



North Devon Homes Ltd

Environmental Sustainability

Policy

Contents

Page Number

1	Purpose	3
2	Scope	3
3	Principles	4
4	Policy Statement	5
5	Review	7
6	Application	7
7	Equality and Diversity	8
8	Related Documents, Policies and Procedures	8
9	Equality Impact Assessment	9

1. Purpose

This policy sets out the approach that North Devon Homes (NDH) will adopt in actively managing the impact of our activities on the environment and seeking ways to ensure the sustainability of our operations.

In 2004, more than a quarter of the UK's carbon dioxide emissions – a major cause of climate change – came from the energy used to heat, light, and run homes.' *Economics of Climate Change (The Stern Review 2006)*

'Most societies want to achieve economic development to secure higher standards of living, now and for future generations. They also seek to protect and enhance their environment, now and for their children. Sustainable development tries to reconcile these two objectives.'
Sustainable Development–The UK Strategy (Department of the Environment 1994)

2. Scope

There are three clear areas within the scope of this policy as follows:

1. The work of the organisation – the direct influence on company behaviour, culture, decision making and procurement of goods and services.
2. The decisions we make about how we maintain or develop our stock to support the “green” agenda
3. The opportunities that we have to influence our customer's behaviour through appropriate information, advice and guidance.

NDH has a track record of working productively with other partners and organisations to deliver more meaningful results. For example as part of Advantage South West (ASW) procurement club, we have been able to research and procure new technologies such as air source heat pumps (ashps) at a very competitive unit cost. This approach will continue to be adopted as we seek to influence the Government's future green agenda and secure the best outputs for our customers.

This policy sets out how we intend to respond to the responsibilities and obligations placed upon NDH as follows:

- Reduce our carbon footprint as a landlord and an employer, in line with Government targets

- Actively reduce the environmental impact of our work through the provision of energy efficient homes and environmentally friendly offices
- Procure environmentally benign products and seek to source them locally wherever possible
- Actively promote recycling activities both internally and with our customers, suppliers and contractors
- Set targets to restrict our environmental impact in terms of:
 - energy consumption
 - waste management
 - travel
 - water usage
 - procurement.
- Develop and implement measures to increase the energy efficiency of our homes and the way they are used in order to reduce fuel poverty amongst our customers.
- Continue to enhance and expand our learning through research, best practice and attendance at special interest groups.
- In setting out our policy we will have regard to:
 - legislative and regulatory requirements
 - new technologies & innovation
 - the operational capacity of our teams
 - the resource capability of the business
 - the views of our stakeholders.

3. Principles

The following principles will apply to this policy:

- It will be open, fair and transparent
- It will reflect the current standards of operation and will be reviewed whenever industry standards, legislation or guidelines change
- It will promote consistency in the approach to minimising the impact of our activities on the environment
- It will be positively promoted with regards to informing the Company's staff, customer and Board members' views and behaviours.
- It will be realistic, achievable and provide value for money

- It will be periodically reviewed as set out in section 5
- It will support and align with all corporate service standards.

4. Policy Statement

In developing an Environmental Management System (EMS) to review and monitor our environmental effects, we are seeking to reduce those impacts and make improvements by adopting a set of relevant objectives.

These objectives can be grouped in the three areas previously identified as follows:

4.1 The work of the organisation:

- Actively striving to reduce or negate the harmful effects which our activities have on the environment;
- Weighing up the costs, benefits and drawbacks of different approaches and aiming to gain most advantage from our limited financial resources
- Taking steps to actively reduce the amount waste from all of our business activities
- Promoting sustainable transport practices among employees
- Encouraging and expanding the environmental awareness of our employees
- Creating and promoting environmental purchasing practices in our business activities and for the benefits of our customers
- Seeking to reduce environmental risks arising from business activities
- Setting clear targets internally and externally at all levels in our business, to continually improve environmental sustainability performance and impact.

4.2 The maintenance and development of the stock:

- Exploring and implementing opportunities to improve the condition of our housing stock and its immediate surroundings.
- Exploring and adopting energy efficiency principles in existing and new stock
- Balancing the adoption of new technologies with the wider investment into maintaining and upgrading our housing stock in terms of responsibly prioritising resources

- Adopting sustainable principles and energy efficiency technologies in new developments / refurbishments
- Promoting improved environmental performance by our contractors and suppliers

4.3 Working with customers

- Promoting sustainable transport practices among customers
- Encouraging and expanding the environmental awareness of our employees and customers
- Promoting energy saving, water conservation and waste minimisation advice to customers to combat fuel poverty and promote more sustainable lifestyles
- Promoting and publicising the initiatives we take in delivering this policy

The Environmental Management System will be presented in the house style of a “Service Excellence Plan” (SEP) and will set out the annual targets and tasks to be achieved by the organisation.

4.4 New properties

When developing accommodation either through regeneration or development activities we will seek to provide new homes that:

- Are Sustainable:
 - Energy and water consumption efficient
 - Keep carbon emissions to the lowest possible levels
 - Introduce the use of renewable energy and recycling
 - Have low running costs for customers
- Contribute to vibrant local communities and economies through a range of sustainable initiatives:
 - Promoting more sustainable transport options
 - Providing easy access to all essential facilities
- Are Flexible:
 - Catering for changing housing needs
 - Providing long term healthy living environments
- Reduce waste and promote as much recycling during construction:
 - Using modern methods of construction (MMC)
 - Implementing site waste management

- Ensure the sustainable use of materials:
 - Using sustainable sources
 - Procured where possible from local sources
- Reduce the impact on and seek to create a beneficial environment for local ecology

5. Review

We will review this policy, procedures and staff training needs at least once every 3 years to ensure that it continues to operate within best practice, achieve measurable results, and achieve continuous service improvement.

Alternatively, the policy and all associated procedures will be reviewed immediately following any relevant change to government policy, regulation or legislation.

The Director of Neighbourhoods will be responsible for ensuring that policy reviews are undertaken, that appropriate consultation takes place and that revisions are reported to the Board for its approval.

6. Application

NDH's Board will delegate responsibility to the Director of Neighbourhoods for ensuring that this policy is communicated and implemented.

Detailed procedures will be developed and maintained by the Green Team in line with this policy to provide further guidance during delivery of all operations and services.

We will provide training for staff to ensure that they fully understand the wider issues surrounding this policy and any associated procedures.

Consideration will be given to the environmental impact of decisions made throughout the organisation. During the coming year, a decision making protocol will be developed to consider how best to balance "hard" and "soft" costs associated with implementing more innovative solutions that address aspirations with regards to environmental sustainability, but which may be more expensive to deliver than traditional solutions.

7 Equality and Diversity

Regard will be given to how best to respond to the individual needs of different customers in implementing the Environmental Sustainability Policy.

In working closely with our customers we will provide support and education to help them live in the most sustainable way. Services and operations will be flexed to produce the best outputs for customers.

Although it is not a protected characteristic as defined in the Equality Act 2010, NDH does recognise that the socio-economic situation of our customers does have a significant influence on how we deliver our services. In our approach to combating fuel poverty and maximising financial inclusion, we will promote relevant products e.g. the Energylinx fuel switching service to assist our customers. We will also adopt a flexible approach on decisions relating to things like open fires, where the use of solid fuel may be more affordable.

The Equality Impact Assessment of this Policy identifies how customers with protected characteristics are affected by its implementation.

8 Related Documents, Policies and Procedures

Environmental Management System – Environmental Service Excellence Plan

Development Strategy

Procurement Policy

Asset Management Strategy

Planned Maintenance Policy

Equality Impact Assessment form

1. Who has been consulted in developing the SPPF?

Date	Consultation methodology	Challenge/impact/result
14-02-2011	All operational Managers	
	Executive team	
	Board of management	Guidance on scope of policy
	Cross section of staff – Green team	Feedback on specific items

2. Identify potential impact on each of the diversity “groups” by considering the following issues:

Strand	No impact	Negative impact	Positive impact	Comments/evidence
Race	√			
Disability			√	Some people with disabilities require their room temperatures to higher than average. Energy efficient systems assist with financially viable heating options for these circumstances. Modern design statements take into account issues of physical disability and “homes for life” standards are adopted.
Gender	√			
Gender Reassignment	√			
Sexual orientation	√			
Religion or belief	√			
Age			√	See social inclusion below
Rural issues			√	Where possible we will install the most cost effective energy system given the resources available
Social Inclusion			√	This policy will result in a positive impact due to direct

issues				financial savings that our customers will make in fuel costs
Pregnancy and maternity	√			
Marriage and civil partnership	√			

3. Does the Policy promote equality of opportunity?

By providing and improving homes that have higher efficient in energy and water consumption ratings, we are freeing up some of the disposable income. This has an impact on low income families and older people with restricted incomes. Lower fuel costs positively impact on those in rural areas where transportation costs may be high and can provide improved access to other town based services. The policy states clearly that we will engage with our customers and stakeholders to promote and extend understanding of sustainability issues.

4. If “adverse impact” identified in table (4) above is it?

Legal (i.e not discriminatory)

What is the level of impact?

5. Is further work required?

No further work is required based on the content of the policy.

6. If actions/suggestions for improvement have been suggested, what should the positive outcome be for North Devon Homes customers and stakeholders?

The policy demonstrates our approach and principles, but the detail in the SEP will be where the positive outcomes can be measured

Review/new EIA (date or timeframe)	3 years
Name of person/s completing form	Elaine Yorke
Date assessment completed	15.02.11
Name (and signature) of manager approving	