



Rural Stirling

Housing Association



Quality property
management services

GROUP SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

Rural Stirling Housing Association, Registered as a Scottish Charity No. SC037849 Venachar Limited, Incorporated under the Companies Act (Company Number SC447415)Registered Office: Stirling Road, Doune, FK16 6AA	
Policy Name	Group Sustainability Policy
Policy Category	Corporate
Date Policy First Approved	November 2019
Date Policy Reviewed	24 November 2022
Review Period	3 years
Next Review Due	November 2025
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes

1. Purpose

- 1.1 We aim to provide, maintain and manage good quality affordable housing to sustain our rural communities. We wish to promote a culture that focuses on the economic, social and environmental improvement of our homes in order to sustain the communities of today and tomorrow.
- 1.2 We also recognise that our environment is fragile and we need to conserve resources to protect our future. As both a consumer of services and provider of homes, there is a great deal we can do to reduce the impact of our activities on the environment.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy sets out the key principles of our approach to:

- Sustainability of building and the environment
- Sustainable communities
- Sustainable organisation

3. Equality & Diversity Statement (Group Statement)

3.1 We will ensure that this policy is applied fairly and consistently. In implementing this policy, we will not directly or indirectly discriminate against any person or group of people because of their race, religion or belief, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, or any other grounds. Our commitment to equality and fairness will apply irrespective of factors such as age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, or other personal attributes.

This policy and any other Rural Stirling Group (RSG) publication is available in other formats e.g., other languages, Braille, large print, audio.

4. SHR Regulatory Standards

4.1 The SHR's regulatory framework sets out Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management to be achieved by all Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). The Board accepts that it is responsible for ensuring that the Association complies with these standards. The standards of direct relevance to this policy are noted below:

- **Standard 2:** The RSL is open about and accountable for what it does. It understands and takes account of the needs and priorities of its tenants, service users and stakeholders. And its primary focus is the sustainable achievement of these priorities.

5. Relevant Legislation

There is no specific legislation however there is Scottish Government and SHR Regulatory Guidance that place obligations on the organisation to produce a policy statement on sustainability and it is also good practice.

6. Sustainability of Building and the Environment

6.1 The sustainability focus of our development and maintenance activities will be on the following areas:

- **Reduction of the carbon footprint of our operations:** we will ensure that our activities reduce waste, reduce energy consumption and minimise CO2 emissions.

We will seek to integrate sustainability measures at all stages of the process including decisions on location, mix and function of projects; layout, design and specification; the most effective forms of procurement; construction methods; material specification; energy sources and energy efficiency; the future use and maintenance of the buildings; waste management and site management.

We will seek to influence the sustainability practices of our contractors and where appropriate include sustainability targets within contract conditions.

- **Reduce Residents' Energy Consumption:** we will support residents to reduce consumption of fuel whilst enabling them to remain safe and warm. This will inform improvement works and providing various forms of learning and information.
- **Reduce low life cycle products where possible:** we will seek to use components in our new build developments, and in our planned replacement programme, that have long life-spans and deliver energy efficient solutions during their lifetime.
- **Reduce waste:** we will encourage and participate in recycling activities for both our residents and ourselves in order to recycle as much as possible. We will also ensure that good are re-used as far as possible by supporting and participating in schemes that promote this.
- **Make the best use of green space:** We will encourage a range of planting and growing to increase biodiversity across our area of operation. We will engage with residents in the use of their open spaces and where quality of open spaces is poor we will work with residents to undertake improvements.

- **Manage water efficiently:** we will work to reduce water consumption and encourage residents to do the same. We will seek to use components in our new build developments, and in our planned replacement programme, that limit water usage- such as low/dual flush WCs, aerating taps and flow-restricted showers.
- **Minimising pollution** by creating minimum dependence on polluting materials, management practices, energy and transport. We will try to minimise the impact of traffic on the local environment in all of our developments. Where practical, we will also promote the use of clean transport, public transport and environmentally responsible operation of vehicles.
- **Enhancing biodiversity** and not using materials that threaten species or habitats and improving natural habitats through appropriate planting and water use
- **Creating healthy environments** enhancing living, leisure and work environments; not endangering the health of the staff, residents, contractors and the wider community through exposure to pollutants or toxic materials or harmful organisms.

7. Sustainable Communities

7.1 The Association will contribute to the establishment and enhancement of sustainable communities through the following:

- **Provide homes that people want to live in,** both now and in the future
- **Promote social inclusion** within balanced and socially diverse communities
- **Reduce Fuel Poverty:** We will provide energy efficient housing to reduce tenants' energy costs and endeavour to ensure that all our homes meet the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing.
- **Supporting communities** by identifying and meeting the real needs, requirements and aspirations of communities and stakeholders and involving them in key decisions
- **Promote and participate in the development of community facilities** and fostering a sense of 'place' and focus within neighbourhoods
- **Work with stakeholders and other partner agencies** to engender a sense of ownership and responsibility to promote safer and healthier communities.
- **Promote and create opportunities for the development of skills** and enhancement of knowledge within communities and promote local employment initiatives

- **Promote and participating in partnership working** with other organisations and agencies to ensure effective delivery of services to local people

8 Sustainable Organisation

8.1 The sustainability focus of our organisation and our operational activities will be in the following areas:

- **Reduce the carbon footprint of our operations:** we will ensure that our activities reduce waste, reduce energy consumption and minimise CO2 emissions.
- **Achieve best value for money** through consideration of quality and whole life costs of goods and services purchased.
- **Reduce waste:** we will encourage and participate in recycling activities for both our residents and ourselves in order to recycle as much as possible. We will also ensure that goods are re-used as far as possible by supporting and participating in schemes that promote this.
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9. Related Documents.

9.1 This policy relates to the following documents:

- RSG Strategic Plan
- Annual Business Plan 2019/20
- Strathfor Housing Alliance Design Guide for New Build Projects
- Sustainable Procurement Policy
- Asset Management Strategy

10. Review

10.1 We will review and update this policy every 3 years. More regular reviews will be considered where, for example, there is a need to respond to new legislation/policy or regulatory guidance.