

Sustainable Homes

Foundations for the Future

Sustainable Development has been around as a phrase for over a decade – but how well is the UK rising to the challenge? This was debated at the Earth Summit and what is clear is the important role housing associations have to play.

Sustainable Development refers to more than bricks and mortar – it is about environmental impact, social equity and economic well-being. Associations are well placed to tackle these issues in an integrated way; to build a better quality of life for residents and communities.

Much of what associations do already supports Sustainable Development, but it takes commitment and cultural change for sustainability to become

central to an association's activities. Many are demonstrating how improvements can be made – realising that the challenge can't be tackled alone, but can in partnership and through business planning.

Sustainable Homes launched Foundations for the Future this month. It sets the context for Sustainable Development and calls for Chief Executives and Boards to take a strategic shift in thinking if sustainability is to become an ethos driving an association's work. Themed checklists provide a background for appraising current sustainability performance and suggest ways to improve, focussing on:

- Sustainable Communities
- Sustainable Tenancies
- Sustainable Buildings.

Case studies demonstrate how associations are already improving their sustainability.

The Housing Corporation launches its Sustainable

Inside your Sustainability special issue....

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Development strategy and action plan next year. The sector will need to be involved. Some associations will be better placed than others to integrate sustainability into their business planning, financial decision making and daily activities. Sustainable Homes proposes to help.

During the next few months, focus sessions are being held, in conjunction with the NHF, for Boards and Chief Executives to raise awareness and encourage commitment to Sustainable Development.

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Sustainable Homes is supported by an Innovation and Good Practice Grant from the Housing Corporation



Regenerating Communities and helping the environment at the Stonebridge Estate (see page three).

Sustainability takes centre stage

Peabody Trust is taking a long-term view to ensure that all its homes are efficient to maintain, affordable to run and have a role in their communities.

Building on the experience of its energy and environmental policies, and from practical sustainable construction, the Trust has developed a Vision for 2020. To support this, as part of its corporate commitment, it has published a Sustainability Strategy.

The Strategy provides the framework for all services: policy, community regeneration, development and technical

services etc. It identifies priority themes, linking existing and proposed actions across the Trust and provides a clear structure for investigating how sustainability impacts on all aspects of the Trust's work. The sustainable development principles are incorporated in the business plan for 2002/3 and each department is responsible for individual sustainability tasks in their annual action plans.

This strategic approach and cross-department commitment has moved sustainability centre stage. The Strategy can be downloaded from the Press Room at www.peabody.org.uk

Free Route Planner

With the help of Sustainable Homes and others, many associations are confident about improving their environmental performance. But what about overall sustainability?

Not sure how to make the first step to improving the sustainability of your organisation, or department? Confused by all the information, guidance, training, consultants and theories on sustainability? Unsure of how to translate all this into action? If you answered yes to any of the above questions, Routes to Sustainability could provide the solution.



It aims to help everyone working in housing to create their own solutions to sustainable action. It guides and highlights the resources, help and tools that are available to integrate sustainability as easily as possible, whatever your field of expertise. It will identify the tools or projects that can help, whether you work in housing maintenance, management, design & development or policy.

Routes will be published in the Autumn with a supporting website, designed to meet the needs of the user, not the theorist. It's free for all involved in housing association work.

To receive your free copy email your details to nicholasdoyle@nbh.co.uk or visit www.practicalenvironment.co.uk.



NEW FOR OLD

Want to use more recycled products but don't know where to get hold of them? ecoconstruction.org promotes recycled and reused materials for the housing industry.



Whether it's refurbishment or new build you are interested in, this website gives you information on new products made from recycled materials or raw materials, including timber, steel and concrete, that can be re-used.

Although a fledgling website at the moment, more products will be added as this market expands in the future.

For yesterday's materials visit ecoconstruction.org today.

Foundations for the Future

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Comprehensive training will be available over the next 2½ years for association staff involved in implementing a Sustainable Development strategy and action plan.

Through collaboration with other Innovation and Good Practice projects a comprehensive suite of tools, advice, assistance

and support will be brought to associations across England.

It starts with this newsletter which focuses on some of the sustainability tools available for the housing sector – look for this icon.



To receive a copy of Foundations for the Future, email info@sustainablehomes.co.uk

Sustainability at Stonebridge

Regenerating areas offers the perfect opportunity to put sustainable development into action. Stonebridge Housing Action Trust (HAT) is a regeneration agency working with the Stonebridge Estate in West London. The estate was built in the 60s and 70s and housed over 6,000 people. 79% of the population are black or minority ethnic and 48% of the population are under 25. Low incomes and high unemployment were common when the HAT formed in 1996.

Since then it has been following a vision to create a popular, safe and well managed environment through community involvement and high quality development. A master plan was drawn up for the estate, in consultation with the residents, looking at both macro and micro issues.

Residents' desire for good quality urban design and the creation of streets and spaces that people want to live in has been nurtured through design competitions and community involvement.

High quality energy efficient designs and durable materials with a low environmental impact create more sustainable housing. All the new homes have high thermal insulation standards and achieve Secured by Design. The latest phase has included sustainable timber framed houses, with water butts and compost bins to encourage environment friendly lifestyles.

Balancing the environmental issues, Stonebridge HAT has been investing in residents too. As almost 50% of the population are under 25, an important element has been to support young people. Through links with local schools

and youth projects, cultural festivals, music and sporting activities have been held and community youth and leisure facilities are included in the new development.

Initiatives within the community are supporting increased educational attainment and skills training for employment.

have been turned into community and drop-in centres including a community police office. This fosters the community spirit that already existed and tackles issue of crime and vandalism. Residents have been encouraged and supported to set up community organisations, promoting activities such as gardening and healthy living.

The HAT has a limited life and steps are being taken to ensure organisational and financial arrangements are in place to deliver the long-term support needed.

Strong partnerships are being forged with local people and



Residents help shape their new homes at Stonebridge

organisations and it is hoped a community development agency (or something similar) will be set up to ensure the community's long term sustainability.

Although Stonebridge

HAT differs from many housing associations, it illustrates the potential associations have in unlocking wider social, economic and environmental support through partnerships. Its long-term vision is making sure sustainability is centre stage. For more information on the work of the Trust, contact Nigel Swanton 020 8961 0278.

The HAT set up a Learning Centre, a local labour reconstruction scheme (over 130 residents have been involved in building the new homes) and runs a Training Forum for tenants.

Many of the shops in the small estate parade had become empty and no longer served the community.

Whilst awaiting demolition they

PR on PV



Generating Solar Homes is campaigning for PV in social housing. Several housing associations are leading the way with using PV in new and existing developments. Nottingham Community Housing Association's (see photo) new development of bungalows at Green Lane, Nottingham includes PV funded through the DTI field trial programme.

The wider DTI programme is now under way with around £10million available for medium to large scale projects. A grant of

up to 65% is available for social housing schemes. To help support more housing associations access this money, Generating Solar Homes is holding a range of free seminars to overcome barriers to PV. Its June seminar focussed on finding additional funding to bridge the gap under this programme. Its latest seminar, to be held in October, will focus on selling PV to the sceptics.

So even if you know about the benefits of PV (low maintenance, environmental savings and free



energy to residents) but need to persuade others, this seminar can help. It aims to provide the answers

needed to break down the barriers raised in comments such as 'it costs too much' and 'residents' won't like it'. It will set out why the Government is backing PV and the environmental and lifestyle benefits it can bring. For more information on the seminar contact Andrea Griffiths-James on 0115 985 9057 or andrea.griffithsjames@nottenergy.com

2020 Vision

So we know that sustainable development affects more than bricks and mortar, and is important to regeneration. But how is it influencing large scale new developments?

"But will we want to live there?" is the question that groups of women have been asking of a new urban extension of over 5000 homes, planned for Swindon. Rarely do developers stop to answer questions such as 'what makes a house a home?', 'will it last a lifetime?', 'will it work as a place to bring up a family?', the very stuff of quality of life and sustainable development.

A recent report reviewed how the development might work in 2020. The main findings argue that development planned today may not meet people's expectations in 2020. Better designed and built homes with integrated services are



wanted. Key factors include:

- flexible housing to cater for household change

- public and 'private' transport options
- accessibility to shops and services

- multifunctional schools supporting 'home' working, health and leisure services

It highlights the gaps between expectations and what's being provided. Solutions are suggested for closing the gap, including building energy efficient homes, designed for living in.

It argues for setting up neighbourhood trusts with a remit to support services geared to changing social needs.

For a copy of the report, visit www.women2020.com or contact Lesley Andrews on 01672 540180, or send a SAE A4 envelope for £1.35 to Women and Housing, Ulmus, Ogbourne Road, Aldbourne, Wilts, SN8 2LD.

Help for your communities

The Energy Conservation and Solar Centre provides free residential training for community activists and workers interested in energy conservation and environmental action. If you work with a community or know of residents that might be interested, visit www.est.org.uk/cafe for details on the next courses to be held (they are often free).

Legally Green

It's one thing to show you're environmentally responsible by working in a way that improves your environmental performance through voluntary decisions, but it's another thing to know whether you are working on the right side of the law.



EcoLaw is one of the latest tools for housing associations. It highlights relevant environmental legislation affecting all operational departments within housing associations. Importantly, it also makes a risk assessment on the potential impact of the legislation and of costs that could result due to delays or intervention arising from the need to meet the legislation.

Your association should have received its reference guide at the end of August. If not, copies can be obtained from Jacky Pett at the Association for the Conservation of Energy on 020 7359 8000. EcoLaw can also be accessed from www.ha-ecolaw.org.uk.



Practical Help for Affordable Warmth

Most housing associations recognise the dual benefits of affordable warmth: warmer homes that cost less for residents to run, and improved environmental performance for housing associations.

However, not all associations are in a position to deliver it across all their stock yet. This is where Practical Environment can help.

Over the next two years it will be providing a free in-house support service enabling associations to develop and implement an affordable warmth strategy and action plan.

The Housing Corporation and



Practical Environment Ltd.

Energy Saving Trust are supporting this service to help reduce CO₂ emissions and improve the quality of life for residents through warmer homes and cheaper energy bills. This free service will help hit the Housing Corporation target for developing an affordable warmth strategy, and could help meet the Decent Homes Standard.

If you don't want to miss out on this excellent opportunity contact Nicholas Doyle on nicholas.doyle@nbh.co.uk, or visit www.practicalenvironment.co.uk.



Sustainability Works

If you're interested in embracing a sustainable approach to construction and regeneration, then Sustainability Works is the tool for you.

This powerful online tool combines comprehensive information with practical support for successful planning, implementation and monitoring of sustainable housing policies and projects.

Sustainability Works is free, easy to use and open to any organisation. It is part of the Housing Corporation's suite of sustainability tools and should be the first place to go whether sustainable construction is new to you, or something you are familiar with.

It offers a unique framework that:

- creates policies, targets and project reports for sustainable construction;
- predicts EcoHomes ratings;



- satisfies the requirements of the Corporation's Sustainability Toolkit;
- helps complete the

Housing Quality Indicators submission.

It focuses on the development process and covers 8 key themes:

- buildings
- energy
- land use
- landscape
- society
- travel
- waste
- water

An extensive library of information is supported with case studies, details of costs and benefits and links to essential information.

To register free, log on to www.sustainabilityworks.org.uk.

To find out more or to attend one of the following sessions email contact@sustainabilityworks.org.uk

NHF Conference fringe session
19 September, Birmingham
NHF Regional Development Forum – 24 September, Birmingham and Crawley
BRE Building Research Housing Group meeting – 14 November, Cambridge.



Working Together

Would you like to access money from the Energy Efficiency Commitment but feel you don't have the resources to do it? ESD, in association with the Housing Corporation are setting up eight regional collectives of housing associations to help overcome this.

By bringing associations together to support each other barriers to accessing EEC can be overcome and benefits of the scheme



maximised. ESD, and its partner Sustain, are confident that they can help secure EEC funding for associations, building on the experience of two pilot consortia they set up earlier this year.



To find out more, or join a consortium near you, visit www.esd.co.uk/eec or contact Kirsti Norris on 01225 816659.

Diary Dates

19 September

SUDS:
Realising the benefits of sustainable drainage systems
Edinburgh
Contact: www.ciria.org.uk/cief

24 September

Renewable Energy for Communities
Bristol
Contact: 0121 633 3836
jhall@peopleforaction.demon.co.uk

7 – 12 October

UK Community Self-Build Week
15 events are organised around the country to promote what can be achieved by voluntary self-builders with limited resources.
UK wide
Contact: 020 7415 70921.
lebetkin@communityselfbuildagency.org.uk

19 October

Corporate Social Responsibility in UK Construction
A licence to operate in the 21st Century?
London
Contact: www.ciria.org.uk/cief_events.htm

October

Bioremediation
4 events are being held in London, Cardiff, Edinburgh and Manchester to promote a real alternative for contaminated land projects.
Contact: www.ciria.org.uk/cief_events.htm.

September to November

Timber frame construction
Free training events are available under the 'Wood for Good' campaign at your organisation over the coming months.
In your office
Contact: kwhite@trada.co.uk
or 01494 565487

5 November

Laying the building blocks of sustainable construction
London
Contact: www.ciria.org.uk/conferences.htm

26 November

In the know about H2O:
Implementing sustainable water management in the built environment
London
Contact: www.ciria.org.uk/conferences.htm

5 December

Solar Energy Society Memorial Lecture
London
Contact: uk-ises@brookes.ac.uk
or 01865 484367

9 December

UK-ISES Conference: Energy Generation and Efficiency in Buildings
Southampton
Contact: uk-ises@brookes.ac.uk
or 01865 484367

Growth of Sustainable Homes

Jo Koenig and Sarah Butler joined the Sustainable Homes team at the beginning of September. Jo joins the team as Sustainability Officer and has spent the last two years working on a DTI project looking at sustainable re-use and refurbishment. Jo will be involved in the Green Street project and promoting Sustainable Development to housing associations.

Sarah joins the team as Sustainability Assistant and has been previously working at The Building Centre providing specialist advice on building products in the UK. She will be involved in the research and development of projects including the Tenants' Green Survey, and provide support and advice to housing associations. Both Jo and Sarah can be contacted on info@sustainablehomes.co.uk or 020 8973 0429.



Sarah Butler Jo Koenig

Footnote, The photograph illustrating EcoHomes in the last newsletter was courtesy of Ealing Family Housing.

Sustainable Homes

For more information on the work of Sustainable Homes contact us:
Hastoe Housing Association
Harlequin House
7 High Street Teddington
TW11 8EE
Telephone: +44 (0) 20 8973 0429
Facsimile: +44 (0) 20 8943 2163
E-mail: info@sustainablehomes.co.uk
www.sustainablehomes.co.uk