

mhs homes group

Environment and Sustainability Strategy

1. Introduction

In January 2006 the **mhs homes group** affirmed publicly, its commitment to the development of an Environment Strategy, by publishing its Environmental Policy Statement. Since then a broad range of initiatives have been progressed, as part of day to day business operations, under the leadership of managers and staff across the group. Our aim now is to encompass environmental considerations and working practices into an overall strategy that connects environmental issues directly with a sustainable agenda, serving the interests of the group and contributing to the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the communities where **mhs homes** has an active role.

2. Policy

Our medium term goal is to acquire accredited standards of excellence in environment management. In pursuit of the ISO 14001 Standards, our policy framework, the tasks we have identified and responsibilities we have assigned ourselves are set out below:

- Comply fully with all relevant legal requirements, Codes of Practice and Regulations.
- Prevent pollution to land, air and water.
- Reduce water and energy use.
- Minimise waste and increase recycling within the framework of our waste management procedures.
- Identify and manage environmental risks and hazards.
- Involve customers, partners, clients, suppliers and sub-contractors in the implementation of our objectives.
- Promote environmentally responsible purchasing.
- Provide suitable training to enable employees to deal with their specific areas of environmental control.
- Improve the environmental efficiency of our transport and travel.
- Establish targets to measure the continuous improvement in our environmental performance.

3. Systematic Methodology

We shall integrate the challenges of the policy into our business by adopting a strategy that is an on-going scheme of management comprising;

- Planning – establish the objectives and processes necessary to deliver results in accordance with our environment policy.
- Doing – implementing the processes.

- Checking – monitoring and measuring processes against environmental policy, objectives, targets, legal and other requirements and reporting the results.
- Acting – taking actions to continually improve performance of the environmental management system.

The process steps of plan, do, check and act form the basis of the ISO standard methodology and is therefore consistent with our pursuit of the ISO accreditation.

4. **Principals of Action**

Our management practices will include;

- Seeking continual improvement of our environmental performance.
- Involving all aspects of the business, our customers, supply chain and other stakeholders in the development and implementation of sustainability policies including where appropriate partnership arrangements.
- Ensuring that we respond promptly and take full account of sustainability concerns expressed by our residents, other customer groups and stake holders including the local authority.
- Accessing all new policies, activities and practices for their effects on the environment and sustainability of the business and in cases of doubt seek external expert opinion as a precautionary measure.
- Ensuring that staff and our supply chain work with us to uphold our environmental standards and are aware of their responsibilities covered by the environment and sustainability policy.
- Encouraging customers and our tenants in particular to access and explore sustainability information where there is a business case for application within the **mhs homes group**.
- Monitoring performance and compliance so as to raise our standards of effectiveness to improve the sustainability of the communities that we serve.

mhs homes recognises that it is in the interest of all who live, work and travel throughout the area where there are **mhs** properties to support the strategy, not simply for our present generation but for those of the future.

5. **Environment and Sustainability Champions Team**

We have formed a team to champion environmental and sustainability issues. Their task is to embed into the culture of the organisation an increasing awareness of environmental and sustainability issues and how they impact on the business. The team is drawn from a broad cross section of the group so that members can facilitate the exchange of information efficiently and effectively and focus on priority concerns where there are connections across different areas of operations. The diversity of team membership adds to the degree of influence that the champions can bring to bear on environment and sustainability matters in our business planning and the implementation of strategies that support our core activities.

6. **Scheme of Delivery**

Our delivery plan can be categorised into functional aspects of the business where we shall;

Operations

Seek to apply the highest available environmental standards in all areas of operations and investment decisions.

Expect similar environmental standards from our partners and supply chain businesses that work with us.

Ensure we have an active programme of auditing waste produced in our offices and take measures to minimise inefficient energy use.

Where practicable and feasible acquire sustainable products that can be recycled or have a low environmental impact and utilise energy from renewable sources.

Pursue the adoption of an environmentally friendly, efficient and effective transport strategy that aims to have a minimal impact on the community served by the group.

Through on-going training and development of staff aim for progressively reduced amounts of waste resources arising from our operations.

Development

Design into our new development schemes environmental sustainability including the use of renewable resources and recycled products from the outset of all new projects where appropriate.

Pursue the development of new properties that are designed and built to the Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3.

Prepare waste management plans for use in connection with our development activities so as to minimise waste and prevent pollution of the air, ground and water supplies.

Current Properties

Raise the energy efficiency of existing properties through loft insulation, wall insulation and heating upgrade programmes including the installation of high efficiency boilers.

Improve and promote water conservation in current properties through the installation of showers, dual flush WC's and water butts where practicable.

Promote and encourage recycling initiatives by working in liaison with our tenants, and wider customer base, the local authority and our supply chain partners.

Complete the installation of a low energy light bulbs programme in communal lighting areas and manage the upgrade of control systems where there is advantage financially and that leads to reduced wastage of energy.

Where circumstances arise in the cycle of replacement, substitute electric heating systems with high efficiency condensing boilers, including the consideration of alternative energies where gas supply is unavailable.

Communication and Involvement

Promote best practice advice to residents on energy and water use in the home through newsletters, web sites and resident participation events.

Integrate environmental discussion and awareness programmes into community engagement projects where circumstances arise, including opportunities provided by housing officers conducting surgeries on estates.

Publish regular articles in the staff newsletter, 'Cones and Homes'. Include sustainability and environmental management in the induction programme and formulate a generic programme of training and awareness in environmental and sustainability matters to expand the influence of the Champions Team.

Examine and evaluate the size of the **mhs homes group** carbon footprint, promote debate and strive to minimise the impact of our CO² emissions.

Monitoring

The strategy is to be made accessible to all staff and published on our web site. The subsidiary, **mhs commercial services** is forming its own Environmental and Sustainability Strategy and together we will operate a twin track initiative. The experience gained in one part of the group will be used to advantage to advance effectiveness of the strategy in other parts.

Further details will evolve and mature. These will become integrated into the environment and sustainability strategy with suitable monitoring arrangements devised to assess progress and make changes in the light of operational experience.

Devising Targets

Evidence of the success of our endeavours to bring environmental and sustainability concern into the heart of our thinking will be measured against targets. The focus of these will be reports on activities that have particular environmental and sustainability assumptions built into the planning stage of our corporate strategy in pursuit of business goals. Such matters shall be managed and controlled to fit with the pursuit of **mhs homes** acquiring ISO 14001 accreditation.

Terry Burton
Administration Director and Secretary