



BERNÍCIA

Our Commitment to Environmental Sustainability



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Introduction

Bernicia is a modern and dynamic housing business that operates in accordance with a set of values that reflect a sector that was created to help people. We are proudly committed to responding to the needs of our tenants, customers, marketplace, and the climate emergency.

As a socially responsible organisation, we are committed to helping reduce fuel poverty and provide affordable warmth by investing in our homes and neighbourhoods and maintaining them as places where people want to live. Through these investments houses are made into homes and neighbourhoods are advanced into communities as we continue to transform our housing stock and progress our business through valued partnerships and innovative approaches.

Within our Corporate Strategy 2026-2031 we have set the ambitious target of achieving an energy efficiency rating of SAP C for 100% our homes by 2030 in line with government's target (subject to being sustainable, realistic, cost effective and affordable). To support and guide our commitment to the environment we have developed a 5-year Environmental Strategic Plan to guide our efforts towards our key targets, which have been set against our corporate objectives.

Bernicia considered environmental management across three key focus areas:



- Decisions that incorporate our landlord qualities encompass the continued improvement of the sustainability of our homes during their construction, usage, retrofit and cyclical maintenance. At the heart of these decisions Bernicia set out to strengthen and engage communities to permit the development and retainment of sustainable lifestyles.



- Strong environmental management through business operations, focusing on office management, fleet and business travel, waste management and utilities.



- The management of our Heat Networks, whereby we must protect and support our heat customers as their heat supplier, by ensuring the provision of energy efficiency, fair pricing and meeting technical standards.

At Bernicia we understand that we need to take responsibility for our actions and make the necessary changes to understand, quantify and reduce our Scope 1, 2 & 3 carbon emissions.



Our Approach

Bernicia's coupled approach to sustainable environmental management is based on our responsibility as a social landlord, and commitments as an advancing business.

Effective and dynamic environmental management is a crucial part of our success as a housing provider. We are not only committed to identifying and reducing our environmental impacts across our stock and business, but also to delivering sustainable homes for our current and future customers.

At a time when our customers are facing the cost-of-living challenges, we are focusing investments into the energy efficiency upgrades to their homes to reduce the amount of money they spend on their fuel bills. We have set out to install innovative heating systems and renewable technologies across our tenants' homes; to not only support our tenants to achieving affordable warmth, but to begin the transition to decarbonise across our heating systems.

Bernicia use performance data to guide our targets and provide clear direction of focus for energy improvements, efficiency measures, emissions reductions and carbon savings across the business's-controlled sources. Environmental Key Performance Indicators (KPI's), SHIFT certification, Energy data, Asset data, stock surveys and Intelligent energy modelling are all key facilitators of driving our success by monitoring our ongoing performance.

Engagement and involvement with our customers to support them and gain customer-led influence on our strategic decisions for environmental management. Bernicia also promotes environmental sustainability internally across the organisation via our colleague Environmental Champions Group.

It is key that ongoing regulatory compliance underpins our approach to sustainable environmental management. We continue to review our environmental risks and the required statutory returns, including horizon-scanning, to proactively plan for those items which may affect our plans and targets.



Our decisions will be guided by our environmental strategic plan, which guides our efforts towards our key aims, which have been set against our objectives.

Where do we want to get to?

As a landlord we aim to:



- Improve the Energy Efficiency of our tenants' homes where practical, cost effective and affordable



- Assist our tenants to reduce the amount of money they spend on fuel bills



- Engage our tenants in environmental awareness education



- Educate our tenants on fuel switching and new sustainable technologies



- Involve tenants and local communities in social value projects



- Support our Heat Network Customers in fair pricing of their heat and hot water supply

As a business we aim to:



- Further reduce our carbon emissions



- Maximise the social, financial, and environmental sustainability of our asset management and business processes



- Ensure regulatory compliance



- Educate our staff on key environmental issues and controls



- Efficiently invest and continue to improve environmental management across each service of the business



- Make a conscious effort to enhance the biodiversity on our estates and schemes



- Measure, monitor and improve our performance where practical, cost-effective, and affordable



- Manage our Heat Networks in line with Ofgem regulations and future Heat Network Technical Assurance Scheme.



Outcomes

We recognise that the benefits of environmental sustainability and decarbonisation accrue both to our customers, organisation and our communities.

By adopting the principles outlined in the Environmental Strategic Plan, collaborating effectively and continuing our development of knowledge across the industry, we will deliver a strategic, consistent and coordinated approach to environmental management and decarbonisation, targeting reductions in carbon emissions and fuel poverty, establishing a clear path towards achieving SAP C across our housing stock, development towards Net Zero and sustainable business practice.

The implementation of this strategy will facilitate and support the delivery of the Asset Management Strategy and the Corporate Strategy.

In the short-term we will continue to build upon and develop our high levels of data, allowing environmental and financial modelling, along with the creation of detailed analysis of the requirements in reaching our targets. We will continue to work towards the decarbonisation of our offices, business activities and homes to strive towards our long-term Net

Zero ambitions where practical, cost-effective, and affordable. Regulations, policies and legislation which impact Bernicia will guide our path towards holistic sustainability solutions and environmental management and will be reviewed regularly.

Our housing stock is a long-term asset, and we need to ensure it continues to meet stakeholder and market expectations, including those in relation to energy efficiency where practical, cost-effective, and affordable. We will proactively seek opportunities to deliver energy investment as efficiently as possible, the opportunities for working collaboratively and being flexible in the capture of the grant funding which is available.

By positively impacting one life at a time, we can strengthen communities and help unlock the potential of the northeast- it's called the Bernicia effect. Through the application of this Environmental Strategic Plan, we will support Bernicia's approach as both a successful business and a dedicated landlord, continuing our success in tackling fuel poverty.

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