



Scottish Housing
Regulator

Environmental Strategy **2015 – 2018**

December 2015

About us

We are the independent Regulator of just under 200 social landlords – around 160 Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and 32 local authorities. We are led by a Board of non-executive members and directly accountable to the Scottish Parliament.

Our one objective is **to safeguard and promote the interests of**

- nearly 600,000 **tenants** who live in homes provided by social landlords;
- around 90,000 **owners** who receive services from social landlords;
- around 40,000 **people and their families** who may be homeless and seek help from local authorities; and
- over 2,000 **Gypsy/Traveller families** who use official sites provided by social landlords.

Our role is to gather, monitor, assess and report on social landlords' performance of housing activities and RSLs' financial well-being and standards of governance, and to intervene where appropriate to achieve our objective. We also keep a public register of social landlords.

You can see more on how we regulate social landlords in our published [Regulatory Framework](#) available on our [website](#).



1 Introduction

This is our updated environmental strategy for 2015-18. Here we restate our aim to reduce our impact on the environment and minimise our carbon emissions. The strategy highlights progress to date against our environmental objectives and sets out our planned action for the three years ahead. We also outline how we will comply with the public sector duties placed on us by current legislation, including the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 and the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011.

2 Our organisation

We are a relatively small organisation, employing around 50 staff and operating from one office in central Glasgow. We are currently minor occupiers of two floors of a privately-owned eight storey office block leased to the Scottish Government. Our heating, lighting and water have, to date been provided on a building-wide basis. We have therefore had limited opportunity to monitor or alter aspects of our physical surroundings which contribute to carbon emissions and climate change.

We are due to move to new premises in January 2016. It is likely that we will continue to share occupancy of another Scottish Government managed building (Europa Building), with utilities provided on a similar basis to our current arrangements. As such, we will continue to have limited control over the monitoring and reporting of our use of energy and other utilities. In the longer-term we may move outwith the Scottish Government estate, at which time we will reconsider how we capture, monitor and report our energy use. The office move may provide opportunities to improve our sustainability and we will seek to identify and act on these wherever possible. We remain committed to working in a way which lessens our environmental impact and lowers our carbon emissions.

3 Our Environmental Objectives

Our last Strategy set out three basic objectives, along with our commitment to develop these throughout the reporting period. We have reviewed these objectives and conclude that they remain relevant to our circumstances. They also reflect our limited control over our physical environment and focus on where we can affect positive behaviour change amongst staff. Our objectives are to:

1. minimise the energy we use and the waste we produce;
2. manage our business travel in a way that minimises its environmental impact, and
3. reduce our use of paper and communicate electronically wherever possible.

Since launching the Strategy in 2012 we have delivered activities and embedded practices designed to reduce our environmental impact and raise awareness of sustainability amongst our staff. We also developed new initiatives to help us achieve our objectives.

We have progressed most against Objective 2, by producing Travel Guidance to help staff make more sustainable business travel choices. We have also introduced a monitoring system, through this we are able to track changes in our travel behaviours over time. Our aim is to reduce our car use, increase our use of public transport and make fewer journeys where possible, using our conference call facilities as an alternative. Our achievements, continued good practice and success measures are outlined in more detail in the Appendix.

4 Our Regulatory Role

The Scottish Parliament approved the first Scottish Social Housing Charter in 2012. Through the Charter, Scottish Ministers set standards and outcomes that social landlords should aim to achieve. The Charter includes an expectation that landlords should meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) by 2015. The SHQS places energy efficiency requirements on social landlords' houses. One aspect of our regulatory role is to monitor, assess and report on social landlords' achievement of the Charter. We report annually on SHQS compliance as part of our National Report on the Charter¹. This gives us an influence over social landlords' contribution to meeting climate change targets.

The Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) was launched by the Scottish Government in March 2014. The EESH will contribute towards the carbon emissions reduction targets set by the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) will monitor and report on social landlords' compliance with the EESH. From 2015/16, all social landlords will submit data to us on their compliance with the EESH on an annual basis.

5 Our Public Sector Reporting Requirements

In addition to complying with the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, we are now subject to further public sector reporting duties.

Firstly, under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004, all public bodies in Scotland are required to further the conservation of biodiversity when carrying out their responsibilities. The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 further requires public bodies in Scotland to provide a publicly available report, every three years, on the actions which they have taken to meet this biodiversity duty.

Here, we state our commitment to meeting the requirements of this legislation. As a small office-based organisation, we are limited in our ability to contribute practically to biodiversity conservation. We will therefore focus on providing information, encouragement and opportunities for staff to find out more and get involved conserving Scotland's biodiversity. We will develop and implement an action plan over the next three years. This is likely to include using our intranet to signpost and share relevant information and exploring opportunities for corporate volunteering on conservation projects.

The second legislative requirement stems from recent amendments to the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. Following consultation, the Scottish Government has placed a statutory requirement on all listed public sector bodies to report on progress against climate change targets (specifically carbon emissions). The reporting requirement comes into place in October 2016. We are listed as a 'major player' in Schedule 1 of the original legislation due to our influencing regulatory role and are therefore required to comply.

As previously stated, our energy use and carbon emissions are currently included within Scottish Government environmental reporting. The proposed approach and reporting template includes metrics that we currently can't capture at an organisational level. We are committed to the principles of the new order and acknowledge that our current circumstances afford us little capacity to report in detail on our energy use.

¹ Charter reports are published on our website at: <https://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/>

6 How we will know if we have been successful

Over the three year period of this strategy we will know we have been successful if we have:

- shifted the balance further from paper to electronic communications and information collection;
- maximised our use of telephone and video conferencing;
- monitored travel patterns and taken action to reduce the environmental impact of our business travel;
- examined the feasibility of further energy-saving measures and introduced these where practical;
- met our public sector reporting duties on energy use and biodiversity conservation; and
- continued to use and refine existing initiatives.

We will report publicly on our performance in achieving our objectives in our annual report

Appendix 1: Objectives, achievements and future success measures

Objectives	Achievements and ongoing best practice	Success Measures for 2015-18
1. Minimising the energy we use and the waste we produce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead officer in place for environmental management, with a focus on promoting and monitoring the effectiveness of our existing initiatives and bringing forward new schemes. • Staff Messages – information, advice and awareness raising of key issues • Ongoing collaboration with the building manager and Scottish Government to investigate the scope for introducing additional energy-saving measures and measuring our energy use (at an organisation level.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We identified and monitored the environmental impact of our office move(s). Where possible, we sought to minimise negative impacts and develop more sustainable behaviours. • Through our internal communications work, our staff are aware of our environmental policies, know how to minimise our energy use and act to support our approach. • We have made the best use of information and techniques available to capture our energy use and set proportionate and achievable targets for reduction.
Objectives	Achievements and ongoing best practice	Success Measures for 2015-18
2. Managing our business travel to minimise its environmental impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have developed staff Travel Guidance which provides information advice and guidance for staff on sustainable business travel. • We have developed Business travel indicators to monitor performance. We are using this information to tailor our policies and staff messages. • In the last 3 years we have reduced our overall business travel. Within this, we have reduced the journeys made by private and hire car and increased the number of journeys we make by public transport. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are aware and make use of our Travel Guidance to make sustainable business travel choices. • We monitor and report on our business travel annually. We use this evidence to develop staff guidance which encourages and facilitates more sustainable staff travel behaviours. • We continue to encourage and facilitate a reduction in our business travel and to make our travel more sustainable.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a secure storage facility for bikes and showering facilities for staff; these facilities help staff to commute sustainably. • We participate in the Scottish Government's 'Cycle2Work' scheme which encourages more sustainable forms of travel. 	
Objectives	Achievement and ongoing best practice	Success Measures for 2015-18
3. Reducing our use of paper and communicating electronically wherever possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We prioritise face to face and electronic internal communication, and we established a staff intranet in early 2012. • Most of our publications are electronic-only, and we encourage our stakeholders to access our publications online. • We hold only small stocks of publications in hard copy and these are printed on paper from sustainable sources. • We have developed and are implementing our Records Management Strategy, including retention policy and disposal of historic paper files. Our current policy is to retain electronic records only, with exceptions on hard copies kept for legal reasons. • Our new Business Intelligence system allows for electronic case notes and records management. • We are reviewing our Communications and Involvement Strategy – to be completed early in 2016. This covers how we engage with stakeholders to meet their needs and fulfil our environmental commitments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will investigate how best to monitor our paper use and seek to set proportionate and achievable targets for reduction. • We will implement our Records Management Strategy effectively, creating and retaining predominantly electronic files (with exceptions for legal reasons). • We will work with our stakeholders to develop communications strategies which meet their needs as well as our environmental commitments.

Objectives	Achievement and ongoing best practice	Success Measures for 2015-18
<p>4. Meet our public sector reporting requirements around climate change and biodiversity conservation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We state our commitment to comply with legislation on Biodiversity Conservation. We are developing proposals to be implemented throughout coming 3 years. • We state our commitment to the principles of public sector reporting on energy use (as covered by the Climate Change Act public sector reporting duty). We recognise our limited capacity to capture carbon emissions at present and will work with others to progress this. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have developed and implemented an Action Plan to raise staff awareness of and encourage action around conserving biodiversity. • We have acknowledged our limitations and set proportionate and achievable goals for action. • We will explore opportunities to improve capture of carbon emissions and energy use. • We report within the timescales set by Scottish Government.

