

Sustainability Strategy

2026 - 2030



Introduction



As a social landlord we believe that the right thing for the planet is the right thing for our customers and our communities. Since we launched our first strategy in 2022, we have embedded sustainability into our operations and maintained it as a core guiding principle for how we work. Over the past year we've carried out an in-depth review to create this updated and refreshed strategy that will guide our progress to becoming a more sustainable organisation.

We continue to support colleagues on their carbon literacy journey operating as a bronze accredited carbon literate business. Our ongoing commitment is reflected in the Sustainable Futures element of our 2030 Plan.

For whg sustainability is much wider than the protection of the environment, it is about enabling communities to flourish and endure, whether it be reducing fuel poverty or utilising our green spaces to promote health and wellbeing for our customers. Through everything we do, the needs of each customer will always come first.

This strategy will continue to enable us to create sustainable communities that support customers in their homes – homes which are happy, healthy, long-lasting and based in thriving communities.

Building on the foundations established in 2022, we will address the ongoing challenges and opportunities we face, such as the transition to net zero, improving energy efficiency, creating green open space, climate resilience and enhancing wellbeing for our customers.

To deliver this we have given careful consideration to the environmental, social and governance elements we plan to invest in. This is reflected in our retention of the Certified Sustainable Housing Label over the last three years and our leading work in Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG). This strategy is aligned with, and supports delivery of, our other key business strategies. Housing plays a vital role in building a sustainable future. Over the years ahead sustainability will be at the core of how we build, operate and engage as we continue to provide excellent homes.

Rob Gilham,
Corporate Director of Strategy,
Assets and Transformation



Strategic context



This strategy continues to respond to the increasing number of external drivers, as well as the social and ethical drivers that are the foundations of whg. We have completed a double materiality assessment for the first time. This assessment evaluated how our actions may affect the environment and people, while also evaluating potential sustainability risks and opportunities that could impact our finances.

Bringing together the most significant environment, social and governance related impacts allows us to consider the risks and opportunities facing the business.

We have identified four key themes to focus on:

- Climate impact
- Community wellbeing
- Sustainable buildings
- Governance

A wide range of stakeholder groups were engaged, including customers, colleagues and senior leaders, investors, peers, and the current regulatory landscape. This comprehensive process has shaped the priorities and informed our new action plan. Those actions will enable delivery of our sustainable futures ambition as part of the plan to 2030.



Climate impact



Community wellbeing



Sustainable buildings



Governance



Our journey

Even before we'd fully developed our strategy, we knew net zero was going to be a priority for us, so we developed a net zero pathway alongside it.



Sustainability strategy approach



We created our first strategy in 2022 and while many of the original principles and ambitions remain, we have refined this version to reflect the fast-changing external environment and the views of our stakeholders. Our approach followed the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) guidance and incorporated guidance developed by the European Financial Reporting Advisory Group (EFRAG) in regard to best practice to complete double materiality assessments. EFRAG's guidance was developed for the use of companies that are subject to the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD). whg is not subject to it but has decided to voluntarily follow this guidance to proactively adopt best practice.

The focus area topics in this strategy are mapped to the objectives and align with the relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). By implementing our Sustainability Strategy, we are committed to making a positive impact on each of these goals.





Climate impact



Objectives

- Climate change mitigation and energy efficiency
- Climate change adaption



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Targets

- Net zero carbon emissions by 2050 with an interim target reduction of 33% to reach 62,000 tCO₂e by 2035 using a 20/21 baseline of 94,000 tCO₂e
- 100% of homes to be EPC C by 2030
- 100% of new homes to be a minimum of EPC B from 2026
- 20% of properties to achieve net zero carbon readiness by 2030
- Integrate climate-related risks into our risk management approach and our asset management strategy by 2027
- Climate resilience strategy or approach to climate resilience by 2030





Community wellbeing



Objectives

- Health and safety
- Affordable housing
- Anti-social behaviour and designing out crime



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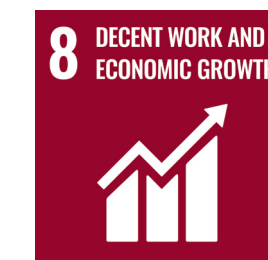


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Targets

- Health and safety risk assessment for all assets, achieving 100% compliance from 2026
- Develop a strategy for managing Awaab's Law requirements for extreme cold and heat hazard by 2030
- Meet 'are our homes affordable KPI' from 2026
- Integrating and utilising outdoor green spaces and dedicated areas across 100% of our residential developments to promote health and wellbeing / exercise for customers by 2030
- Programme of Neighbourhood Plans across our geography which include actions to improve the physical space in neighbourhoods, reducing the potential for anti-social behaviour and crime from 2026
- Clear evidence of a positive impact on community safety, wellbeing and the environment on specific sites where we have delivered our Green Open Spaces Strategy framework by 2030





Sustainable buildings



Objectives

- Sustainable building design
- Waste management
- Biodiversity
- Building health and wellbeing



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Targets

- Meet or exceed Future Homes Standards where possible and future-proof decarbonisation through retrofit. New Build Design Brief will continue to exceed Building Regulation standards in support of this from 2030
- Reduce fly tipping by 2030
- Improve water management by 2030
- Improve management of waste across whg owned estates and at our Home Maintenance Services stores by 2028
- 100% of whg owned land assessed/GIS mapped in support of the Green Open Spaces strategy by 2035
- Enhance biodiversity net gain by 2030 (above regulated 10%)
- 100% of pilot homes to have monitoring sensors to promote building health and wellbeing from 2026





Governance



Objectives

- Regulatory compliance
- Alignment to ESG standards
- Disclosure and transparency
- Sustainable procurement



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Work & workplace
of the future

Targets

- Maintain whg's ISO 14001 Environmental Management System from 2026
- Achieve "Frontrunner" Ritterwald Certified Sustainable Housing label in all dimensions by 2030
- Gold and top 20 suppliers to share actual emission data by 2028
- ESG together with Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) factors shall be considered and given due regard in our procurement processes. Customer engagement will shape our major customer impact procurements from 2027





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