

## Environmental Sustainability Strategy

### Islington and Shoreditch Housing Association and Lien Viet Housing Association

#### Mission Statement

ISHA's environmental sustainability strategy focuses on the following objectives:

- to tackle fuel poverty
- to improve the energy efficiency of our residents' homes
- to continue to meet our carbon reduction targets
- to minimise the environmental impacts of our new developments.

"I'm delighted ISHA is taking action to understand its environmental impacts, including energy use, through independent assessment – and then working to reduce them." **Stephen Stringer, Chair: ISHA**

This strategy addresses how issues of environmental sustainability will be embedded in our organisation. The strategy contributes to ISHA's overall strategic plan, and in particular to Strategic Plan Objective 3 "To maintain, improve and develop good quality and affordable homes in our key community areas."

To help us measure our performance in achieving our environmental targets, we have joined the Sustainable Homes Index For Tomorrow (SHIFT). SHIFT is a sector specific tool which provides external validation of the steps that housing providers are taking to embed environmental sustainability in their organisations. It was developed in partnership with housing associations, the Homes and Communities Agency, Environment Agency, National Housing Federation, UK Green Building Council and others. It also provides sector wide benchmarking and comparisons of performance and lessons in good practice.

The SHIFT system encourages continuous improvement and offers three grades of award bronze, silver and gold. ISHA achieved the bronze standard in 2013 and is committed to achieving a higher standard when we are next assessed in 2014. We would expect to maintain progress towards achieving the gold standard by the end of the action plan period.

This strategy is divided into four sections:

- Strategy and management;
- Office practices
- Existing buildings
- and New build

Each section has a brief statement of the outcome ISHA wishes to achieve, a summary of the current position, and the activities needed to achieve the proposed outcome.

## Strategy and management

ISHA aims to:

- reduce our negative impacts on the environment;
- improve the understanding of the sustainability of our homes at every level of our organisation and;
- make sure that our residents have access to the means to reduce fuel poverty and have the opportunity to participate in efforts to reduce our carbon footprint.

In 2009 ISHA adopted a Sustainable Development Strategy. This refers principally to new developments and for instance does not cover the refurbishment of existing stock.

ISHA has already made a number of significant investments in “greening” our various activities. Examples include the installation of photovoltaic panels on the office roof, the retrofitting photovoltaic panels to 12 existing blocks of flats, the development of nearly 300 code four plus homes. In 2009 ISHA won “Small Business CO2 reduction of the Year” by Islington Council for work to cut emissions within our own buildings, but also “on their extensive engagements with their tenants in order to demonstrate the links between carbon reduction and cost savings.”<sup>1</sup> As a result of the investment in our stock, our average SAP rating is assessed as 82. This is the second highest score of all SHIFT members and indicates the priority ISHA gives to the thermal comfort of our buildings and efficiency of the heating systems we provide residents.

This strategy builds on these achievements and clarifies the priority areas for improvement. It takes into account the likely timescales and investment needed, identifies relevant ways in which the required improvements can be measured and monitored. It also provides for an annual review by the Board, of the robustness of the plan and the need to make changes where appropriate. The review will include an analysis of whether the previous years required outcomes have been achieved, whether the action plan going forward needs updating and a value for money assessment on the investment achieved.

Throughout the process internal and external stakeholders will be updated on our progress and invited to help in making the improvements we seek.

The 2013 SHIFT assessment identified that there was a lack of an overall strategy and that a comprehensive strategy should address all aspects of sustainability throughout the organisation including;

- Adaptation to climate change
- Energy efficiency
- Sustainable materials
- Water efficiency
- Hazardous materials
- Municipal waste management
- Construction waste management
- Flytipping
- Ecology
- Green transport
- Resident engagement
- Staff engagement

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<sup>1</sup> Islington Giant Green Business Awards Judges’ comments

The action plan set out in appendix A is derived from the comments of the SHIFT assessment carried out in 2013. It sets out the recommended areas of improvement and assigns a priority based largely on whether the target is to be achieved by the end of 2013/14 (high priority), 2014/15 (medium) or 2015/16 (low).

The action plan below allocates responsibility to each director whose responsibility it will be to see that specific actions arising from the target is delegated appropriately. Achievements of targets set by the action plan will be incorporated into the annual appraisal system as appropriate.

The sustainability strategy will be reviewed with staff via staff and team meetings and staff training will be held on various aspects of the sustainability strategy. New members of staff will be told of their role in achieving sustainability targets via the induction process.

The association's strategy and action plan will be publicised to our residents and other stakeholders including on the associations website and their involvement encouraged (see later section)

### Business (Office) Environmental Management

ISHA wants to ensure that our day to day activities are carried out in a way that is sensitive to the environment and minimises our carbon footprint thereby reducing our energy consumption leading to lower costs and improved efficiency.

To help achieve the above aims the association invested in a new roof at our main offices including Photovoltaic panels. These have reduced our use of electricity by 14% and saved approximately £7,500 in energy costs over the last 5 years. In 2013 we installed new double glazing. To reduce the need for staff to use their own vehicles to travel to work, we provide pools cars, have a cycle to work scheme and provide season ticket loans for public transport. We recycle all the paper used in our offices and we encourage staff to reduce power consumption by switching off lights etc. We use Procurement for Housing to advise on the value for money sourcing of equipment and wherever possible purchase only Fairtrade consumables e.g. tea and coffee.

Because of the existing investment we have made, our energy use per person of approximately 76.8kg/m<sup>2</sup> is already lower than the majority of SHIFT members. However we intend to reduce this still further by carrying out an energy audit to see where we are at risk of overheating the office, identify where further investment would reduce energy consumption etc. We will pay particular attention to our water usage and compare it to the benchmark set by SHIFT of 3m<sup>3</sup> per employee.

We will look to reduce the amount of waste per employee below the current level of 54kg per employee and recycle more office waste than the 56% currently recycled. We have an interim target of at least 60% to be recycled by 2016.

## Sustainable Asset Management (Existing Buildings)

The Asset Management Strategy supports the implementation of ISHA's strategic objectives, as set out in the business plan, and balances the competing needs for investment. A key priority of the strategy is to ensure that ISHA delivers an excellent and accountable service to our customers. ISHA recognises that fuel poverty and energy efficiency are key concerns for our residents.

ISHA created a baseline of all its properties by carrying out a full energy audit in 2005. Since then all new property energy details are added to the database, and all voids are reviewed and updated. All other stock is updated on a seven year rolling cycle in line with the cyclical works programme. In April every year a snapshot of the information retained on our properties is used to assess our current average SAP score.

The asset management strategy highlights the importance of ensuring that all its stock meets a minimum EPC rating of C. All voids are refurbished to this level. In addition the annual asset plan identifies through its stock and energy efficiency surveys properties where the thermal efficiency can be improved and costs to the residents reduced by installation of double glazing, insulation and retro fit of energy saving devices such as photo voltaic panels.

The association is committed to reducing fuel poverty amongst its residents. The association is currently one of a small number of associations involved in the National Energy Study, 52 ISHA residents are taking part in the study and the last monitoring period ends in March 14. After that we will receive a report on suggested improvements in reducing fuel usage which we will share widely with residents and if appropriate incorporate efficiency improvements and recommendations in planned retro fit programmes

Future programmes will continue to be assessed following energy surveys completed during the cyclical decoration and repairs programme and when properties become void. These surveys will inform our future short term and medium term programmes.

Investment in our existing stock to improve thermal efficiency and reduce residents' utility bills will include the retro fitting of the following where suitable;

- Photovoltaic panels to existing blocks of flats,
- Replacement double glazing
- Internal wall insulation to solid walls
- Roof insulation
- Water minimisers
- Condensing boilers
- Hot water cylinder thermostats and insulation
- Recycling facilities
- Rain water collection
- Fitting of smart meters
- Community renewables

We recognise that we will need to increase our investment in energy efficient retro fit programmes including community renewables, SUDS, and overcome the challenges of implementing holistic solutions to our older stock to achieve our aims.

In conjunction with general advice on reducing water usage and possibly in conjunction with installing equipment within the home to reduce water consumption e.g. low flow taps etc. Consideration will be given to helping resident's control their use of water by retrofitting water meters where possible, subject to consultation with those affected.

Our partnering contractors are committed to ensuring that building materials and practices are sustainable and to reduce waste.

Waste minimisation figures will be collected from maintenance contractors with a goal of 60% diverted from landfill by 2016. Better waste management facilities will be provided to more residents subject to the limitations of existing kitchen layouts and local authority recycling regimes. Further publicity will be given to residents on our bulk waste disposal arrangements etc.

The possibility of providing natural compost and havens for wildlife will be looked into on our larger sites.

A revised "green guide" to be given to new residents will also be given to existing residents. Information will include green travel plans, avoiding overheating and the implications of climate change.

To save printing costs etc. residents will continue to be able to opt out of receiving ISHA's quarterly newsletter in the post and receive it electronically etc.

### Sustainable Development Strategy (New Build)

ISHA sustainability strategy for new build addresses a wide range of social, economic and environmental concerns. Our development work contributes to sustainability through:

- Developing high quality housing stock, which contributes to our residents sense of well-being and health:
- Ensuring that our new homes are well designed and adaptable, reflect the needs of a multi-cultural society and cater for the needs of older people, vulnerable groups and those with special needs.
- Promoting on site practices that reduce the impact of construction upon the environment, making efficient use of the resources available and limiting waste.
- Ensuring that environmental concerns are addressed when selecting development sites (using brown field land where practicable) and the choice of building materials.

- Incorporating renewable energy and water saving technologies where possible, and driving down utilities costs to our residents.

All of our new development schemes are assessed against the Code for Sustainable Homes and we have a target to achieve code level 4 and exceed it where cost constraints make this achievable.

We are committed to on-going improvement in our use of sustainable products and using renewable energy technologies, however we aim to offer solutions that are practical and relevant to our residents addressing the issues that matter to them. A sustainable home should be one that respects the limits of the planet's environmental resources and biodiversity, and it should also be a place that is warm, secure and easy to live in.

### Design

A well designed home is one which contributes to the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the community in which it lies.

The design process should be used to ensure that buildings, infrastructure and any public spaces are buildable, fit for purpose, resource efficient, sustainable, resilient, adaptable and attractive.

Our design processes will include real engagement with key stakeholders including existing residents. We will strive to build new homes which are easy to manage, cost effective to maintain and which offer the prospect of reduced running costs.

A well designed building must also be future proof. Wherever practicable it must be adaptable: both to the future impacts of climate change and to the future needs of its residents.

### Energy

We will provide housing that aims to reduce future CO<sup>2</sup> emissions and offers affordable warmth and hot water to our residents.

We recognise that heating, hot water and electricity running costs related to heating, hot water and electricity use are important to all of our residents and we are committed to combating "fuel poverty". In designing our homes we consider how the building is heated and cooled, its orientation and opportunities to exploit passive solar gain. By adopting a "fabric first" approach our homes will be well insulated and efficiently glazed.

Our new homes will incorporate renewable technologies wherever it can be demonstrated they will deliver tangible benefits for residents and the environment. We will seek new funding opportunities to support these initiatives where we can.

Any appliances supplied by us will be "A rated" energy efficient and our homes will provide suitable drying spaces.

## Water

ISHA will provide housing that minimises the overall impact on the local water supply.

All new homes will incorporate water conservation measures including low flow taps, dual capacity cisterns and water butts. We will consider the use of water recycling where appropriate.

We will, in conjunction with our consultants and the water authority, continuously review and implement ways of minimising the impact on existing water systems through the use of permeable brick pavements, and the provision of reed beds, and water holding areas such as gravel ponds etc.

## Waste

ISHA will provide housing that minimises the accumulation of more waste.

We will ensure that all our new housing is designed to support recycling schemes. There should be sufficient space for segregated waste bins; encouraging our residents to easily recycle their waste. We will introduce compost bins where it is practical to do so.

We will design suitable recycling provision which best meets the local authorities recycling objectives and their refuse collection policies.

We will also encourage our contractors to minimise on site waste, ensuring that waste management plans are adopted and introducing targets for waste reduction.

## Transport

We will encourage the development of new housing that has good access to public transport which minimises the use of the private car. We will seek to reduce parking provision to the minimum required to satisfy our residents for all new schemes. We will encourage the use of car clubs by our residents.

Before proceeding with a new development we will assess whether the location has easy access to local facilities such as, schools, healthcare, post offices, parks and leisure facilities.

In negotiation with planning authorities, all new housing will include cycle storage that is well designed, easily accessible and secure thus encouraging our residents to use the bicycle as the transport of choice.

## Environmental impact

ISHA will consider the environmental impact of its development programme, and seek to minimise this impact wherever possible.

We will consider, and will adopt landscaping schemes which enhance the environment and encourage indigenous species. We will also ensure that all new estate planting schemes will include plants that have resistance to drought and are easy to maintain.

We will adopt strategies to proactively encourage biodiversity: for all new development we will consider the inclusion of bat & bird boxes, green walls and green roofs. We will plant species which produce food sources such as berries and nuts which are suitable for native fauna.

In designing our new homes we will consider the environmental impact of materials, fixtures and fittings used. We will encourage our contractors to use materials from sustainable sources and that minimise the length of journey from point of origin.

### Sustainable communities

ISHA will produce a targeted development strategy that promotes sustainable communities addressing diversity and community cohesion. We recognise that a sustainable community requires other amenities such as the proximity of schools, transport and community facilities.

We will promote development in areas in need of regeneration. However we recognise that new developments can cause disruption to social cohesion and we will seek to counter this by actively engaging with local communities about their aspirations for their area (see our public consultation strategy).

We will strive to meet full Secure by Design standards for all our new homes. We will ensure that our new homes feel safe and secure; using passive surveillance and introducing Home Zones where possible.

We will ensure that the homes we build are flexible and adaptable to the future needs of our residents.

We will design places where people want to live and which they are happy to call home.

### People

When selecting contractors ISHA will consider their approach to training and their Health and Safety Policies.

We will encourage our contractors to adopt a planned approach to training which can ensure that all projects are built by a fully trained, qualified and competent workforce on all projects.

To assist the local economy, where possible we will encourage contractors to procure from local suppliers and will encourage our contractors to offer training and apprenticeships to local people and our residents, primarily through the use of the Construction Training Initiative (CTI) wherever possible.



We have adopted a zero harm approach to reduce the incidence rate of accidents on site. We will actively monitor this on all our sites. We will ensure our staff are fully aware of the potential risks involved in construction projects both to themselves, construction staff and future residents.

### Action Plan

The three year action plan largely follows the format of the SHIFT assessment carried out during 2013 allowing the actions arising from the strategy to be aligned with the improvement areas identified by SHIFT.

The plan identifies the action required and the priority which is based on a combination of the scale of the task, an assessment of the impact on residents and the investment required.

Based on the level of priority assigned to the task the action has then been allocated into one of the next two years. This will ensure that we can devote sufficient resources to each task rather than tackling everything at the same time in insufficient detail. Where the task is due for completion in the second year where relevant a milestone to be achieved in the first year is shown.

The director responsible for progressing each action is identified on the action plan and it will be their responsibility to provide quarterly updates to the management team and also [annual] updates to the relevant subcommittee. Overall progress will be reviewed annually by the Board.

[Approved by the Board March 2014]