainable, Responsible Business.

This plan will be reviewed annually, with key targets to be monitored and reported on regularly to Corporate Management Board and Board to ensure that WDH is on-track and improvements are being made year-on-year. The day-to-day delivery of the Sustainability Plan is the responsibility of the Sustainability Team with strategic direction provided, and regular review undertaken, by the Director of Investment.

We recognise that it is of paramount importance to communicate its sustainability credentials and key achievements to internal and external stakeholders in order to demonstrate that we are taking the lead within the housing sector and beyond, to underline the importance and benefits of organisations embracing sustainable development and showcasing what can be achieved.

We will also continue to take advantage of any opportunities to collaborate with partners from across different sectors and will look to utilise any funding opportunities wherever possible in order to innovate and improve.

By the end of this plan the aim is to have:

- improved our homes to a minimum EPC (energy performance certificate) band rating of D wherever possible – five years ahead of the Government target for fuel poor homes;
- created a Green Retrofit Standard following a number of trials of alternative heating systems and packages of low cost energy efficiency measures;
- a clear position regarding energy switching and will have been proactive in ensuring as many residents as possible are on the best energy tariffs;

- reduced the business carbon footprint year-on-year, resulting in a 10% improvement on 2015 levels – lowering our environmental impact and realising associated cost savings as a result;
- annually maintained ISO 14001 accreditation to demonstrate that the business is operating within an environmentally sound framework; and
- implemented a Sustainable Travel Policy across the business so that employees have a clear understanding of the options available to them to travel sustainably both during work and whilst commuting.

The plan will be delivered by undertaking the Sustainability Action Plan outlined at Appendix B, which sets out the actions that will be taken, the targets set and the outcomes which will be realised as a result.

Background Papers

- Cutting the cost of keeping warm – a fuel poverty strategy for England (HM Government, March 2015).
- Grey Fleet Review for WDH (EST, February 2015).
- WDH Carbon Footprint Report (Carbon Trust, May 2015).



Vision

to create confident communities

Mission

to inspire, transform and promote excellence

Values

to be creative, inclusive and work with integrity

delivering promises, improving lives