



Sustainability Policy

Approval date:
Review date:

This policy applies to

- Link Group Link Housing Link Living Link Property
 Horizon Larkfield West Highland Lintel Trust

Policy Summary

This policy consolidates Link's existing practices and set out the principles and process of planning for future inclusion of sustainability throughout the group.

Equalities

The operation of this policy will always be in accordance with Link Group's Policy on Equality & Diversity

Privacy

This policy fully complies with Link's Data Protection Policy.

Policy Owner

Director of Development and Asset Management

Approved by

Link Group Board

1. INTRODUCTION

Link is a group of award-winning social enterprise companies, committed to undertake its business activities in a sustainable manner. As the vision and supporting aims of our business are to improve the lives of people and the communities in which we work, we need to ensure that our activities will not compromise but support the needs and aspirations of future generations.

This policy consolidates Link's existing practices and sets out the principles and process of planning for future inclusion of sustainability features throughout the group.

This policy covers all Link group's business areas and activities and their respective places of operation. As such, this policy applies to all staff and volunteers including the Boards and Senior Management Group.

2. PRINCIPLES

This Policy takes reference from the Scottish Government's vision as set out in the Route Map to an Energy Efficient Scotland and Scotland's Climate Change Plan, including the forthcoming legislation set out in:

- Energy Efficient Scotland
- The Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing post-2020 (EESH2)

The following principles govern the operation of this policy:

2.1 Social Sustainability

Deliver high quality homes and the appropriate support services to enhance the lives and wellbeing of our residents and the communities in which we work.

2.2 Environmental Sustainability

To minimise the harmful effects of our activities on the environment by reducing waste, utilising sustainably sourced materials, using renewable technologies and reducing our energy consumption.

2.3 Economic Sustainability

Consider sustainability initiatives and options that improve the cost-effectiveness of our business.

2.4 Integration of Sustainability Throughout our Business

To be mindful of our business activities and the impact that these may have on the wider environment.

3. OBJECTIVES

Link is mindful of its business activities and the impact that may have on the wider environment. Link's vision is to be a provider of choice and excellence in the delivery of a wide range of socially inclusive regeneration, housing and support services. Our objective is to manage all our activities efficiently while minimizing the impact on the existing environment.

As one of the largest RSL groups in Scotland, we have the potential to influence a significant number of people; our customers, staff, contractors and suppliers as well as other stakeholders. Therefore, it is appropriate that Link strives to be a market leader and promotor in the field of sustainability.

4. APPROACH AND METHOD

The Link Group Board in its formal approval of the policy acknowledges that it accepts full responsibility for its implementation. Day-to-day responsibility for the operation and monitoring of this policy lies with the appropriate directors and managers of the Link group of companies. All relevant employees have a responsibility to ensure that this policy is applied as instructed.

The policy will be implemented using the following approaches:

- Devising procedures for compliance with the policy
- Initiating staff training sessions to ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities and obligations
- Monitoring adherence to policy requirements

5. POLICY

This policy promotes sustainability under the following headings within in our various business activities:

5.1 Environmental Sustainability

- In recognition of the need to conserve energy and natural resources, as well as the benefits that could be accrued in terms of health, comfort and costs for customers and Link, we will strive to incorporate effective features in our Design Guide and Technical Brief used for building new homes. Also when undertaking repairs and refurbishment to tackle climate change, moving towards zero-waste and a reduction in carbon emissions to achieve the targets set out in Energy Efficient Scotland.
- In recognition of the adverse effect of developing new homes and the related refurbishment activities during their lifetime, we will ensure developments are sustainable. We will base the feasibility of a development on the long-term demand for the property types and will ensure adaptability of homes to meet the changing needs of the users. We will consider construction methods and materials used in each project and monitor them in detail to minimize the

impacts to the environment and to maximize the social, economic and organizational benefits.

- We are mindful of the current global environmental issues and will ensure our objectives remain aligned to emerging issues and account for technologies to mitigate our impact. Where possible, we will strive for and explore ways to achieve “carbon neutral” in our future activities.

5.2 Social Sustainability

- We will provide high quality housing and environmental design to support places where “people want to live”. For new developments we will adopt an inclusive design approach that creates properties and neighbourhoods that can be used by everyone regardless of disability or age, and so improving sustainability in use over the long term.
- We will create physical conditions for sustainable communities by realising the opportunities offered by individual locations; their environments, past heritage, and relationship to local and regional factors such as business growth, improving employment markets and transport links.
- We will create conditions to support sustainable communities by the effective delivery of a wide range of social inclusive regeneration interventions; incorporating housing support services and community focussed activities.
- We will contribute to the stability of individual tenancies and the sustainability of communities by providing high quality homes and complementary support services for new and existing tenants.
- We will strive to ensure that we are providing affordable warmth and supporting tenants to mitigate the likelihood of fuel poverty.

5.3 Economic Sustainability

- We will build and / or refurbish our assets in such a way that they will provide affordable warmth to our tenants. We will adopt a “fabric first” approach to development and refurbishment to ensure our buildings are energy efficient, compliant with current standards. We will also incorporate alternative / new technologies where appropriate to further enhance the energy efficiency of the properties and so that they are affordable to heat.
- By acknowledging the potential brought on by being sustainable, we will seek and explore opportunities innovatively to maximize use of our assets and create a carbon offset for both the economic benefits of the organisation as well as the resultant benefits of the environment.
- We will undertake procurement activities in such a manner that will balance the direct organisational costs and benefits to the wider communities and the environmental impact.

- We will incorporate training and local employment opportunities into our procurement and service activities.

5.4 Corporate Sustainability

- We will strive to ensure our supply chains are sustainable by having appropriate procurement processes to assess our suppliers in relation to sustainability.
- We will ensure that critical business decisions are sustainable and ethical.
- We will work to the requirements of current and future regulations / legislations incorporating sustainability (such as Scottish Building Standards, SHQS, and EESSH and its subsequent amendments etc.) as basic benchmarks but will aim to exceed them as far as possible.
- We will continuously seek ways to work more efficiently by the effective use of information technologies (such as mobile working, utilising video conferencing, and reducing travelling time for trade staff etc.) and to capture the resultant financial and environmental benefits.
- We will promote the organisation's sustainability commitment by seeking appropriate accreditations / recognitions of our activities.
- We will encourage our employees, customers, contractors, suppliers and other stakeholders to work, live and operate sustainably by providing appropriate information and training to maximizing the impact of this policy.

6. MONITORING, PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND REPORTING

The following areas will be subject to monitoring:

- Risk management
- Provision of training and / or information to staff
- Compliance with policy requirements and procedures
- The applicability of new methods of working and technical developments

These will be monitored by appropriate managers within each company and/ or function and reported to the relevant director. If any significant issues of concern arise, these will be dealt with by the director who will report such matters to his/ her Board.

Periodic audits of policy compliance may be conducted by the Internal Auditor. Audit results will be reported to the Audit Committee.

7. POLICY AVAILABILITY

This policy is available on the Link Group website, to the Board on the Link Group extranet and to staff on the Link Group intranet.

This policy is available on request free of charge from Link Group. A summary of this policy can be made available in a number of other languages and other formats on request.

8. POLICY REVIEW

Link undertakes to review this policy regularly, at least every three years, with regard to:

- Applicable legislation, rules, regulations and guidance
- Changes in the organisation
- Continued best practice