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This strategy sets out the steps BHT Sussex is taking to:

- Assess its environmental impact.
- Work towards reducing its environmental impact over the next 50 years.

## Context

The initial 2021 – 2023 strategy allowed BHT Sussex to scope its capacity for action to reduce environmental impact, and to identify sources of funding available.

BHT Sussex acknowledges that the climate crisis is the biggest threat to humanity in the coming years and that it needs to play its part by reducing its impact. Local and national government, and the National Housing Federation (NHF) all also acknowledge this need. At the time of drafting this strategy:

- The UK Government has committed to reducing UK carbon emissions by 78% from 1990 levels by 2035 and net zero by 2050.
- Brighton and Hove City Council and Hastings Borough Council have declared a climate emergency, pledging to become carbon neutral by 2030. East Sussex County Council and West Sussex County Council have also declared a climate emergency.
- The NHF are working on a road map for net zero carbon<sup>1</sup> for housing by 2050.

BHT Sussex acknowledges the urgency of the climate crisis and is working to embed sustainability across its operations, and towards reducing its carbon emissions to net zero carbon as swiftly as practical considerations and financing will allow.

This is the second stage of the journey towards an environmental strategy which covers BHT Sussex operations over the next 50 years.

It builds on its initial two-year strategy, during the course of which BHT Sussex took its first steps towards eliminating its carbon emissions.

BHT Sussex will:

- Produce a carbon reduction plan by 2024.

1 - **What does net zero carbon mean?** Net-zero refers to balancing the amount of emitted greenhouse gases with the equivalent emissions that are either offset or sequestered. This should primarily be achieved through a rapid reduction in carbon emissions, but where zero carbon cannot be achieved, offsetting through carbon credits or sequestration through rewilding or carbon capture and storage needs to be utilised. (Edie.net)

- Improve the data it holds about its properties and operations to enable it to identify where the most significant organisational environmental impacts are, so that it can plan to address them.
- Seek to reduce costs to the organisation and reduce the utility bills of our clients and tenants through greater energy efficiency.
- Identify areas where we can act to reduce our impact now.

BHT Sussex has three key areas of focus within this strategy:

1. Clients and tenants
2. Properties
3. Organisation

For each area we have identified objectives we want to achieve over the next five years.

## **1. Clients and Tenants**

To reduce utility costs among clients and tenants and reduce their carbon footprint by introducing a number of measures.

We will:

- Continue to work in partnership with local energy saving services and engage clients and tenants in energy saving.
- Continue to promote low-cost measures that improve energy efficiency and thermal comfort (for example, draught excluders and radiator foil).
- Provide regular energy saving advice to clients and tenants in our communications.
- Seek to install smart meters on landlord supplies so that we can monitor energy use and reduce estimated bills.
- Move communal utilities to renewable energy providers where the cost is similar to non-renewable.
- Continue to promote measures that improve water efficiency and prevent the wastage of water.
- Seek to install water meters on landlord supplies so that we can monitor water use and reduce estimated bills.
- Reduce the environmental impact of meals provided in our services.
- Encourage use of sustainable transport and active transport where possible.

## 2. Properties

BHT Sussex recognises the need to improve the energy efficiency and quality of its properties. More specifically, the need to ensure that all properties, as far as is reasonably possible, have a minimum EPC rating of C by 2030 as is set out in the Fuel Poverty Strategy for England 2015.

It will:

- Establish the current EPC and SAP rating of all BHT Sussex properties.
- Design any new builds or developments to have zero emissions.
- Design any new builds or developments to have efficient use of water and sustainable drainage.
- Develop a plan to improve the energy performance of our properties.
- Seek grant funding where possible to help deliver our plan.
- Improve the biodiversity of our estates, gardens and green spaces through maintenance and client and tenant involvement.
- Improve the biodiversity of our estates, gardens, and green spaces where they are to be redesigned or replanted.

## 3. Organisation

BHT Sussex will work to ensure the organisation is an environmentally conscious workplace and will meet the Government target of net zero carbon by 2050 at the latest.

We will:

- Complete a carbon assessment to establish the carbon footprint of our offices.
- Review procurement procedures to work towards embedding sustainability in our supply chains and reducing waste.
- Develop a carbon reduction plan in line with Government procurement requirements.
- Forecast costs for work towards carbon reduction in line with available information.
- Develop a plan to reduce waste and improve recycling rates.
- Encourage an environmentally sustainable culture by establishing environmental champions, including environmental stewardship in learning and development and regular employee communication.
- Encourage use of sustainable transport and active transport where possible.
- Continue the use of online and teleconferencing as an alternative to travelling for meetings, where possible.
- Seek to benchmark ourselves against other similar sized organisations.

- Investigate the possibility of achieving SHIFT accreditation, Certified Sustainable Housing, or similar accreditation status.

## **Timeline**

An action plan accompanies this strategy, setting out timelines for working towards objectives set.

For substantive long-term changes, such as retrofitting properties for energy saving, external drivers will determine timelines. These include Government policy, for example, any future legislative requirement for minimum performance standards for energy efficiency. The availability of suitable funding to support works towards decarbonisation will also influence progress.

While BHT Sussex monitors Government policy drivers and available funding sources, there are many tasks it can progress to reduce its environmental impact, including:

- benchmarking its current resource use and waste arisings.
- promoting energy and water saving measures which should save costs.
- enhancing greenspace for biodiversity.
- embedding awareness of environmental impacts across the organisation.

A communications plan will underpin this work and will set out the plan for internal and external communications to encourage behaviour change.

Both the action plan and communications plan are live documents, periodically reviewed to adapt to external opportunities and drivers as they arise.