

SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 We recognise that our activities, buildings and homes have an impact on the environment and consume energy. This impact can be detrimental, as energy is often provided from finite resources. We recognise further that sustainable development is a positive way to improve the quality of life & well-being of our service users, staff and the communities that we serve.
- 1.2 National and international policy, regulations and taxation are increasingly penalising resource consumption, pollution, inefficiency, waste and toxicity to reverse unsustainable trends. Improving the performance of the organisation and of its buildings in relation to these issues will mean that we are better placed to meet our commitments to best value, respond to current pressures and respond to changing economic and social policy. Improvements will also inspire and aid our commitment to those in need, through creation of a positive, healthy environment.
- 1.3 Within this overall context, this policy describes how we will integrate sustainability into our day-to-day activities and longer term planning, so that we may contribute to meeting the long term needs of service users and the communities within which we operate.
- 1.4 By ‘sustainability’ we mean:
“The capacity of an organisation to continue to deliver social, economic and environmental value into the long-term future.”
- 1.5 Integrating sustainability will play a major role in implementing our vision, which is:
“ARK will play a significant part in improving Scottish society and living environments. We will change lives for the better and will encourage communities to be available and welcoming to people who require support in life.”

1.6 In all our activities we will:

- adopt an approach that recognises the role of social and environmental issues in enhancing the delivery of services, seeking to develop our reputation in this area;
- improve our knowledge and understanding of sustainability issues;
- increase operational efficiency and contribute to meeting the current and future needs of service users.

1.7 This policy complies with Scottish Social Housing Charter Outcome 4, which states:

“Social landlords manage their businesses so that tenants’ homes, as a minimum, meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) by April 2015 and continue to meet it thereafter, and when they are allocated, are always clean, tidy and in a good state of repair.”

2.0 AIM & GOALS

Aim

2.1 Our overall aim with regard to sustainability is to make a positive contribution to the quality of life in the areas where we operate.

Goals

2.2 Our goals in support of our Aim are to:

- innovate continually to deliver optimum benefit to the local environment, society and economy;
- contribute to the achievement of local and national objectives with regard to sustainable development;
- change lives for the better, through innovative, high-quality working practices and encouraging communities to be available and welcoming to those who require support in life;
- contribute to the maintenance of sustainable local communities, through the care and support provided to service users and our housing management and maintenance services to all tenants;
- demonstrate leadership in sustainable development procurement related to care for those with special needs in the 21st century, thereby contributing to a culture of social responsibility and enhancing ARK’s overall reputation. A valuation of energy and environmental impacts will be included in quality scores for appropriate tender exercises for suppliers and service providers;
- seek to ‘future proof’ ARK, our service users and staff from fiscal and regulatory changes resulting from sustainable development policies;

- encourage developers and designers to adopt an approach to sustainability that is based on reliable, affordable and replicable techniques that offer social, environmental and economic advantages;
- minimise any adverse direct and indirect environmental impacts of our activities such as inefficiency, waste and pollution, to minimise the potential climate change impact as well as future liabilities;
- deliver sustainable buildings that will enhance the quality of life for service users and tenants through improvements to the quality of our buildings and land in relation to affordability, resource consumption, health and well-being;
- significantly reduce, if not eliminate, fuel poverty amongst our tenants through appropriate refurbishment and attention to operational aspects.

3.0 DEVELOPING & INTEGRATING SUSTAINABILITY

General

- 3.1 In developing and reviewing our policies and procedures we will seek to promote sustainability across all our activities, while ensuring that any sustainability objectives are linked to and are compatible with our overall business plan and strategic objectives.
- 3.2 To support this policy we will establish a framework of clear priorities and an Action Plan (specific actions designed to achieve current priorities).
- 3.3 The priorities and Action Plan will cover a period of 3 – 5 years but will be reviewed and ‘rolled forward’ annually, normally as part of the annual Business Plan exercise.
- 3.4 Wherever possible the targets in the Action Plan will be measurable so that we are able to review and clearly measure our performance and progress towards achieving our priorities.

Care and Support

- 3.5 The services we provide through Care and Support staff are at the very heart of why ARK exists. Our mission is to:

“provide the best regarded care, housing and support services in Scotland for families, children and adults of all ages who require support to have a good life. We will build life-long and life-enhancing relationships and promote the right of people to have a life free from poverty and discrimination.”

- 3.6 We will seek to deliver sustainability in this core area of our activities through:
 - providing high quality, specialised support to our service users;
 - enabling them to maximise their choices in the lives they wish to lead, in accordance with the ARK Service User Charter;
 - promoting a culture amongst all staff of continuous learning and development, always seeking to be at the forefront of good practice;
 - valuing innovation in the development of effective new ways of delivering key services;
 - actively working with service users to reduce energy costs and energy consumption through education and advice.

Property development

3.7 Both in new-build and refurbishment/reconfiguration developments we will seek to integrate sustainability measures at all stages of the process, including decisions on:

- the location, mix and function of the project;
- the layout, design and specification;
- the integration of external space;
- the most effective form of procurement;
- construction methods;
- material specification;
- energy sources and energy efficiency;
- the future use and maintenance of the buildings;
- waste management and site management.

3.8 In the wider sense, we will seek to contribute to sustainable developments and sustainable communities by:

- providing homes that people want to live in, both now and in the future;
- providing an appropriate environment both for service users to live in and carers to work in;
- creating living environments which are healthy, safe and secure;
- encouraging biodiversity by planting species that encourage biodiversity and minimise the use of pesticides and herbicides, where feasible;
- supporting tenants and service users to engage with their local community and environment;
- creating social cohesion – recognising the needs of everyone;
- providing opportunities for economic activity and employment.

Property maintenance and modernisation

3.9 In delivering our planned, cyclical and reactive maintenance services we will seek to:

- maximise the life cycle of components through a high quality specification at initial installation;
- maximise the life of components through repair rather than replacement, where this is feasible and compatible with tenants' expectations and other requirements, e.g. the requirement to achieve and maintain the Scottish Housing Quality Standard by 2015, and thereafter;
- regularly review standard specifications having regard to the environmental impact of individual products and materials, such as heating systems, heating boilers, paint, timber etc.;
- review procurement practices to maximise local sourcing of materials and the reduction of transport (energy) costs, where this is compatible with other objectives;
- implement energy efficiency measures which meet or exceed the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH), such as:

- (e.g. loft insulation to floors, walls and roof spaces, improved efficiency lighting;
 - installing 'B' rated windows as measured by the British Fenestration Rating Council;
 - reducing mains water consumption in our homes through installation of water efficient sanitary ware and devices;
 - the installation of cost effective energy generation that contributes both to a sustainable environment and the reduction in individual tenant's heating costs;
- maximise the positive impact of our environment on the health of tenants, service users and staff, through e.g. increasing the provision of secure cycle storage, where viable;
 - seek to influence the sustainability practices of the contractors we use, where appropriate including sustainability targets in contract conditions.

Housing Management Services

3.10 Our approach to sustainability includes seeking to support tenants in maintaining their tenancies, and addressing social and economic issues that impact on our tenants.

3.11 In addition to the action we will take under the development and maintenance headings above, we will:

- work in conjunction with local partners, funding agencies and other relevant organisations to improve the social and economic well-being of those we house;
- seek to develop tenant involvement through our tenant participation strategy;
- provide Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) to all prospective tenants at the point a property is marketed;
- through tenant newsletters and our website:
 - provide tenants with appropriate energy efficiency advice, or direct them to sources of suitable advice, enabling them to reduce their energy costs and create healthy internal environments;
 - provide tenants with information about how they can play their part in addressing environmental issues;
 - encourage tenants to maximise their use of local recycling facilities.

3.12 Through our housing services policies and procedures, in particular when dealing with the issues arising from rent arrears and anti-social behaviour, we will seek to assist tenants to sustain their tenancies.

Workplace facilities

3.13 We will seek to maximise sustainability measures in all our offices and other workplaces through:

- reducing waste
- reducing energy consumption
- maximising recycling opportunities.

Awareness & involvement

- 3.14 We will be proactive in raising awareness amongst our staff and service users about sustainability and environmental issues, the impact of human behaviour on climate change, and the practical contribution they can make to sustainable development. We will encourage staff to share knowledge of best practice with service users and other relevant stakeholders.
- 3.15 We will encourage staff to be involved in developing corporate social responsibility across the organisation, with a commitment by senior management to 'lead by example' both in their own practices and in developing a long term environmental strategy.
- 3.16 We will ensure our employees, suppliers and service providers are aware of sustainability issues affecting their role, their colleagues, our service users, tenants and stakeholders, through appropriate learning, development and communications.
- 3.17 We will comply with all legislative requirements relating to the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) and work with suppliers and service providers to produce and maintain a sustainable performance specification for selected core products and services. We will set environmental sustainability targets for service providers

Procurement

- 3.18 Where appropriate, we will place a high priority on the environmental policies of our suppliers and will seek to work with key suppliers to improve their overall environmental performance, encouraging them to reduce the adverse environmental impact of their products and processes.
- 3.19 When making purchasing decisions we will consider environmentally friendly choices, i.e. those products with a low adverse environmental impact.

4.0 IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

- 4.1 The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented throughout the organisation.
- 4.2 The Chief Executive is responsible for establishing priorities and an Action Plan to implement the principles outlined in this policy, and for ensuring that that the priorities and Action Plan are reviewed and updated annually, normally as part of drafting the annual Business Plan.
- 4.3 The Chief Executive will ensure that this policy is reviewed by the Board at least every three years.

Approved by the Senior Leadership Team in:	September 2016
Approved by the Board of Management in:	March 2016
Next review of policy due by:	September 2019
Complies with:	SSHC Outcome 4