



Sustainability Strategy

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Introduction

EPIC is focused on providing energy-efficient homes that are suitable for modern living and affordable. Our approach to sustainability is embedded in our Corporate Plan to help us deliver our commitment to our tenants and wider communities.

We understand the important part we play in the global response to climate change and aim to deliver long-lasting positive change. This strategy brings together the environmental, social and governance areas in which we operate in a cohesive way, which embeds sustainability across everything we do.

Strategic Context

Legislation continues to evolve, and the political and global landscape continues to shift with far-reaching implications. What remains consistent is the heightened focus on the quality of homes in the sector, and the challenges that face the environment. This strategy responds to the increasing number of external drivers, as well as the social and ethical challenges that coincide.

Pathway to Net Zero

The UK government has set a legally binding target of reaching net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. From homes to offices, the UK's built environment is responsible for around 30% of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions.

EPC C

Through the Clean Growth Strategy, the UK government has set a target for social housing providers to attain EPC band C for fuel-poor homes by 2030 where practical.

Greenhouse Gas Protocol

The Greenhouse Gas Protocol (GHC) establishes a comprehensive global standardised framework to measure emissions from operational actions.

- Scope 1 covers emissions from sources that an organisation owns or controls directly.
- Scope 2 are emissions that a company causes indirectly and come from where the energy it purchases and uses is produced.
- Scope 3 encompasses emissions that are not produced by a company itself and are not the result of activities from assets owned or controlled by them, but by those that it's indirectly responsible for up and down its value chain.

The Future Homes Standard

Currently in consultation, the Future Homes Standard makes provision for fuel and power in buildings by limiting heat gains and losses and providing fixed building services which are energy efficient and have effective controls when carrying out retrofit work.

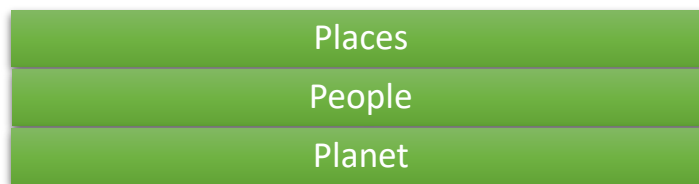
Internal Context

This strategy is underpinned by relevant supporting policies and procedures with sustainability embedded into our holistic approach.

Our funding and financial controls support our approach to sustainability, included in our Long-Term Financial Plan, approach to asset appraisal and improvement, and resourcing requirements.

Purpose of the Strategy

This strategy has been developed to ensure that we maximise our positive social and environmental impact, outlined by three themes that embed sustainability across everything we do. This will present measurable performance-based targets, and a clear roadmap of how we will achieve these.



It allows us to deliver a sustainable business fit for today and prepared for tomorrow, enabling us to create sustainable communities that support tenants in their homes, now and into the future. EPIC is in a unique position as a strong community-focused organisation. The density and focus on the central areas allow potential for a more efficient and sustainable service to be provided, developing stronger partnerships and communities in the area. This will support and sustain communities with high-impact targeted improvements. In delivering this strategy, we will hope to ease the cost-of-living pressures and reduce fuel poverty by improving the efficiency of our tenants' home.

Places

Target – 100% of our homes will be EPC band C or higher by 2030.

Data

EPCs are a useful tool for understanding the performance of the building stock, and the degree of accuracy and consistency of these assessments has continued to improve over time. We will continue to improve our data quality to inform this strategy further. Establishing the baseline position with confidence is essential to devising and quantifying a robust investment plan.

We will invest into an energy assessment system to allow us to fully understand our current and future energy performance position in a dynamic way.

Investment

We will continue to invest in the energy efficiency of our homes; we are on the way to achieving our commitment to this with 49% of our homes already at this level.

Using the data available to inform asset investment, we will integrate sustainability into our day-to-day operations, to maximise opportunities to improve our homes' energy performance. This also supports the wider objective of EPC C, with care taken to specify works and components that deliver the required performance improvement.

As part of our investment programmes and damp and mould preventative works, we will install adequate ventilation to support moisture control in our homes.

When our homes become empty, we will review the energy efficiency and, if viable, carry out retrofit work between tenancies to improve the comfort of these homes.

With this approach we will avoid premature component renewal, whereby EPCs may recommend upgrading otherwise satisfactory components, with a substantial remaining serviceable life, to improve energy efficiency.

Starting with the basics we will take a 'fabric first' approach to optimise the thermal efficiency of the fabric of the building reducing the demand for heat, improving thermal comfort and lowering CO2 emissions. Measures include roof, wall and floor insulation and draught sealing and window and door replacements; we will utilise funding opportunities available.

Consideration will be given to capital cost plus ongoing maintenance and lifecycle liabilities associated with solar, heat pump and mechanical ventilation systems.

With 30% of our homes currently with an EPC D rating, we are aware that improving a dwelling from EPC D to EPC C can be challenging. This will be a focus area for EPIC to ensure ethical considerations are made when improving these properties.

Rationalisation

As part of our approach to stock rationalisation, we will continue to consolidate our homes into our core communities (Bentilee, Hanley, Meir and surrounding environs). This densification allows us to provide more efficient and sustainable services, further developing and leveraging local connections in the community.

People

Target – To improve tenants’ well-being by reducing concerns of energy bill costs and their homes’ thermal comfort.

As a community-focused landlord, we continue to engage with our tenants, proactively supporting those at risk of, or experiencing, fuel poverty. The benefits of lowering energy bills and improving our homes’ thermal efficiency is far reaching. Our ‘fabric first’ approach is essential because it reduces demand for space heating in the home.

We realise, however, that our sustainable investment goals will not be either instantaneous or a catch-all to fully support those experiencing fuel poverty. Therefore, we will provide support to our tenants and communities with advice on sustainability, financial resilience and mental health support either directly or via a partnering agency.

Investing in our local communities, we will facilitate access to education around sustainability, strengthening skills and increasing employability. We will promote the social mobility of the local area by including social value commitments of local apprenticeships in retrofit as part of future retrofit contract requirements.

To support this, we commit to ensure everyone at EPIC knows how to play their part in the path to net zero by becoming a carbon-literate organisation by 2026.

Engaging with our staff, we will explore options to increase recycling in our offices, reduce water usage and encouraging a reduction on transport reliance as part of agile working.

To improve biodiversity and promote environmental awareness, we will look to explore the enhancement of our outdoor green spaces, which will also support tenant well-being, and community ‘kerb appeal’. We will work with our tenants to establish a pilot project and establish its performance and practical delivery with continued tenant involvement.

Planet

Target – To become Net Zero Carbon in our own operations (Scope 1 and 2) by 2035 and in our housing and supply chain (Scope 3) before 2050.

The road map to achieving net zero covers three key scopes; these will be tackled and prioritised as the journey progresses.

We will develop a way of measuring and reporting on all direct carbon emissions (Scope 1) and indirect emissions (Scope 2) by 2025, adopting the Sustainability Reporting Standard for social housing (SRS). We will aim to become Net Zero Carbon in our own operations by 2035.

We will review our use of office space if our offices are still required. As part of this we will look to upgrade lighting in our offices with LED lighting by 2030; upon component renewal in our offices, we will explore low-carbon heat-pump options and increase our PV usage.

We will also explore procurement of a renewable electricity supplier to both our blocks and our office spaces, allowing us to understand and manage our energy consumption better.

Scope 3 (all other indirect emissions) is extremely broad, covering emissions across EPIC's entire value chain, covering everything from acquiring goods to the energy used by tenants to heat their homes to employee commuting. We will develop a method of reporting on these by 2035, influencing our future policies regarding procurement, monitoring technology, informing our supply chains and use of office spaces to achieve Net Zero by 2050.

Action Plan

Strategic Theme	Target	How we will get there
Places	100% of our homes will be EPC band C or higher by 2030.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in and use an energy assessment system to improve data quality. • Integrate sustainability into day-to-day operations to maximise opportunities to improve our homes. • Take a 'fabric first' approach to targeted sustainability investment to reduce heating requirements and reduce fuel poverty. • Rationalise stock into core communities to continue to target investment.
People	Improve tenants' well-being by reducing concerns of energy bill costs and their homes' thermal comfort.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support to tackle fuel poverty. • Promote social mobility and improve understanding of sustainability. • Invest in staff and improve carbon literacy. • Explore options to increase recycling in our offices, reduce water usage and encouraging a reduction on transport reliance as part of agile working. • Improve biodiversity; we will look to explore the enhancement of our outdoor green spaces.
Planet	Become Net Zero Carbon in our own operations (Scope 1 and 2) by 2035 and in our housing and supply chain (Scope 3) before 2050.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand and manage our energy consumption by adopting the Sustainability Reporting Standard (SRS). • Upgrade our office lighting to LED. • Upon planned renewal of office heating, explore low-carbon heat-pump options and expand our PV systems. • Measure and initiate further mitigation into our housing and supply chain through updated sustainable procurement.