

Sustainability Strategy 2021



Paragon Asra

PA Housing

Introduction

In our Corporate Plan (2020-23) we have committed to developing a new Sustainability Strategy to cover all areas of the business to deliver net zero-carbon homes and emissions before the government deadline in 2050. For our residents' homes, we will align this with the stock reinvestment, building safety and development programmes. The built environment contributes around 40% of UK carbon emissions, so for us as a housing provider, there is a major challenge and cost ahead.

We know that improving our environmental performance is just one element of being a socially responsible business and we're committed to making improvements across the board. This Strategy is concerned primarily with reducing our waste and carbon emissions, but it should be read alongside our policies on Modern Slavery, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, our Community Investment Strategy and our Framework for Sustainable Finance, all of which can be found [here](#).



Our approach

The overarching goal of our Strategy is to embed sustainability into each element of our services, modernising our everyday activities to reduce our environmental impact and deliver better outcomes for our customers.

We have put sustainability at the heart of what we do, making it one of our top priorities in our new Corporate Plan. We will carry out an assessment of our existing carbon footprint so that we understand where we can make the biggest improvements and how we can effectively target our investment. Based on the feedback we have had so far from customers and colleagues, we have put together an initial action plan that identifies measures we can take in the short term while we are working on our roadmap for long-term investment. We have structured our approach to look at these key areas:

Property

Improving the environmental performance of our new homes, our existing homes, our estates and our offices.

People

Enabling and encouraging sustainable living, working and travel practices among our customers and our colleagues.

Partners

Working with our contractors and external partners such as Local Authorities and the GLA / Homes England to achieve wider sustainability goals together.

Our Properties New Homes

We are committed to achieving high energy efficiency in our new homes, both to reduce our impact on the environment and to reduce energy costs for our customers. We have recently reviewed our specification documents to make sure that we deliver the same high energy efficiency to all of our customers regardless of any regional differences in requirements.

Case Study: *Thames View House, Walton on Thames*

We have recently obtained planning permission to redevelop our existing building at Thames View House to deliver 97 high quality new homes and a modern community facility that will provide a new base for a valued local pre-school. The existing building has come to the end of its economic life and has significant issues with thermal efficiency. Our new design achieves carbon savings of 35% above the requirements of Building Regulations, and in addition to an energy efficient building fabric the scheme will offer:

- 50% of on-site parking spaces enabled for electric vehicle charging.
- Improvements to local bus stop provision and the provision of a car club for the neighbourhood.
- Photovoltaic panels on the roofs to capture solar energy which can be used for lighting and power in communal parts of the building.
- A centralised heating system which provides more efficient heating than individual boilers and allows heat to be recycled around the building.
- 48 new trees as part of an overall planting strategy that aims to encourage biodiversity.
- Bird and bat boxes to provide habitat for native species.
- Improvements to the recreation ground next door to the site to be delivered in partnership with Elmbridge Borough Council, contributing to safer and more pleasant green spaces for the whole community to enjoy.

*Computer-Generated Imagery /
PRP Architects LLP © 2021*



Our Properties Existing Homes

We know that understanding our existing housing stock is key to improving our environmental performance. We are commissioning a complete review of EPC certification for our existing housing stock, and by the end of 2022/23 we will have up to date information about 100% of our stock. We will start by addressing the 30% of our properties that are currently rated EPC band D and below, with a target for all our homes to attain EPC band C or better by 2030.

We have planned an initial investment of £230m to upgrade the energy performance of our homes, a figure that will be refined as we complete updates to our stock condition surveys. A range of investments will be considered, including improved insulation to roofs and walls, upgrades to heating systems and windows and the production of on-site renewable energy where possible. We have invested in powerful new software that will enable us to target our investment to the most effective measures on a property by property basis.

We will also invest in our estates, providing better biodiversity through our new planting regime and installing electrical vehicle charging points for our customers and contractors to use.

Case Study: *First time Central Heating Initiative*

Through this programme completed in 2019/20 we converted 225 homes in areas of deprivation from inefficient storage heaters to high efficiency gas central heating. On average this realised an improvement of 7 SAP points for each home and amounted to an average saving of c.£800 per annum, or £66 per month for each household.

Following the success of this programme we have accessed two additional grant funding schemes; the Fuel Poor Network scheme and ECO3, which will provide a total of £518,778 in grant against a total investment of £1,082,000. The programme will see upgrades to a further 136 fuel-poor homes and we expect to see similar financial gains for households and improvements to SAP scores.



Our Properties Offices

We planned to assess our office provision to reduce our operating carbon footprint, and this has been brought to the fore as a result of our response to Covid-19. The pandemic has accelerated changes to our working practices, and we now reviewing our office accommodation as part of a move to more agile way of delivering great services. This includes assessing the spaces we need now and into the future, the energy performance of existing buildings and how we can add facilities that promote sustainable travel.

Case Study: *Office facilities*

We are installing brand new secure cycle stores at our two main offices to support our Bike to Work scheme and plan to invest in electric vehicle charging points and electric pool bikes at our offices to encourage colleagues to travel sustainably.

Our People Colleagues

We've surveyed our colleagues to find out what is most important to them and to collect their ideas on how we can change for the better. There is a high level of commitment among our colleagues, with 77% of respondents strongly supportive of getting involved with moving PA Housing towards a more sustainable future. The top priorities identified by colleagues so far have been: reducing work travel and moving towards more sustainable travel methods, setting ourselves carbon reduction targets and working with our supply chains to co-ordinate our approaches.

Case Study: *Business Mileage*

By working differently during 2020 we reduced our business mileage by 215,000 miles in 6 months compared with the same period the previous year, a carbon saving of around 172 metric tons*. We have reinforced this saving by reviewing our Essential Car User policy to reflect our desire ensure that this is a long-term trend.

In recent months, we have carried out recruitment interviews online and estimate that, in the period from April to September 2020, interviewee travel was reduced by 6,400 miles compared with office-based interviews.

**From National Energy Foundation Simple Carbon Calculator*

Our People Customers

We know that energy efficiency is key to preventing fuel poverty as well as improving comfort in the home. We asked our brilliant Involved Residents how we could best support them to reduce their own carbon footprints in day to day life and live more sustainably while saving on costs. Alongside broad support for additional insulation and other water and energy saving measures in their homes, the top priority was to be able to get involved with sustainability initiatives in their local communities.

Case Study: *Elmbridge Community Eco Hub*

We are providing seed funding for the "Elmbridge Community Eco-Hub", a fantastic community initiative in an area where around 6,000 of our customers live. The Hub is designed to be a place where everyone in the community can come to learn, make, take, give, share, borrow, buy, fix, recycle & up-cycle with a community and environmental focus. It will provide local residents with facilities such as a "Library of Things" that will lend out tools, and a "Repair Café" where residents can learn to fix items and reduce waste. We are actively looking for similar initiatives to support in our other communities.

Our Partners Supply Chain

We know that many of our partners are making strides in reducing carbon emissions and that we can learn a lot from them. We will be talking to our supply chain about how they are improving their environmental performance and how we can work together to do even better, including planning virtual conferences to discuss joint goals and what we can do to work even better together to optimise our positive impact.

Case Study: *Fortem*

Fortem deliver our responsive repairs service across London and the South East. They have achieved Carbon Trust accreditation and were the winners of “Best SME in Carbon Management” at the Carbon Trust awards in 2019 for their approach to reducing their carbon footprint. We are working with Fortem as we analyse our property data to better understand our common carbon footprint and areas for improvement that we can deliver together.



Our Partners External Relationships

Many of our Local Authority partners have declared a climate emergency in their boroughs, and we are keen to work in partnership as they develop their plans.

Case Study: *Zero Carbon Housing in Ealing*

We are working in partnership with the London Borough of Ealing, who have committed to achieving the best possible environmental performance from all new homes in their borough. Working together, we're investigating the technical and funding options that will enable us to achieve Passiv Haus accreditation for new homes that we build in the borough. This will deliver high performing homes which are not only be close to carbon neutral in operation but will go hand in hand with low fuel bills and better affordability for our customers. Our plans also include creating spaces that support customers to reduce their carbon footprints in their working and personal lives, such as work and childcare spaces within a short walk from their homes, and excellent pedestrian and cycle links to local green spaces.



Putting ideas into action

In the first instance, we identified “quick wins” in our Year 1 Action Plan so that we could make some swift improvements.

The Board has also approved our first Action Plan for Years 2-5 which set out our medium-term goals that require further planning and investment. Sustainable practice and technology are exciting areas where great progress is being made, so these are live documents which are updated regularly. You can read the latest updates [here](#)

We continue to look ahead and keep abreast of developments in policy and technology that will influence how we reduce our impact on the longer term.

The UK has made a legally binding commitment to achieving zero carbon by 2050, which is now within the 30-year period of our Business Plan. We will continue to look to the longer-term future and plan investment to ensure that we achieve zero carbon status by or before this deadline.



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